

## COLLOQUY

Webster's Dictionary defines colloquy as mutual discourse. Readers are encouraged to submit additions, corrections and comments about earlier articles appearing in Word Ways. Comments received up to a month prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

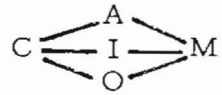
Responding to "Crosswords and the Computer", Darryl Francis and Dana Richards called the editor's attention to an article by P. W. Williams and D. Woodhead in the February 1979 issue of The Computer Journal entitled "Computer Assisted Analysis of Cryptic Crosswords". Unlike Helen Bauer's program which attempts a complete solution of a (standard-clue) crossword puzzle, this program merely gives hints to the solver on how a clue should be analyzed. The words in a cryptic crossword are of three kinds: (1) a synonym word or phrase, analogous to a clue in a non-cryptic crossword; (2) one or more operator words which suggest certain transformations (anagram a word, reverse a word, insert one word in another, read consecutive letters disregarding spaces between words, look for a sound-alike word, join two words); and (3) one or more text words or phrases on which these operations are carried out (text taken at face value, or abbreviated as in 'or' for 'gold', or exemplified as in 'Dee' for 'river'). The charm of cryptic crosswords lies in their ambiguity -- the same word may play different roles in different clues, and there is no standard order for synonyms, operators and text. The Williams and Woodhead program generates suggestions of the roles the various words in a clue can play. For example, the cryptic clue 'The object is to cut a new robe, by the way' is broken down as follows:

OBJECT	abbreviation 'it'
IS	operator =
CUT	operator 'split word, insert another inside'
A	abbreviation 'a'
NEW	operator 'anagram'
BY	abbreviation 'per', operator 'join'
WAY	abbreviation 'n' 's' 'e' 'w' 'rd' 'st'

In this clue, the synonym is 'by the way' and 'cut', 'is' and 'new' are operators acting on 'object' and 'robe' -- IT is inserted in the middle of OBER (an anagram of 'robe') to yield OBITER. This program ought to be helpful to beginners but any reasonably proficient solver of cryptics would probably find it of little value.

Replying to an unsolved problem in "Dictionary Eodermdromes" in the

August 1980 Word Ways, Philip Cohen sent in a proof that the 45-letter lung disease of miners, pneumonoultramicroscopic silicovolcanokoniosis, must have two crossings in its spelling net. The three consonants M, N and C all join with the vowels A, I, and O; two such connections are diagrammed at the right. If the OULTRA sequence is to avoid a crossing, it must lie on the outside of this diagram; but then LI demands a crossing. Finally, a second crossing is induced by the letter N connecting to A, I and O. This is the only known word in Webster's Second or Third with two crossings.



Edward Wolpow notes that the reformed spelling DECIFER should be added to his list of -ifer words in "Onomasticon IV" in November 1980. Harry Partridge discovered CLIFER, REIFER and STRIFER in the OED, and Darryl Francis added STELLIFER from the same source (can anyone find its reversal, REFILLETS, in a dictionary?).

Frank Rubin adds to his consecutive-S saga with the following footnote: "It seems that the King has been poisoned by his cousin, Aguri S'ul. He has forced the princess to marry him, thus combining their kingdoms, and making the princess an empress, namely Supreme Sovereign Sukesh Salima Sirani S'ul, Serene Suzerain. The boat is now Empress S.S. S.S.S.S. S.S.'s S.S. S.S. Ssst." Enough of these ridiculously contrived sequences, responds R. Merrill Ely. He submits the more logical entries

In the Tampa AAA, A. Aaron is in good standing (7 As)  
Ross's SSS status is 1-A (7 Ss)

AAA is the American Automobile Association, and SSS the Selective Service System.

One more word can be added to "Is a Picture Worth 1000 Words?" -- ETIC, in Webster's 6000 Words. A clipping from a Washington (D.C.) newspaper about 1978 contains a letter from James L. Nammack challenging M. V. Churchill's assertion that the word SPECULATOR is the most prolific ten-letter word. To back up his claim, he listed 560 words beginning with S or P that can be taken from INTERPOSAL, and conjectured that a full list would contain well over 1000. (His dictionary was Webster's Second Unabridged, but he did not allow plurals.) In similar vein, Boris Randolph sent in 629 words from ILLUSTRATION taken from the Random House Unabridged. However, there is no need to go to words of ten letters or more to produce a list of 1000; in a forthcoming Word Ways article Jeff Grant proves that it can be done with a seven-letter word!

Maxey Brooke thinks that Dave Silverman's reference to "horse colors" may be those colors whose mention brings to mind horses: bay, dapple,

dun, gray, piebald, pinto, roan, sable, sorrel and steel.

