

KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws editor at drABC26@aol.com. Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

Kawkshics

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearer at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are; the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Fcknig amzanig, huh?

Banking on Wells Fargo

Rich Lederer has an account at Wells Fargo bank, and he says "I love being associated with such a loopy institution because when I loop the last letter of the first word, WELLS, and the last two letters of the second word, FARGO, I get SWELL! GO FAR! Such an optimistic message."

The Governator

Rich writes "A body-builder, a midget, and a porn queen pushing a smut peddler in a wheelchair walk into a California bar. The bartender looks at them and asks 'What is this? An election?' The signs seem to point toward Arnold Schwarzenegger being the next governor of California. After all, he did star in movies with the titles 'The Running Man' and 'Total Recall'. And the last actor to be governor of California had the first name of Ronald, an anagram of which is Arnold."

Plus and Minus Zero

In the May Word Ways, the numbers positive and negative zero were discussed, but were they ever used in the real number world? Rex Gooch writes "Plus and minus zero were numbers in IBM's most popular series of computers in the sixties. It was easy to forget that minus zero existed when testing balances, which led to an electricity supply company sending a bill for s 0d to one of its customers. Said customer ignored it, soon to be threatened with legal action for recovering the debt. To placate the machine, he then sent a cheque for s 0d. A few says later, he received a letter from his bank, whose computer would not accept this as a valid amount!"

Dr. Spooner's Feather Warcast

"We're your morning meteorologists, Willy and Chet. Expect a dowdy clay, mindy and wild, with fight log and shattered scours. Later it will be kitterly bold with roaring pain. Highway motorists should anticipate glow sowing, plus light rain in the right lane. Altogether, a doggy say, but tomorrow will be sore money. And now a word from our sponsor, Scotchgard: 'Hush your brat! Even when it rains steadily, it won't stain readily'. Next forecast at 6 PM with Wayne and Rhett" (by Don Hauptman, with thanks to Sean Potter, a meteorologist and wordplay enthusiast).

Section 1: Introduction

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records. It highlights the need for consistency and the potential consequences of errors. The text emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the data and the reliability of the results.

The second part of the document details the methodology used in the study. It describes the selection of participants, the procedures followed, and the instruments used for data collection. The authors provide a clear and concise explanation of the experimental design and the steps taken to ensure the validity of the findings.

The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a summary of the key findings and a discussion of their implications. The authors analyze the data and provide a detailed interpretation of the results, highlighting the significant differences and the overall trends observed in the study.

The fourth part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and suggests directions for future research. It acknowledges the constraints of the current study and offers insights into how the research can be expanded and improved. The authors provide a thoughtful analysis of the study's strengths and weaknesses.

The fifth part of the document concludes the study and provides a final summary of the findings. It reiterates the main points of the research and offers a final perspective on the significance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the participants and the funding sources, and they provide contact information for further inquiries.

Section 2: Methodology

The methodology section describes the experimental design and the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. It includes a detailed account of the participants, the materials, and the steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. The authors provide a clear and thorough description of the research process, from the initial planning to the final data analysis.

Section 3: Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section presents the findings of the study and discusses their implications. It includes a summary of the key results and a detailed analysis of their meaning. The authors provide a clear and concise explanation of the results and offer a thoughtful discussion of their significance and the broader context of the research.

alive: temporarily metabolically abled
 clumsy: uniquely coordinated +
 crime rate: street activity index *
 dead: living impaired; terminally inconvenienced +
 death: post-viability outplacement *
 dishonest: ethically disoriented +
 drunk: sobriety deprived +
 elderly: chronologically experienced; chronologically gifted
 fail: achieve a deficiency
 fat: laterally enhanced [*Tom Reesor, in "Wordplay" column, Mensa Bulletin, Jan 2003*]
 gossip: community information dissemination specialist [*Richard Esser, in "Wordplay" column, Mensa Bulletin, Jan 2003*]
 heavy: gravitationally compromised [*Ove Michaelsen*]
 homeless person: urban camper [*Dan Maumo, in "Wordplay" column, Mensa Bulletin, Jan 2003*]
 lazy: motivationally deficient
 mass murderer: indiscriminate life cessations *
 panhandler: unaffiliated applicant for private-sector funding +
 pregnant: parasitically oppressed
 rude: cordiality impaired [*Ove Michaelsen*]
 spendthrift: negative saver
 stoned: chemically inconvenienced
 stupid: differently clued
 ugly: aesthetically challenged *
 vagrant: nonspecifically destinationed individual
 white (person): melanin deficient/depleted [*Ove Michaelsen*]
 worst: least best [*carried over from doublespeak*]

