

COLLOQUY

Susan Thorpe writes "I am rather concerned about the indiscriminate use of the term 'improvement' in Word Ways. At some stage, I have probably been as guilty as the next person of using it incorrectly. Exactly what is an 'improvement'? Let us consider a particular case. In the Nov 2000 issue, page 299, Sir Jeremy Morse offers an 'Alphabet of Long Heterograms', the words taken from two specific sources, the OED and Webster's Second Edition. In the Feb 2001 issue, page 59, Eric Chaikin claims six longer 'improvements'. As these come from Webster's Third Edition, they are not improvements within the parameters of Sir Jeremy's original exercise. Rather, they could form the basis of a similar, or parallel exercise carried out with a different dictionary. I think this distinction is important. Perhaps we should restrict the use of 'improvement' in Word Ways to being a *longer (or whatever) example using the same parameters as the original exercise*. With this in mind, here are some improvements to Sir Jeremy's 'Alphabet of Long Heterograms': ENDOLYMPHATICUS (see *ductus endolympaticus* in Web2), FORECASTINGLY (OED), JUXTAPYLORICS (Web2), KLUDGEMANSHIP (OED), PSEUDOMYTHICAL (Web2), SULPHOLBENZAMIDE (OED), WORSHIPFULTY (OED). If hyphenated examples are allowed, then CLOTH-MEASURING (Web2) and YACHT-BUILDING (Web2) can be added. Can HYPERABDUCTION (OED) be pluralized?"

Murray Geller noted a couple of typos in Eric Chaikin's AEIOU supervocalics in the November Word Ways: mouldiewarp should be moudiewarp, dipneumonia should be dipneumona, and the headings aeiou and auieo should be aieou and aueio, respectively. He also offers the following improved examples: excommunicant, denunciator, euphoria, bimolecular, circumrotate, white oakum, odalisque, subatmospheric, purgatories, subdeaconship, undissolvable and ammoniuret., He also notes that Webster's Third contains the double-AEIOU entries EDUCATIONAL QUOTIENT and SIMULTANEOUS REACTION in addition to AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE.

"Footwords to Howl" elicited from Susan Thorpe the following complaint about Ginsberg's original: "Oh God, for most 'Howl's' rock bottom, too long, too 'cocky', too hollow for most worldly logology." She appended the following riddle: "Q: How do two low-down yobbos rob shoddy Soho shop of a lorry of logology books on porn worlds? A: Not on foot."

In the November 1978 Word Ways, Dmitri Borgmann offered four transpositions of NITROGEN: TENORING, INGERTON (a surname from NY Times Obituaries Index), RENOTING and RETONING (both coinages). Darryl Francis added GREINTON, a place in Somerset, England, given in the Times Index-Gazetteer. He now writes that the ability to modify or personalize the ringing tone (called the RINGTONE) is discussed on at least two websites, ringtones/mobile-phone-guide.co.uk/directory and yourmobile.com. He adds "I predict that it won't be too long before RINGTONE appears in a standard dictionary, if indeed it hasn't already appeared in one."

A couple of typos in "Anagramming the Bible" in the August Word Ways: 'Huzzah' in the middle of p 182, and 'Jail or hang' on the second to last line on p 182.

Susan Thorpe writes “[For] words like narrow (made of narrow letters) and square (with the square total of 81), ‘self-referential’ seems rather cumbersome. How about ‘autonymous’ to describe these words? Web 3 defines ‘autonymous’ as ‘naming or designating itself--used of symbols and expressions’.”

Rex Gooch writes that MacMillan has published *Making the Alphabet Dance* in a hardcover British edition for £12.99. Both the hardcover and paperback editions are out of print in the United States, but numerous secondhand copies are available on bibliofind.com and alibris.com, and new ones (autographed, if desired) can be purchased from the editor.

Roland Silver writes “I enjoyed considerably Dennis Borris’s article “There” in the February Word Ways, but was astonished that he didn’t note Gertrude Stein’s famous remark about Oakland, California: ‘There is no there there’.”

Daniel McGrath notes several typos in the February issue: the “Asian Mormons” article was in Nov 2000, not Aug 2000; in “Long Time No E” it is the final 42 letters of the miner’s lung disease; in Rex Gooch’s seven-letter word ladders, the one cited on page 41 is CUTLERY-PANTIES, not SUTLER-PANTIES. Finally, the Italian city is Siena, not Sienna, invalidating one of Conti’s bananagrams as well as a group of palindromes in “Theme and Variations”. This mistake dates back to a Leigh Mercer palindrome half a century ago!

Susan Thorpe observes that BLACKJACKED and APPLE-CHEEKED, both in the OED, can be added to Dave Morice’s healthy words in his “Vitamin Letters” kickshaw in the February issue. These contain eight of the twelve possible vitamin letters, but FLAG-BEDECKED in the OED contains nine!

In the current Kickshaws one can find a reverse alphomic word ladder by Susan Thorpe. The word HIST was inadvertently omitted from her alphomic word ladder in the August 2000 Kickshaws. Inserting this word between GIST and HOST extends the ladder length from 34 to 35.

Don Hauptman writes “My scholarly brother Robert, a professor of library science, has a different interpretation of one of the examples cited in my article on fractured English [in the February 2001 Word Ways]. I had suggested that the T-shirt in Tokyo proclaiming ‘O.D. on Bourgeoisie Milk Boy Milk’ might be explained as a misspelling of ‘soy milk’. Bob’s exegesis is that the name of the company is ‘Bourgeoisie Milk Boy’ and in the shirt slogan, that name is modifying the generic product. Because Bob has two Ph.Ds (one A.B.D.) and I have none, I am willing to concede the plausibility of this argument.”