

KICKSHAWS

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Kickshaws is currently being assembled by a series of guest editors. All contributions should be sent to the editor in Morristown, New Jersey.

Months of the Year

In the November 1977 Word Ways, there appeared an article of mine called "Elementary, My Dear Reader". Basically, the aim of the article was to take the names of the chemical elements and either transpose them or add as few letters as possible to them to effect a transposition. For example, ARGON transposes to GROAN; CALCIUM isn't transposable, but if a B is added, the word CALUMBIC can be formed; FERMIUM isn't transposable, either, and three letters have to be added to create the word FLUMMERIES. I went through the names of all the chemical elements, presenting my various findings. In the February 1978 Word Ways, Jeremy Morse and Edward Wolpow managed to find numerous improvements on my original list of words; my thanks to both of them.

Here, I'd like to try a similar exercise, but on a smaller scale. Using the names of the months of the year instead of the names of the elements reduces the problem to just over a tenth of its original size -- a manageable group of words to consider in Kickshaws. Some of the month names have transpositions, but others need one or more letters added before a genuine transposition can be achieved.

Webster's Third allows the plurals of all the month names (such as NOVEMBERS and DECEMBERS), but I have ignored 'trivial' solutions such as these, preferring well-mixed transpositions. My various transposals (indicated by asterisks) and other words are given below, along with relevant comments.

- JANUARY the shortest solid word that I could find here was the twelve-letter JURAMENTALLY; however, if a two-word dictionary word is allowed, JAUNTY CAR can be found in Webster's Third
- FEBRUARY the editor suggested the eleven-letter IRREFUTABLY which will be difficult to improve on
- MARCH a simple transposition is given by CHARM*
- APRIL two straightforward transpositions are PILAR* and PRIAL*
- MAY one can find AMY*, MYA* and YAM* in Webster's Third
- JUNE JUNED is the past tense of the verb JUNE, to drive briskly; while the verb and the month name are probably unrelated, it can

be argued that JUNED is a trivial solution. As an alternative, I offer FUNJE, found in Webster's Second. Six-letter words are quite common: JUNDIE, JUNEAU, JUNGLE, JUNKER, JUNKET and JUNKIE.

JULY three six-letter words -- JUMBLY, JUNGLY, and JUSTLY -- can be found in Webster's Third. A five-letter solution is JUYLL, an obsolete spelling of JULY found in the Oxford English Dictionary. Or does the fact that they are closely related disqualify this solution? Is there an uncontroversial five-letter solution?

AUGUST Webster's Third contains AUGUSTA, AUGUSTE and AUGUSTI, all of which seem somewhat trivial; GUATUSO, in Webster's Second, is a much better choice.

SEPTEMBER the shortest word found thus far is the sixteen-letter Websterian word MISINTERPRETABLE; surely this can be shortened. I half-expected to find the word BETEMPERS* tucked away in Webster's Second, along with items like BETHUNDER, BETIMBER and BETIPPLE.

OCTOBER no problems here: Webster's Third contains the transaddition BEDOCTOR.

NOVEMBER no problem again: Webster's Third contains OVERNUMBER.

DECEMBER my best offering is the doubly-hyphenated and accented word BÉCHE-DE-MER from Webster's Third.

I think that you will agree that there is plenty of scope for improvements to this list, which is why I'm offering it to you. There would be little point in offering you a set of perfect solutions where all you had to do was gape in amazement. I hope that you will feel sufficiently challenged to better my offerings.

Better still, you might like to tackle the same problem using the names of months from other calendars. Webster's Third gives the names of the months in the Jewish, Muhammadan and Hindu calendars at the main entry MONTH. Webster's Second gives the names of the months in the French Revolutionary calendar at the main entry REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR. What virtuoso feats can be performed with the names of all these other months?

Daffy Definitions

In the November 1981 Word Ways I reviewed The Second Barnhart Dictionary of New English, a collection of neologisms. I was thumbing through this volume recently, looking for ideas for Kickshaws, when I was struck by one particular term and its two definitions. I feel that the term is of sufficient interest to offer to Word Ways readers:

SPEAR CARRIER (1) a person of secondary or minor importance; an underling (2) the most active and important leader of a movement, party, or the like; a standard bearer

Examples of both uses are given in the Barnhart Dictionary; the first quotation comes from National Review and the second from Harper's.