Squared Circles

How would you fill in the blanks to complete the lattice below? The same letters go across and down, and they can spell more than one word per line. My solution uses one word for the first and three words for the last to make a special kind of sense.

—	—	S	—	C	—	—		
—	—	Q	—	I	—	—		
—	S	Q	U	A	R	E	—	D
—	—	A	—	C	—	—	—	—
—	C	I	R	C	L	E	—	S
—	—	E	—	E	—	—	—	—
—	—	D	—	S	—	—	—	—

Fortune Cookie Poems

The poem below, including the title (in italics), was collaged from fortune cookie fortunes that rhyme. Rhymed fortunes are rare. I have found eleven, eight of which appear in the poem. I am putting together a novel by collaging 1,000 to 2,000 fortune cookie fortunes to tell a story in 12 chapters. Anyone who sends me one or more fortunes obtained from restaurants or stores (not written for this book) will be listed as coauthor. Recently, the Cedar Rapids Gazette did an article on this project and included a request for people to send fortunes. At this writing there are 44 coauthors from Iowa. The plot is based on the actual fortune "Help! I am being held prisoner in a

Chinese bakery!". The book will be divided into three parts: Introduction, Novel, Index of Fortunes. The index will be almost as long as the novel itself, and the number of coauthors could be even longer. This poem introduces the novel:

*Inch-by-Inch, Life's a Cinch
Yard-by-Yard, It's Very Hard.*

Loan no money on this day;
if you do they'll not repay.
You will enjoy good health;
that is your form of wealth.

Good examples have twice
the value of good advice.
Words of haste do friendships waste.
Good advice is beyond price.

What wish, what dream, would you like to fulfill?
You can make it come true if only you will.
Let happy thoughts fill your mind.
The treasures you've wanted you'll soon find.

Squared Alphabet, Circular Palindrome

In the last issue, the editor discussed the palindromicity of the Fibonacci bigram series. The squared alphabet, which first appeared in the Aug 1986 Word Ways (page 171), also has an unusual palindromic quality. To generate the squared alphabet, take the alphabetic values of the letters A=1 to Z=26), and square them to get a new set of 26 numbers. Convert those numbers to the alphabetic values they represent. If a number is greater than 26, divide it by 26 and use the remainder as the alphabetic value (for example, J=10, 10 squared = 100, 100 divided by 26 is 3 with remainder 22, 22=V). The result is a palindrome except for the terminal Z: ADIPYJWLVCV-QNMNQQVCLWJYPIDA Z. A little algebra shows why: $(26 - x)^2 = 26^2 - 2(26)x + x^2$ which is equal to $x^2 \pmod{26}$. If the letters are printed in a circle so that the end connects the beginning (DAZ continues with ADI), the squared alphabet is palindromic starting at either M or Z. To visualize this, imagine a circle of 26 lights, each having one letter of the squared alphabet on it. The lights flash on and off, starting with M, and going one letter at a time in both directions (LN, KO, JP, etc.). They reach Z at the same time and merge into a single light again. Then the lights go their separate ways, flashing at YA, XB, ZC, etc. till reaching M, where they merge into one.

