

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.

Summer Madness

The crazy, hazy, lazy days of summer are upon us and the demented logologist's mind turns to thoughts of palindromes. Somehow I've never quite understood the attraction of palindromes. It's true that the creation of a readable palindrome represents a substantial challenge and its successful execution may be viewed as a real tour de force, but rarely are the results edifying. Seldom is great philosophical wisdom imparted. Although it apparently appears in no dictionary, the fifteen-letter Finnish word SAIPPUAKAUPPIAS (a soap-dealer) is, according to native speakers of the language, a grammatically-sanctioned compound word -- can anyone find an example of its use in Finnish literature? Amazingly, it beats the best English-language example by 4 letters. From Louis Phillips of New York we have a palindromic motto for the SPCA: STEP ON NO PETS. But Mitchell Porter of Queensland, Australia has taken up the gauntlet flung down by Dmitri Borgmann in Language on Vacation who lamented that he had never been able to incorporate the Icelandic city REYKJAVIK into a palindrome.

Mitchell writes: "Recently I was involved in an investigation on kivas -- those subterranean social chambers used by the Pueblo Indians in the southwestern United States. The eminent archaeologist and Indian authority Professor Higgins believed that similar structures may have been used by the Cherokees and other tribes of the southeastern states. A research team was assembled, and I was assigned the position of typist to help document the findings.

"We were soon discovering so many kivas that we could no longer name them after members of the team, and so we switched to simple letter designations. After several weeks of exploration we began cataloguing our results. As the professor dictated the names and state locations of our finds, I typed:

KIVA 'A', TN
KIVA 'B', TN

KIVA 'C', NC
KIVA 'D', NC

KIVA 'E', SC
KIVA 'F', SC

KIVA 'G', SC KIVA 'I', KY
 KIVA 'H', KY KIVA 'J', KY

"At this point the professor made one of those common intercalations that so annoy us all -- he paused and said 'er'. Paying only half as much attention as I should have, I typed down the 'er' alongside the last entry: KIVA 'J', KY ER. Noting my mistake, I thought 'Oh, well, it doesn't matter; I'll erase it later'.

"Then I looked harder at what I had written. Eureka! All unwittingly I had just produced the reversal of REYKJAVIK. Prof. Higgins was not amused and I was summarily fired.

"I've just learned that Prof. Smith-french has received a research grant to study the Indians of Iceland. If only I can get myself assigned to his team I can spend those long dark evenings writing archaeological palindromes comparing the two projects. What a prospect!"

Incidentally, Mitchell Porter is ten years old, and undoubtedly Word Ways' youngest contributor. Keep up the good work; we await with eagerness the output of your fertile brain when you reach eleven.

The last word on palindromes may be an article which appeared in the April 1978 issue of the Journal of Computer and System Sciences, authored by Zvi Galil: "Palindrome Recognition in Real Time by a Multitape Turing Machine". I couldn't even begin to guess at what that means, but the article runs to eighteen pages. Perhaps Rudolf Ondrejka of Linwood, New Jersey would find it interesting; recently he sent Word Ways a method for constructing pandigital palindromic square numbers of any size (his smallest one is 102030405060708090807060504030201).

Vacation Time

As you're tooling down the road on the way to your mountain hide-away, give some thought to a question posed by ye editor: how many towns are there whose names followed by their Zip Code state abbreviations form English words? Hypothetical examples like REGAL IA or ROMA NY abound, but real-life ones are harder to come by. A quick trip through the Zip Code directory revealed only JACK AL, THOR IA, ALDA NE and AVA IL. However, if one could transport towns to more suitable states, one finds

BOND AR (not KY)	MAY OR (not ID)
DOLPH IN (not AR)	UNA CT (not SC)
ALAMO DE (not IN)	TEA MS (not SD)
ALMO ND (not ID)	SUN NY (not LA)
ALTA ID (not CA)	BREA KS (not CA)

Can Word Ways readers add more states, or upgrade these to towns in their proper states? If one could only find a town named BRA, it would fit in any of thirteen different states: DE (obs. var. of bread), CA, CT,

ID, IN, IL, KY, MA (var. of Brahma), ME, MS (plural of the masculine proper name Bram), VA, ND and NY. Too bad that California has no town named MAJOR or we could really confuse the post office who wouldn't know whether to send our letter to the West Coast or the Balearic Islands.