His closest lieutenants, not to mention assorted spear carriers, have gone to jail or about to stand trial for the same set of offenses of which Nixon is accused.

No one went so far as to say that Agnew, the spear carrier of the fall campaign, was as good as dumped with Connally coming on board, but the sly winks and smiles suggested it.

As far as I can determine, no other dictionary lists SPEAR CARRIER. The nearest that any dictionary comes is the Oxford English Dictionary, which contains items such as SPEAR-BEARER and SPEAR-HURLER. I had hoped to find a straightforward definition (such as 'one who carries a spear') in the Oxford.

Words such as these have been discussed in Word Ways several times before: by Dave Silverman in the August 1969 Kickshaws, by Tom Pulliam in "Merry Am Webster!" in February 1976, and by Richard Lederer in "Curious Contronyms" in February 1978. At least two terms for this kind of word have been proposed: 'autonym' by Joseph Shipley, and 'contronym' by Jack Herring.

American Counties

Since its first issue in February 1968, Word Ways has published a wealth of material concerned with United States statenames and the names of cities, towns and villages. What seems to have been ignored completely is any sort of logological study of the names of the counties that make up the various states.

There are approximately 3000 counties in the United States, many bearing the same names. What interesting logological properties do these names possess? Is it possible to select one county name from each state and attribute an interesting logological property to it? For example, SEVIER County in Arkansas transposes to REVISE; INYO County in California transposes to YONI; Idaho possesses a palindromic county, ADA; and Illinois has two counties that form adjacent steps in a word stair, MACON and MASON.

Is there some enterprising individual who will set the ball rolling? I don't expect a definitive logological study of US county names, but some kind of initial foray into the area might yield up some surprises. Let's see some results!

What's the Connection?

Consider the following five word-pairs: COATI/CANOEIST, SHAPER/SAMPHIRE, CRUMPETS/CARPETS, THISES/SHEETS, and NIXED / INCISED. In all of the five pairs, there is the same relation between the first and second words. What is it?

All answers to Kickshaws quizzes will be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

American Speech

American Speech (or, to give it its full name, American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage) is published four times a year by the University of Alabama Press for the American Dialect Society. The journal is concerned principally with the English language in the Western Hemisphere. The journal publishes articles dealing with current usage, dialectology, and the history and structure of English. The Winter 1981 issue completed the 56th volume of the journal, so you will see that it goes back quite a few years. The journal was extensively quoted in Mencken's The American Language and its two supplements; just open any page of Mencken's books and you will find copious reference to American Speech in the footnotes.

I am rather surprised that so little mention of this journal has been made in Word Ways. Perhaps most readers are unaware of its existence. If so, that's a great pity, for there is a great deal of interesting material in American Speech. I have only been subscribing to the journal for the last year or so, but have found it most rewarding to read. Titles of articles which appeared during 1981 include Jewish English in the United States, The Vocabulary of Time Magazine Revisited, Computer Terminology: Words for New Meanings, Japanese Borrowings in English; Adapting CB Lingo to Canadian French, and OK - Is It African?

Each edition contains various reviews as well as a regular section entitled Among the New Words. This section deals with a different group of neologisms in each edition. Only a small subset of the words covered actually go on to find their way into hardback collections of neologisms (such as the Barnhart dictionaries and 6000 Words). For example, the Winter 1981 edition looks at various neologisms formed by the morpheme -GATE, deriving from Watergate. As a combining form, -GATE has been listed in the World Book Dictionary since 1979. Among others, American Speech lists AFTERGATE, BILLYGATE, DIAMONDGATE, FOODGATE, H₂OGATE, NASAGATE, PAJAMAGATE, PANAGATE, PULITZERGATE, and even TEAPOT DOMEGATE! Also mentioned is GATEGATE. All of the neologisms recorded are accompanied by extensive citations. Even if you decide not to subscribe to American Speech (and it's only fifteen dollars per year), you really ought to try and find it at your local library.