The squared alphabet leads to other alphabets that are circular palindromes. Adding one to each letter on either side of the midpoint produces a similarly palindromic alphabet: BEJQZKXMD-WRONORWDMXKZQJEB A. Multiplying each letter by two produces an alphabet composed to two palindromic segments: BHRFXTTXFRHB Z BHRFXTTXFRHB Z. Adding 1 to the first letter, 2 to the second, and so on, the resulting alphabet is again composed of two palindromic segments: BFLTDPDTLFB Z Z BFLTDPDTLFB Z Z. Or, adding 26 to the first letter, 25 to the second, and so on, one obtains ACGMUEQEUMGCA ACGMUEQEUMGCA.

Squaring the squared alphabet gives the fourth power alphabet APCVAVINIPCNMNCPINIVA-VCPA Z (eight different letters), and squaring the fourth power alphabet gives the eighth power alphabet AVIPAPCNCVINMNIVCNCNCPAPIVA Z (six different letters). Squaring the eighth power alphabet gives the fourth power alphabet again, and thus they loop forever.

Adding the square alphabet to the fourth power alphabet results in a new palindromic alphabet. Adding any combination of squared, fourth power and eighth power alphabets any number of times results in a circular palindrome, but not necessarily a new one. In fact, adding and/or multiplying the corresponding letters of two or more palindromic alphabets, even those not derived from the squared alphabet, results in a palindromic alphabet.

Calling Dr. Ologist!

William Brandt writes "In looking through an earlier copy of *Word Ways* (Aug 1998), I came across a listing of 'Doctors and Nurses' by Larry Cowen in the Kickshaws section that listed medical staff personnel such as Angie O'Plasty, Ann T. Biotic, Jerry Atricks and Sir E. Brill Cortex. After looking at my list of medical consultants, I would like to submit to Kickshaws the following people to be added to the list: psychologists Donna U. Worrie and Less Moody, proctologists Ben Dover and Seymour Butts, emergency ward technician Sue Cher, microsurgeon Lance Boyle, plastic surgeon Luke Younger, infectious disease consultant Penny Sillen, and X-ray technician Ray D. Ologist.

"To complement the list of names on the medical staff, there should also be a list of names for their patients. For that list I would like to submit to Kickshaws the following people: Arthur Ritus, Denise Hurt, Rick Etts, Brian Tumor, Di A. Beetes, Anne Jina, Dee Hydration, Ray Bees, Di A. Rea, Ginger Vitus, Hal A. Tosis, Dick Lexic and Sy Chotic.

"As long as we are talking about names, I would like to submit the names of the members of my skydiving club: Ida Wanna, Irma Scaredto, Dewey Hafta, Kenny Maekit, Izzy Coming, Kenny Doit, Woody Doit, Terry Fied, Hugo First, Noah Kandew, Willy Makeit, Gladys Overwith and O. Howard Hertz."

Roamin' Roman

Stuart Kidd sends an anecdote showing that Roman numerals are alive and well in the modern world: "A patient came to see me recently asking for the 5,10,20 tablet. '5,10,20?' I asked. Then he drew on a piece of paper: 'Yeah, you know—V 10 XX (an arthritis medication)!"

Romantic Squares

A Romantic number is an Arabic number that has a well-formed Roman numeral embedded in its name. For instance NINETY-NINE has II in it. In the entire number-naming system, there are only 1,411 Romantic numbers, from FIVE (IV=4) to FORTY FOUR THOUSAND NINETY-NINE (DII= 502). Out of these, only six square numbers are also Romantic numbers: NINE, SIXTEEN, TWENTY-FIVE, FORTY-NINE, SIXTY-FOUR, EIGHTY-ONE. The Arabic numbers add up to 244, which is the sum of the two squares 100 and 144. The Roman numerals embedded in the six square Romantic numbers are also squares (1,9,4,1,9,1) and they add up to a square (25).