A phonetic variant of this game was played over 20 years ago by Dr. Charles J. Reilly of Eustis, Florida, who reported a list of "never seen postmarks" in Linns Weekly Stamp News. As reported in the July 1957 Enigma, he proposed such whimsies as PRAISE ALA, WAIT ALASKA, NOAH'S ARK, HORSE COLO, FARMERINA DEL, INCOME TEX, HITTER MISS, AINTNO MO, SHAPELESS MASS, BEE O, VITA MINN, SQUEE MICH, APPLES IDA, and MONTMOR N.C. In the next issue of the Enigma, Harry Ober of Brookline, Massachusetts added PRONE CONN, OOMPAH PA, PIANO LA and B-MINOR MASS. The best real-life example along these lines is the delightful near miss OLLA LA.

After you've arrived at your mountain cabin, consider the autonym TIMBERED which can mean either "covered with trees" or "stripped of trees following logging operations".

Dictionary Diversions

Some years ago I gave a sample copy of Word Ways to my friendly bank teller who had expressed an interest in seeing it. Several weeks later, she thanked me profusely, but I realized that she was not a potential subscriber when she enthused that she read it every day with Herb Webster in the other hand.

David Rosen of Buffalo, New York discovered in Webster's Third the following etymology and definition of GIFOLA: "(NL, anagram of Filago), syn. of FILAGO". Such an obvious occurrence of wordplay in the pages of Webster would seem quite remarkable. Another example from Webster's Second gives "a garnet" as the definition of GRANATE, a perfect anagram. Perhaps these are isolated occurrences and no others can be found, but if such is not the case, an article on instances of wordplay in Webster's would be fascinating.

Animal Kingdom

In a recent letter Helen Gunn of Hamilton, New York writes: "It occurred to me recently how frequently various members of the animal kingdom make their way into some of our everyday locutions. For instance: it might be one of those days when it's raining cats and dogs, and a group of people wearing turtle-neck sweaters might be sitting around shooting the bull; others may engage in a bit of horse-play, badger one another, parrot someone's words, ape someone's actions, or just kid around, in general having a lark. Among the group may be people who are mousy, kittenish, cocky, pig-headed, a silly goose or a social butterfly.

" People give bear-hugs, wolf down their food, clam up, or chicken (weasel) out of a situation. We can skunk someone at a game of gin rummy, kowtow to someone or toady to them. Take catnaps, too. A private investigator might bug someone's room or hound someone by dogging his footsteps.

" If we are suspicious of a scheme, we may smell a rat and become as mad as a wet hen. Nervousness can cause butterflies in the stomach or ants in the pants which could drive anyone batty or at least cuckoo.

" We can go whole hog for something, proceed at a snail's pace, cry crocodile tears or get a frog in the throat. Eager beavers may be early birds or bird brained."

Helen offers two dozen more adjectives for you to match up with their animal counterparts. Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of the issue.

blind as a	ape	mad as a	lamb
busy as a	bat	nervous as a	loon
changeable as	bear	playful as a	mouse
crazy as a	bee	plump as a	mule
cross as a	bird	proud as a	otter
fleet as a	chameleon	quiet as a	owl
free as a	clam	scared as a	ox
gentle as a	deer	slippery as a	partridge
graceful as a	eel	sly as a	peacock
greedy as a	fox	strong as a	pig
hairy as a	hornet	stubborn as a	rabbit
happy as a	kitten	wise as a	swan

This 'n That

A disc jockey on radio station WNEW (New York) commented on a recently-held competition for the best sentence in the English language. The top pair which were tied for first place: " We can sleep late tomorrow" and " No date has been set for the wedding" .

Leo Rosten, in the book King Silky: " The opposite of 'dismay' is 'next June' ."

Alan Frank of Somerville, Massachusetts asks: " What is the longest word contained intact within a larger, etymologically unrelated word?" He starts with mechANOTHERapy; readers are invited to search for longer examples.

A UP wire-service story datelined Detroit, September 3, 1949: " An engineering study announced today by General Motors Corporation put automobile noises into 7 classifications: squeak, rattle, thump, grind, knock, scrape and hiss" . Modern cars seem to have a wider vocabulary; my car does all of the above and it also pings.

Speaking of autos, Boris Randolph suggests an advertising gimmick for WordWays. Put the letters BE OUR AUTO into the blank spaces in the word square at the right to form six more words reading horizontally and vertically.