A final plea: if any reader has old copies of American Speech that he wishes to dispose of, please contact me through the editor of Word Ways.

Fff

In the August 1981 Word Ways, Jeff Grant's article "Consecutive Identical Letters" appeared. He offered various words which contained each letter of the alphabet three or more times consecutively. As examples of words containing three consecutive F's, Jeff listed PFFF, PFFFT and PHFFFT, all taken from The American Thesaurus of Slang, as well as FIRESTUFFFOSTERED, lifted from Finnegans Wake. (I do

wish that editors and typesetters would learn that there is no apostrophe in 'Finnegans'.)

I recently came across a 3-F word that should perhaps be added to those above. The Fall 1981 issue of *American Speech* contained an article by Barbara Hunt Lazerson, an occasional contributor to *Word Ways*, entitled "More Fest-ivities". The article presented numerous neologisms formed using the morpheme '-fest', such as FOODFEST, JAZZFEST and PORKFEST. As Barbara points out in her article, four of the fest-words have gained sufficient currency that they are in Webster's Third: GABFEST, FUNFEST, SLUGFEST and SONGFEST. One of the fest-words offered in her article was PONTIFFFEST (or, more precisely, PontiffFest). This was used to refer to various observances of Pope John Paul II's visit to Chicago in 1979. The term itself appeared in print on September 9, 1979, in the *Chicago Tribune*.

Updating Borgmann

In the Introduction to *Language on Vacation* (Scribner's, 1965), Dmitri Borgmann discussed three words: EX-WIFE, UNCASHED and DUTY-BOUND. Dmitri wrote that these three words had never appeared in any dictionary, but that did not in any way detract from their realness or usefulness. Those words of Dmitri were published in 1965, and therefore probably written in 1964 or 1965.

I'd like to examine each of those three words, and make various comments on their availability in dictionaries at that time.

Firstly, EX-WIFE. EX-WIFE appears in Wentworth and Flexner's *Dictionary of American Slang*, a source that would have been available to Dmitri in 1964-65. Though EX-WIFE is not a main entry, it is used to define the term EX. One of the definitions of the word EX is given as 'an ex-wife or an ex-husband'. Since Dmitri's book was published, EX-WIFE has appeared in at least two other dictionaries. In 1966, the *Random House Dictionary* listed EX-WIFE under the main entry EX-. In 1972, the *A-G Supplement of the Oxford English Dictionary* listed EX-WIFE under the main entry EX-. The dictionary also gave illustrative quotations from 1876 and 1962. I think that EX-WIFE can now be considered a dictionary word.

Secondly, UNCASHED. UNCASHED appears as a main entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a source that was certainly available to Dmitri in 1964-65. Dmitri referred to 'an uncashed alimony check'; the 1896 illustrative quotation in the *Oxford* refers to 'two or three uncashed checks.' UNCASHED also appeared without definition in the 1966 *Random House Dictionary*.

Thirdly, DUTY-BOUND. Dmitri was probably right about this one; it wasn't given in any dictionary around 1964-65 (unless some *Word Ways* reader can prove both Dmitri and me wrong!). The word has since appeared, though, in the *A-G Supplement of the Oxford English Dictionary*. It appears under the main entry DUTY, with quotations from 1908 and 1957.

A Pair of Palindromes

I recently came across two palindromes neither of which I recall seeing before. They both seemed new to me; I don't recall seeing them before in Word Ways, though I may be wrong. Just in case neither has seen the light of day before -- in a logological work, at least -- I shall offer them here.

The words are DEVIVED and DEVOVED. DEVIVED is the past tense of the verb DEVIVE, a nonce word meaning 'to render lifeless'. DEVIVE appears in the big Oxford, a few pages before DEVOVED. This is a participial adjective, meaning 'devoted'. DEVOVE also appears in Webster's Second as a verb, so DEVOVED is okay by that dictionary too.

How many more palindromes and the like are nestling in the pages of the Oxford English Dictionary just waiting to be discovered?