Straddle Word Games

Susan Thorpe describes two word games of her creation: "The first game looks for phrases, lists, book titles, etc. of three or more words in which one or more letters at the end of a word can be joined with one or more letters at the beginning of the following word to make a straddle word. Although a whole word may be included inside the bits from its two neighbours (as OF in SOFT, below), *all* the words of the phrase must be involved. In THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK,

the words made are THESE, END, SOFT and EWE, respectively. Furthermore, each extracted word must be separated from the next extracted word by at least one letter. The word END replaced by VEND would not be admitted because THESEVEND is not a word.

“The second game is a more complex variation of the same theme. It aims to eliminate *all* the letters of a phrase, etc. by progressively extracting straddle words. Unlike the first game, it is not essential to involve all the words each time. For example, start by writing the number names one to ten in a line: ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE SIX SEVEN EIGHT NINE TEN. So far, we have eliminated the words NET, REEF, IVES (as in St. Ives in Cornwall), NEIGH and a second NET. Now write down the remaining letters and repeat the procedure: O WO TH OUR F IX SEVE T NI EN. This eliminates THOU, FIX, VET and NIE. Carry on: O WO R SE N and O N! It is perfectly OK to ignore a potential word (I ignored O W) if, by doing so, it enables a successful conclusion to the exercise as in this case in which *all* the letters have been used to make words.

“Here are three more examples in which all letters have been used: ORANGES AND LEMONS (sand) ORANGE LEMONS (gel) ORAN EMONS (Nemo) ORA NS (ran) O S; THE NAKED AND THE DEAD (then, da, ed) AKE ND TH EAD (ken, the) A D D; THE MAID OF ORLEANS (them, for) AID O LEANS (dole) AI ANS (Ian) A S.”

Extracting Palindromic Sets

I suggested to Susan the idea of removing palindromic sets of letters from a word until all the letters are gone. The letters forming a set remain the order in which they occur in the word. Sometimes there are two or more ways to reach the zero letter point. For instance, DEEPENED can be reduced to zero by removing DPD ENE EE or DENED EPE. It seems that longer words have a greater chance of reaching the zero letter point than shorter words do. For instance, the word ANTIDISESTABLISHMENTARIANISM reduces to zero in several ways, including ANA NTN IDI SIS EE SHS TLT ABA MRM II. Susan provided a few examples: MILLENNIUM to MUM IEI LL NN, INCONVENIENCE to IVI NON CEC ENNE, CONSCIENCES TO COC NIN SECES, SEVENTEENS to SEES EVE NTN. She notes “2 of these 3 sets [in SEVENTEENS] are well-known words which suggest that it might be possible for *all* the extracted sets to be well-known words in their own right—I have not investigated this.” She points out that all pair isograms do it, as HORSESHOER to HH OO RR SS EE), and near pair isograms, as SENESCENCE to SS EEEE NN CC.

Author! Author?

Here are some more book titles we’d like to see, as Mad Magazine would put it. In some cases I hybridized the names of existing authors to fit the new books.

Mary Wollstonecraft Stengel, *Frankenstein Versus the New York Yankees*

Stephen King, *The Biography of Ellery Queen*

T.S. Gaines, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Neuman*

Herman Escher, *Moebius Dick*

Dr. Rin Tin Tin (Veterinarian to the Stars), *“Lassie, We Hardly Knew Ye”: The Scandalous Hollywood Transgenderization of a Legendary Canine Icon*

Florida Orange Growers Association, *In Defense of O.J.*

Allen Ginsberg, *Beauty and the Beats*

Ernest Hummingbird, *The Sun Leaps, Twirls, Falls, Jumps, Trips, Plunges, Bounces, Flies, Glides, Soars, Flips, Dips, and Also Rises*

Running From the Devil

Monte Zerger found some unusual numerical wordplay out on Highway 666. As he tells it, "Perhaps you saw in the media that Highway US 666 has been renamed US 491. The highway runs from Gallup NM to Monticello UT, also passing through a portion of Colorado. The change was officially made on July 30. An AP release states 'Transportation leaders from the three Western states all applied for the change to US 491 because of what some saw as the old number's satanic connotation. Leaders of the Navajo Nation also had sought the change'.