Toni Harno comments that MICHIGANDER (mentioned in "The Assault on Logology" in November) is a highly debatable term in Michigan -- purists insist that MICHIGANITE is the right term, the other being denigrating. William Sunners passes along various state name oddities, such as the fact that the terminal letters of New Jersey (N, Y) form the initial letters of its neighbor, New York. In similar vein, Harry Partridge notes that CALIFORNIA and FLORIDA, the two anchors of the Sun Belt, are the only states containing the letter F. He wonders if Wyoming is the only state named for a geographical feature in another state (Wyoming Valley, in Pennsylvania).

LeRoy Meyers points out that many of the works attributed to Lambros Dimetrios Callimahos (in the May 1980 Kickshaws) have also been found in the library of Euclide Paracelso Bombasto Umbugio: see the May 1977 and August/September 1978 issues of Eureka (now Crux Mathematicorum). In the Colloquy follow-up on Callimahos's work, Boris Randolph should have pointed out that Q is the symbol for 500 in medieval Roman numerals; D, of course, is the more familiar symbol.

Andrew Bremner of Cambridge, England notes the odd UHHI-HHEE, a 17th-century form of 'wehee', a whinny or neigh, in the OED. A full study of dictionary-spelled sounds might make an interesting Word Ways article. Incidentally, the source of "Dictionary Sounds" should have been given as the English Dialect Dictionary.

Charles Holding, the discoverer of the 17-letter well-mixed transposal pair basiparachromatin/Marsipobranchiata (see "Long Well-Mixed Transposals", February 1976), published in the September 1980 issue of the Enigma an 18-letter transposal pair consisting of the plurals of two dictionary-entry nouns in Webster's Second Edition: inarticulate-nesses/natural necessities. Notice that only two bigrams (na, es) and one trigram (ess) appear in both words -- a remarkable achievement!

LeRoy Meyers comments that Charlie Bostick's Ravenisms (in the May 1980 Kickshaws) remind him of Janeisms -- malapropisms, often quite apropos, uttered by Goodman Ace's wife Jane on the "Easy Aces" radio program of forty years ago. Some examples: running around like a chicken with its hat off; I had him in the hollow of my hand; don't cross bridges in midstream; begin at the beguine; I'm getting my bearings balled up.

William G. Hutchison Jr. sent in the somewhat startling punning name Mother Frockers, apparently a maternity clothes outlet in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Toni Harno reports on a tree nursery in Ludington, Mich-

igan named Shady Deals. LeRoy Meyers often notes punning business names: Sherlock Homes, Inc. near Columbus (home builders); Village Pedaler near Allentown (bicycles); The Leaning Tower of Pizza in New Jersey (restaurant); Sole There in Manhattan (shoe store); United Skates of America, Inc. in Columbus (roller rink); Media Well Done, Ltd. in Manhattan (advertising agency for professional men); Word of Mouth in Manhattan (specialty foods); and The Permanent Press in Sagaponack, New York (publisher).

Maxey Brooke comments on the variety of meanings in different countries for certain all-consonant words: TSK-TSK is an admonition in English, but means 'no' in many countries of the Near East; PST is used to attract attention in English but in many European countries is used to call the cat; and SHH means 'be quiet' in English but 'hurry up' in German.

Two long-delayed follow-ups: Maxey Brooke notes rest rooms labeled McHim and McHer in a Dallas McDonald's ("Tudor Nomenclature", February 1977), and a Braniff stewardess recently asked him to bring his seat back forward ("Strange Paradoxes", February 1977).

In the August 1980 Kickshaws, Dmitri Borgmann listed 120 words and phrases made out of the letters in PALINDROMES. Martin Hucklesby of Eastleigh, Hampshire, England continues this theme with a poem:

Dim Eros-plan,  
dream on! Slip,  
seminal drop ...  
I'm spor-laden.

Pairs meld on  
primal nodes;  
slip more, and  
RNA implodes!

'Mid personal  
promise-land,  
a mold ripens.

Spiral demon;  
Pre-amino LSD!  
Spin, realm, do -  
I am splendor!

Rid neoplasm!  
DNA implores ...  
Rods map, line,  
roam spindle -

Don't bother looking for SAUCELLES in Webster's Second in "9x9 Word Squares" -- the correct word is SAUCELESS. Philip Cohen sent an article on near-miss nine-squares from the February 1923 Enigma.

LeRoy Meyers says that the Millicent limerick from one of Richard Lederer's students (in the May 1980 Colloquy) is actually more than forty years old. The French limerick "improved" by John McClellan in the May 1980 issue is by George A. DuMaurier, and is quoted on page 265 of Carolyn Wells's A Nonsense Anthology.