A Websterian Oddity

In the Kickshaw entitled "Months of the Year", I mentioned that Webster's Third allows the plurals of the month names to be formed. It indicates a plural form for all of the months. For JANUARY and FEBRUARY, it spells out the plural forms in full: JANUARYS and FEBRUARYS. This is to make it obvious that the Y is retained before the S, and that the -IES ending is inapplicable. However, JULY is a slightly different matter. The plural is not spelled out in full; the dictionary merely indicates that the plural is formed by the addition of -S. Thus, the plural would seem to be JULYS. This makes sense, because JULIES is more likely to be read as the plural of the female given name JULIE. What I can't understand, though, is why JULYS is not spelled out in boldface type in exactly the same way as JANUARYS and FEBRUARYS. Any thoughts or comments?

More Oddities and Curiosities

A volume well-known to readers of Word Ways is Oddities and Curiosities of Words and Literature by Charles Carroll Bombaugh, edited and annotated by Martin Gardner. On page 54, Bombaugh refers to the five mutual transposals VEIL, VILE, LEVI, LIVE and EVIL. On page 339, Gardner incorporates these five words and a sixth one, IVEL, into verse form.

I wondered how many transposals could be found if an S were added to the same group of letters. I was intrigued by the fact that ELVIS would be one such transposal; ELVIS Presley is a name well-known to millions over the last 25-30 years, and ELVIS Costello is currently a big British name in US country music.

So, just how many transposals are there of the letters EILSV? There are 120 different ways in which those five letters can be arranged, and I have found that 10 per cent of them -- a dozen -- are genuine words. Let's look at them:

- ELVIS a masculine given name, as in Elvis Presley and Elvis Costello; this is listed in the Random House Dictionary. ELVIS is also a Scottish plural of ELF, in the Oxford English Dictionary
- EVILS a common word
- IVELS this is the plural of IVEL, an obsolete spelling of EVIL that appears in the Oxford English Dictionary. IVELS itself actually appears in a quotation dated 1300 (on page 349).
- LEIVS the -S form of the verb LEIV, an obsolete spelling of LEAVE taken from the Oxford English Dictionary
- LEVI'S this appears in Webster's Third as the trademarked name of blue denim jeans. LEVIS is the name of a town opposite Quebec City on the St. Lawrence River
- LIVES a common word
- SEVIL a 17th-18th century spelling of SEVILLE, a city and province of Andalusia, taken from the Oxford
- SLIVE a verb from Webster's Third having two meanings: to slice off, and to move furtively
- VEILS a common word
- VILES this can be either the plural of the noun VILE, one who is vile, or the -S form of the verb VILE, to vilify; both are in Webster's Second
- VLEIS the plural of VLEI, a temporary lake, in Webster's Third
- VLIES the plural of VLY, a temporary lake, in Webster's Third. This dictionary merely indicates the plural forms of VLEI, VLAIE and VLY as taking an S. This seems to imply that the plural of VLY is VLYS, though the case for VLIES could be argued. However, this problem disappears when the Oxford is checked; it gives VLIE as a variant form of the nouns FLEA, FLY and VLEI.

These are the only genuine transposals of EILSV that I could find, though I've combed numerous dictionaries and gazetteers for items such as ILVES, SILVE, SIVEL, SIVLE, VESIL, VISEL and VISLE. Can anyone confirm any of these? Or any of the other 101 variations?

A Two-Move Scrabble Poser

According to the hardcover edition of The Complete Book of Scrabble by Gyles Brandreth (published by Robert Hale, London, 1980), the highest theoretical score that can be achieved on the first two moves of a game of Scrabble is 314 points. The first player puts down HYDROXY for 102 points, with the second Y on the centre square. The second player turns the first word into HYDROXYBENZOIC, scoring 212 points. The two scores added together come to 314 points.

According to the paperback edition of this book (published by Sphere, London, 1981), the highest score is 348 points. The first player puts down QUIZZER for 118 points, with the Q on the centre square and the first Z represented by a blank. The second player plays HYDROXY perpendicular to QUIZZER, making QUIZZERY. (The first Y of HYDROXY and the Y of QUIZZERY are the same tile.) This scores 230

points. The two scores added together come to 348 points.