"In the Bible, Jesus tells Peter that he should forgive his brother's sins 490 times. Does this mean that the 491st sin is unforgivable, and the devil wins? This was the basis of Swedish filmmaker Vilgot Sjoman's 1965 film entitled simply '491'. The film encountered a myriad of censorship problems. Sjoman, who also filmed 'I Am Curious—Yellow', had to appeal to the Swedish parliament to allow it to be shown (even after several judicious cuts). It did not fare as well in the United States where it was banned.

"Replacing the digits in 491 with their alphabetic counterparts, we have the acronym DIA. As a Coloradoan I immediately associated this with Denver International Airport. Too bad US 491 doesn't run through Denver.

"Allow each of the letters D, I and A to mate with their symmetric opposites in the alphabet, and we have D-W, I-R and A-Z. These six letters can be rearranged to form WIZARD. Is the devil still at work along the highway, or is it now the magic of the wizard?

"The highway is 194 miles long. This number is the reverse of 491, suggesting to me that the devil hasn't given up easily.

"Or am I the devil? Assigning the numbers 1 through 26 sequentially to the letters of the English alphabet, the value of my full name, MONTE JAMES ZERGER, becomes 194."

Name Games by Ames

Jay Ames twists common names around to find new imagined meanings in them...

AGGIE stone face (marble-eyed)	BARBIE Aussie outdoor cooking
CHUCK bar or dance-h all bouncer	an ever-lovin' never-leavin' love-in livin' doll
ELMER glue maker	HARLEY pig rider
IKE likeable	IZZIE a doubtful dude
JAKE he's OK	LIONEL sells model trains
LUKE tepid sort of guy	MATT submissive (a real door mat)
MIKE radio announcer	NEAL knee bender
NOEL Christmas caroler	OTTO eighth one in turn
PENNY dirt poor but proud	PADDY easily-riled Irish lad
REX a home wrecker (rex all he touches)	SALLY sally forth regardless

Return of the Son of Applesauce

Louis Phillips sent the following installment of quick, bumper-stickerlike hits of wordplay wit and quips of letterplay wonder:

A DOCTOR SO LAZY
HE CAN COMPOSE
ONLY 2/17 OF A HAIKU

Say ah!

BUGS BUNNY MEETS THE AUTHOR OF RABBIT RUN

John Updike?

What's up, doc?

CRAM MAX EXAM MARC

AAADHHLPRYZ = haphazardly organized

Shall we assign George Patton general topics?

ART A MUST SUMATRA

I sd to Camus: "Al, how are you doin', pal?"

He sd: "Lou, I'm Mr. Camus to you."

What is the favorite vegetable of snakes?

ASParagus

StigMATA HARI—a woman who spied on flesh wounds

WHY I DID NOT GO TO THE BATHROOM

The sign said men, & so,

Being just one man

I did not go.

If there is an infinite number of prime numbers is there an infinite number of prime ribs?

CA—short cake

ST—short story

WH—somewhat

GNIOG—going in the wrong direction

SWEAT—not breaking into a sweat

SW EAT—breaking into a sweat

How terrible it is to be one half of a couplet

What is the difference between a listener caught up in a tale of suspense, a wedding gift, and lyrics by Ice-T?

One is rapt, the other wrapped, and the last is rapped

Word-Provoking Thoughts

Anil sends the following words with commentaries on meanings behind the meanings:

LONER take away everyone left and right and only one remains.

FESTER a person at a fest.

BEAR a beast of burden?

ALDRIN a deadly insecticide taken by bored farm boys to produce an “aldrin buzz”?
 BIGRAM another “truthful” or self-defining word, being itself a bigram—of a higher order,
 a two-word phrase. Higher truth still, it’s two ‘grams, big ram and bi gram.