W O R D
A
Y
S

And, speaking of word squares, how about this Double Acrostic from John Meyer of Walton, N. Y. ? For those who like the historical background, the double acrostic, which was the forerunner of the cross-word puzzle, first appeared in 1856. Dudeney claims that Queen Victoria invented it. It consists of a list of words of various lengths (the cross-lights), arranged so that the first letter of each word, read vertically, forms another word, as do the last letters (the uprights). Readers are encouraged to solve the following double acrostic found on a Team cereal box:

Uprights: The ONE, a bird of ebon shade,
Builds tree-top TWO in forest glade.
Cross-lights: One clue for all four words I plan;
Some common grains consumed by man.

Give up? See Answers and Solutions at the end of the issue.

And finally, Timothy J. Wheeler of Shelbyville, Indiana asks what the following words have in common: Acapulco Light, Gorilla, Honda, Baby Teeth, Hairpin, True Cross Fire, Upright Neon, Beads, Fat Face, and Blippo?

Macaroni Salad

One variety of wordplay which has always intrigued me is macaronic verse -- the writing of poetry in which every line is cribbed from a different source. When well done it sounds no worse than much romantic poetry and certainly a lot better than modern verse. The following example was sent by Helen VanUmmersen of Kailua, Hawaii. Written in rhyming couplets, only one line is pure VanUmmersen.

POTPOURRI

A Pentameter Patchwork Written
in Cowardly Couplets

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.
When I do count the clock that tells the time
And by the forelock seize upon a rhyme,
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies;
It is not wisdom to be only wise.
When I see birches bend to left and right,
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight.
The poetry of earth is never dead
And bread I broke with you was more than bread.

Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?
 I woke, she fled, and day brought back my night.
 A poet is flesh and blood as well as brain,
 And drinking largely sobers us again.
 To me, fair friend, you never can be old . . .
 An angel writing in a book of gold.
 Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey;
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.
 It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally;
 But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
 I love not man the less but nature more.
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran;
 I knew the ruin as I knew the man.
 O weep for Adonais; he is dead.
 The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.
 O world, thou choosest not the better part!
 Nature I loved; and next to nature art.
 Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.
 If winter comes, can spring be far behind?
 But when discord and bickering begin,
 All nature wears one universal grin.

For those who like a challenge (or who have a copy of Bartlett's Familiar Quotations), try to identify the author of each line. For those who wish a more modest challenge, see if you can identify the one line which is pure Van Ummersen.

Cry Me a Riddle

The relatively new magazine, *Omni*, recently ran a competition for solutions to four of Bishop Wilberforce's heretofore unsolved riddles. A panel of eminent word enthusiasts, including the editor of *Word Ways*, was recruited to judge the results. It was expected that a few hundred replies would be received and the judging comparatively simple.

To everyone's surprise, thousands of cards came in, analyzing the enigmas from every conceivable angle. Apparently the solving of riddles is as much a popular pastime as it was in earlier days.

Recognizing this, *Word Ways* is offering its own riddle competition with one eminent judge, ye editor of *Word Ways*, assisted by the current *Kickshaws* editor and with a year's free subscription to *Word Ways* as the prize. The riddle was sent in by G. Nall of Birmingham, England who found it in "Drawing Room Scraps, Sheet No. 17", a British publication of the last century.

In the morn when I rise
 I open my eyes
 Tho' I ne'er sleep a wink all night;
 If I wake e'er so soon,

I still lie till noon,
And pay no regard to the light.

I have loss, I have gain,
I have pleasure and pain,
And am punished with many a stripe;
To diminish my woe,
I burn friend and foe,
And my evenings I end with a pipe.

I travel abroad,
And ne'er miss my road,
Unless I am met by a stranger;
If you come in my way,
Which you very well may,
You will always be subject to danger.

I am chaste, I am young,
I am lusty and strong,
And my habits oft change in a day;
To court I ne'er go,
Am no lady or beau,
Yet as frail and fantastic as they.

I live a short time,
I die in my prime,
Lamented by all who possess me;
If I add any more
To what's said before,
I'm afraid you will easily guess me.

It is expected that entries will be accompanied by the rationale for their choice as the correct solution; all entries should be mailed to Word Ways, Spring Valley Road, Morristown NJ 07960 before October 10. The winner, if any, will be announced in the November issue.

The Last Word

The following was copied from the Cherry Valley (NY) Gazette of April 27, 1864:

A lady occupying room letter B at one of the hotels wrote on the slate the following: "Wake letter B at seven; and if letter B says 'let us be', don't let letter B be, because if you let letter B be, letter B will be unable to let her house to Mr. B, who is to be on hand at half past seven." The porter, a better bootblack than orthographer, did not know at seven whether to wake "letter B" or "let her be".

With that, this Kickshaws editor knows enough to let her be.