The various key words, such as HYDROXYBENZOIC and QUIZZERY, can be found in several dictionaries, though I don't believe that one dictionary lists all the words used in these two solutions.

Obviously, after the hardcover book came out, the author discovered a better solution -- which suggests that even better scores might be awaiting discovery. Can you improve on the score of 348 points for the first two moves? Use words from any single dictionary if you wish to follow Scrabble rules, or more generally use words from a combination of dictionaries.

The one-move Scrabble problem (ZYXOMMA, scoring 130 points, reported in the November 1974 Word Ways) and the two-move Scrabble problem discussed here are special cases of the general problem of finding the highest score attainable in a Scrabble game's first n moves -- a very difficult investigation, as the number of possibilities to be checked rapidly increase. As illustrated above, one cannot expect the best n -move Scrabble score to include any of the best $(n - i)$ -move Scrabble scores; each problem must be solved from the start. Perhaps a computer, primed with the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary vocabulary, could be programmed to look into this problem for small values of n . (Scores based on this dictionary probably won't be quite as good as the ones reported above, for it doesn't contain ZYXOMMA or QUIZZERY.)

Appeals

Can I appeal to readers of Word Ways to help me find certain types of words in print? There are two particular groups of words which I am very interested in at the moment. They are not the sort of words which get listed in dictionaries, so I need references to books or magazine articles in which they have appeared.

The first group of words is odd or strained comparative or superlative forms of adjectives. I am not interested in any comparative or superlative form which is actually given as a main entry in any major dictionary, or is clearly indicated under such a main entry. I am interested instead in the ephemeral. For example, I have on file examples such as LIBERALEST, TRAVELLINGEST, WEEEST ('most wee'), EX-ER ('more ex'), UNCOORDINATEDEST, EPTEST ('least inept') and SAVOURIEST.

The second group of words is plural proper names. Again, I am not interested in anything which can be found in a major dictionary. It is the fleeting examples which I want to get hold of. For example, I have on file examples such as KU KLUX KLANS, CADILLACS, EDDIE COCHRANS, TENNYSONS, ENGLANDS, BRITAINS, CHARLESES, GERMANIES, VAN DYCKS, JAMES BONDS, DRACULAS, VIETNAMs, GRAND CANYONS, RICHARD NIXONS, KING CANUTES, HENRY KISSINGERS and NEW HAVENS. I am especially keen to unearth plurals of place-names, historical or literary characters (from MACBETH to SNOOPY), multiword names, and organizations.

If you can help, please provide the source of the word in each case, plus all supporting information (for example, page number, date, column number, and relevant sentence).

Plea for help over.

Logophile

Logophile, The Cambridge Journal of Words and Language, is a British publication which has received a number of mentions in Word Ways. Though I am listed in the journal as a correspondent, I have very little idea of what has happened to the journal. What I can tell you is that the last edition which I have received is Volume 3, Number 4, which appeared in December 1980. Nothing appeared during 1981, and so far nothing has appeared in 1982. Letters which I have written to various individuals associated with the production of Logophile have gone unanswered, or been returned to me, or have been answered with vague excuses for delays. To reiterate, I have not received a copy of Logophile for the last 16 months. If you have subscribed, let me reassure you that your copies have not got lost in the mails; the journal is in limbo.

In December 1981, the editor reports that he got a letter from Paul Remley, Deputy Editor in the most recent Logophile issue, which said

Strange as it may seem, you may know more about the current status of the magazine than I do. I have had no formal contact with anyone associated with it since May of this year. At that time I delivered the nearly-completed pages of what was to have been Vol. 4, No. 1. Do you have any idea whether this issue appeared? The only contact I have had with Mr. Geelan has been one brief and cryptic transatlantic phone-call. My general feeling is that the magazine suffered for its overambitious layout and 'professional' come-on (not to mention subscription rates). It was in fact no more than a labor of love pasted up in various college rooms on alternate Sundays.