Pyramidal Sentences

“A pyramidal sentence,” according to Anil, “is a coherently meaningful word pyramid. I’ve been looking for them for years but have found very few. There are three in the Appendix of *up/dn* (Word Ways Monograph 5), my favourite being ‘Enemy Mine Amo’: *I in fin find fiend friend*. Like the best pyramids, this one involves no rearrangement as new letters are added. I’ve got a few more in waiting or under repair but here’s one I thought cute enough to jump the queue. And it’s reversible:

Likker liker like lie—ie, I (I, ie, lie, like liker, likker)

Here’s a slicker longer version with better spelling but rude:

So lick ‘er slicker licker liker like lie (ie, I??)

I just noticed—after thirty years of sitting on the “friend” example—that it too is reversible, turning into an invitation to beggars when *fin* changes from meaning “the end” into meaning “five dollars”: *Friend, fiend, find fin in I*.

A Vowel Cascade

“Relevant to the penultimate pyramid above,” Anil notes, “here’s a vowel cascade that arose from a sick elf anagram of **fickles** (n.) **s*ck file**. When I asked what the * stood for I realized there were four apt answers, the fickle **SACK, SICK, SOCK** or **SUCK file**, reflecting the four standard reactions to fickleness, respectively: 1) drop hir, 2) avoid hir (play sick or declare hir sick), 3) attack hir, and 4) suck it all in and keep *ucking [up to] hir (‘hir’ is him or her). In the plural this makes a complete vowel cascade of the phonetic sort, resembling one in ‘Vowel Cascades, Vowel Movements and Di-Odes’ in the Feb 2002 issue: **Sacks sex, sick, socks sucks**. (The fickle one discards both sex and sucking up to sickos.) It also works in the singular with sex picking up the s sound from sick: **Sack seck-sick, sock suck**. Here’s another phonetic vowel cascade, which combines the best of grammar with the worst of taste: **Fax ‘fex fix fox fux** [faxing that apology or inducement saved hir sex life (‘fex = effects (n.))].”

Harc! Harc! A Hydrogen Arc!

Anil recalls an enjoyable game from the Feb 1971 *Word Ways*, revisited by Susan Thorpe in “The Elemental Game” in May 1995. In this game an element’s name can replace its abbreviation in a word to create another word. There aren’t too many of these: FEy to IRONy, Sated to SULFURated, AGed to SILVERed, CUed to COPPERed, baSIs to baSILICONS, jAR to jARGON. “Here’s a belated response to Kickshavian David Silverman’s call for more examples: Cation to CARBONation, Nous to NITROGENous, Bic (pen) to BORONic, Nation to NITROGENation.”

Pot80, Pot80 Pot80, Pot80 Pot80 Pot80, 4...

“Not so long ago [Aug 1994 *Kickshaws*], in a galaxy far from Andromeda,” writes Anil, “Peter Newby presented a fun style of rebus: POTOOOOOOOO translates as potatoes (POT, 8 O’s), which I’ve debased into the above, half a child’s counting rhyme. (I discarded the other half of

the child.) Here's some more rebuses in that general style. Knowing the trick should make these fairly easy."

1. TOOMB 2. clock watch 3. 0009 4. tttt ttt 5. 10 dalmatians 6. eeeee eeeee 7. 1930-39, 1940-49, etc. 8. SSSSS SSSSSE 9. escort escort escort escort escort escort escort escort escort 10. come and come and come and come and come and come and come and come and come and come and come and come and 11. 3:50 12. Aunt Four, Uncle Four, Cousin Four 13. LADIES, GENTS, crash at 11:30 PM

Truthful Number

Anil writes "Speaking of truthful, here's a number (if you'll be so kind to call it that) that matches four for truthfulness: nineteen and two halves."

News From New Bybwen

Peter Newby sends the latest news via the great transatlantic cable: "Roy Amey, ye mayor of New Bybwen, had invited the distinguished author of *Backward Planet*, David Morice, to select the current year's meaning of the word ALP for the town's ancient 'planet palindrome'".

"Obviously," said the first citizen, "we can discount its meaning as a mountain as they are notoriously difficult to drag..."

"Drag, sir?" quoth the literary giant.

"The meaning of the verb 'ten', ye nup!"

