

TENNESSEE'S SLEEVELESS PEPPERETTE

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Shortly after Howard Bergerson resigned from the editorship of *Word Ways*, he wrote to tell me of his latest logological discovery: PEPPERETTE, a word containing four of one letter, three of a second letter, two of a third letter, and one of a fourth letter. According to the 1969 *Britannica Yearbook*, a pepperette is "a girl who does a dance routine during an intermission at an athletic contest". Although the word fills an obvious gap, it doesn't seem to have caught on; in the intervening 12 years, I have never seen it used, nor does it appear in the 1971 *Addenda of Webster's Third Edition*.

In a subsequent letter, Howard urged me to join forces with other interested researchers, using our logological sluice-boxes to pan more of the precious 1234 material until we had enough for an article with the sprightly title above (watch for one next fall on your Saturday afternoon TV screen). Dave Silverman mentioned the problem in the May 1970 *Kickshaws*, coining the term "pyramid words" for words of this type, but there the matter rested; the task of plodding through Webster's Unabridged counting letters in words was much too formidable.

With the publication of Jack Levine's *A List of Pattern Words of Lengths Ten Through Twelve* in the fall of 1972, the previously formidable task became a trivial one. Here are the words in Levine's list, with definitions and comments added:

ACTAEACEAE	a group of plant genera typified by the baneberry
BEERBIBBER	one who is addicted to beer-drinking (below the line in Web II)
CHACHALACA	the Texan guan, a bird of the order Gallinae
DEADHEADED	treated as a deadhead, i.e., one who is not required to pay for a ticket (Web II lists "deadhead")
DISSEISSEE	a person ousted (usu. wrongfully) from tenancy or possession of land
ENTETEMENT	state or quality of being opinionated (below the line in Web II)
ISOOSMOSIS	equality of diffusion through a semipermeable membrane (in a list of isó- words in Web II, without further definition)
KEENNESSES	states of sharpness (Web II lists "keenness" only)
KINNIKINIC	a mixture of dried leaves (usu. sumac) and bark (usu. dogwood, or silky cornel) smoked by the Indians and pioneers in the Ohio valley

KOTUKUTUKU	the New Zealand native fuchsia
NAGNAGGING	nagging (Web III lists "nagnag" only)
NESHNESSES	states of softness, weakness or fastidiousness (Web II lists "neshness" only)
REDEFERRED	deferred again (Web II lists "deferred" only)
REMEMBERER	one who remembers
REREMEMBER	remember again (below the line in Web II)
RERENDERED	rendered again (Web II lists "render" only, below the line)
RERESERVES	reserves again (Web II lists "reserve" only, below the line)
REREVERSESES	reverses again (Web II lists "reverse" only, below the line)
RESTRESSES	converts an unstressed (weak) monosyllable to a stressed (strong) form (Web II lists "re- stress only)
SANENESSES	states of being mentally sound or rational (Web II lists "saneness" only)
SASSANIANS	members of a dynasty of Persian kings, ruling from 226 to 641 AD (Web II lists "Sassanian" only)
SERENENESS	quality or state of being calm, quiet or composed
SLEEVELESS	lacking sleeves
SUSURRUSES	whispering or rustling sounds (Web II lists "sus- urrus" only)

Several observations about this list can be made. Only one word, SLEEVELESS, appears in the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary, but three more, KINNIKINIC, REMEMBERER and SERENENESS, appear in Webster's 7th Collegiate. Only two words, NESHNESSES and RESTRESSES, have the same underlying pattern, 1234123323. REMEMBERER and REREMEMBER are transposals, as are RERESERVES and REREVERSESES. The word DEADHEADED would have the symmetric pattern 1234123121 if only the fourth and fifth letters could be interchanged. A slight variation of KINNIKINIC (in Web III) is the eleven-letter palindrome, kinnikinnik.

As Howard Bergerson pointed out, the word PEPPERETTE is in some ways the most interesting of the entire set. The first six letters form the word PEPPER, a pyramid word; the first three letters form the word PEP, a pyramid word; and (trivially) the initial letter P is also a pyramid word.