A Ten-Letter Palindrome

According to Leslie Dunkling's excellent First Names First, the United States film star Kim Novak started off life as Marilyn Novak. Marilyn Novak's film studio ran a competition to find her a new name. Suggestions that were made and discarded included Iris Green, Windy City and Kavon Novak. The name finally chosen was, of course, Kim Novak.

The palindromic Kavon Novak, even though it never came into being, is worthy of a place in the logologist's collection of long palindromes.

Shahanshah

Elsewhere in this issue, Robert Cass Keller presents an article on pyramid words -- words which contain one of one letter, two of a second letter, three of a third letter, and so on. The largest dictionary exam-

ples are ten letters long, although Pamela Brang made a nice try for a fifteen-letter one with the coinage RESUPPRESSERESS and Dmitri Borgmann once suggested KNELLLESSNESSES.

One example of a pyramid word not in the Keller article is given as the title of this Kickshaw -- can anyone tell me who, what or where it is?

My Set Piece

Consider the six letters AGINST. 21 of the 26 letters can be added to AGINST such that the seven letters can be rearranged to make a genuine seven-letter word: AGAINST, BASTING, CASTING, DATINGS, TEASING, FASTING, STAGING, HASTING, SKATING, LASTING, MASTING, ANTINGS, AGONIST, PASTING, STARING, STATING, SAUTING, STAVING, WASTING, TAXINGS, and STAYING. The five letters I, J, Q, S and Z do not seem to result in genuine transposals when added to AGINST.

There are several other groups of six letters which can have most of the letters of the alphabet added in turn to create seven-letter words: AEERST, AEINRT, AENRST, AGINRS, EENRST and EGINRS. Is there a six-letter group more prolific than AGINST?

Stating the problem more generally, for different sized groups from two letters to twelve, what set of letters for each group size is most prolific at producing transadditions using each letter of the alphabet separately? The problem has previously been considered in Word Ways, in the May 1972 Kickshaws, using a group size of four: complete sets were assembled there for EERS and ADER (although one might quibble with EZER'S or EURE'S). In my article "Neustria" in the February 1982 Word Ways, I found twenty transadditions for the letters AEINRSTU.

As it is rather tedious checking all the different possibilities, a computer with access to a dictionary might be the best way to tackle this problem. If one is interested in compiling complete or near-complete sets of transadditions, the best way to start may be to examine lists of words containing J, Q, X and Z and discovering common subsets of letters (for example, SEXUAL and SQUEAL both contain AELSU, a set of letters which one would not have selected for examination very quickly).

Astronomy and Astrology

In my first Kickshaw, I offered the shortest words from which the names of the months could be spelled out; in my final Kickshaw, I return to this subject, which I find most fascinating. In particular, I have been toying with the names of the planets in the solar system and the names of the zodiac signs -- what are the shortest words that all of these names can be spelled out from? My two lists, given below with brief comments where relevant, can certainly be improved upon.

ARIES

RAISE

TAURUS	AUTOSAURI
GEMINI	MENINGIC is in Webster's Second
CANCER	CHANCER or CHANCRE
LEO	OLE is in Webster's Third, and OLE in Webster's Second
VIRGO	ROVING
LIBRA	BRAIL
SCORPIO	SCORPION
SAGITTARIUS	DISSATURATING is from the verb 'dissaturate' in Webster's Second
CAPRICORN	ACCORPORATION is in Webster's Second
AQUARIUS	AQUARIUMS
PISCES	SCEPTICS
MERCURY	CURRYCOMBED and the shorter two-word term RUM CHERRY are both in Webster's Third
VENUS	UNVEST
EARTH	HEART
MARS	RAMS
JUPITER	JUNIPERITE is found in the Oxford English Dictionary
SATURN	NATURES
URANUS	URANOUS
NEPTUNE	UNPATENTED
PLUTO	PLOUT

Where I haven't specifically given a source for a word, it can be found in Webster's Third.

Anyone care to tackle the names of stars, or asteroids, or constellations, or all sorts of other things in the same vein?