"Nup, sir?"

"A fool or simpleton! Now, Mr Morice, for this year does 'alp' mean a sleep demon, a bullfinch or an elephant in this, our oldest construction?"

"NUPS TEN ALP," SAID DI AS PLANET SPUN

Calling All Ucalegons

Jeremy Morse writes "Your Ucalegon piece [in the August Kickshaws] woke great poetic memories. In Homer's *Iliad* he is a wise Trojan counselor, too old to fight: odd perhaps that his name in Greek literally meant 'not caring' (there is one 'H. Careless' in the London phonebook). In the *Aeneid* Virgil makes him neighbour to Aeneas' family ('already neighbour Ucalegon is burning'). Finally in Juvenal's third Satire, when he is describing the fire danger in Rome, Ucalegon is the rich owner, crying 'Fire' and getting his belongings moved out, while the last to burn will be his poor lodger in his garret under the tiles, where the gentle doves lay their eggs ('Ultimus ardebit quem tegula sola tuetur / a fluvia, molles ubi reddunt ova columbae'). So not so much a hoax as an inspiration!

Long Imaginary Town Names

In the May Kickshaws, I listed WINCHESTERTONFIELDVILLE Iowa (from the Adam Sandler movie "Deeds") as the longest fictitious town name that I know of. Jim Puder writes "The perfect reference to consult on that question is Manguel and Guadalupi's *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places*, a charming book which has been around since 1980 and which was recently released in a new edition (Harcourt, 2000). From early 18th century French fiction the dictionary dredges up SCARICROTARIPARAGORGULEO, the capital city of the island of Letalispons in Abbe Pierre Francois Guyot Desfontaines' 1730 novel *Le Nouveau Gulliver*, a work testifying to the

popularity of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* for years after the latter's publication in England. The inhabitants of Letalispons were notable for their palindromic lives: they all lived to about 120, but from the age of 60 on they would grow increasingly youthful. Their motto was 'Ars brevis, vita longa'.

The longest one-word, solidly-written fictional town name perpetrated by a well-known writer might be VONDERVOTTEIMMITTIS, the name Edgar Allan Poe gave to an imaginary Dutch village in his short story "The Devil in the Belfry."

The Poet's Corner

Can you discover why Ed Wolpow sent Word Ways the following poem?

ADIRONDACK SHINGLES

Among old and crafty mountain men,
 Far gone in their heart-held dreaming,
 Nearest neighbor one mile down a rock road,
 Busy poking old and peeling car bonnets,
 An owl hoots past a tin ear.
 The sunny period in every week
 Is time for one—one hoarse chuckle.
 It's not the place for foxy generals
 Nor a spiffy consul, furtive, medalled.
 No young and flaxen onlookers
 With peach fuzz included.
 Extant alumni of a meaner university
 Plead for simple knots and bolts.
 Home to fossil icons of steep hills,
 And not fossil verses which gleam
 With glib phrases that parse nicely,
A rogue element in every line.

A Good Kickshaw to Read

Usually advertising slogans rely on hyperbole, but not always. When a slogan attempts to achieve average normalcy, it has a down-to-earth ring of truth to it. I've eaten lunch at a restaurant called Lou Henry, which soberly identifies itself as "A good place to eat." It is exactly that. It isn't great, it isn't poor. It is rock-solid good, and I wanted to eat at a place that was just good. I've looked at cars at Cross-Roads Car Co., which claims with some self-effacement and perhaps a hint of ennui to be "A nice place to buy a good car." How true! I've been to nicer places and to not-as-nice places, and on the niceness scale, this falls in the middle. And the cars in the lot did look good, nothing to write home about but definitely good for a trip to Lou Henry for something good to eat. Note the pleasant absence of exclamation points in both slogans. Just honest, God-fearing periods, plain and simple. Those two slogans, for all their modesty, fit into a good kickshaw, not a damn good kickshaw, not a helluva good kickshaw, but certainly a good kickshaw to read.