

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.

Dave Silverman introduced the Kickshaws column in the May 1969 Word Ways. For me (MJH), Kickshaws was usually the high point of each issue, with Dave's unique blend of puns, word games, philosophy, wit, and challenges enough to keep me busy until the next issue! Most of my contributions to Dave's column over the years were a direct result of his challenging me to solve some sticky word problem. Several of the rebus ideas presented in this Kickshaws were inspired by him, and we have included a word game that Dave invented but never used in his own column. We are aware that being guest editors of Kickshaws will not ensure logological immortality; that distinction (with respect to Kickshaws) belongs to Dave Silverman alone. But we hope he would have approved of the medley we have for you in this issue.

Cube (M)

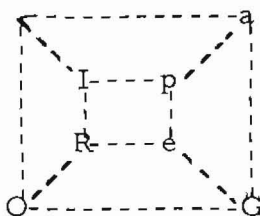
This is the word game invented by Dave; I don't think it has been presented in print anywhere.

In turn, Smith and Jones label the eight vertices of a cube with different letters. Whenever the vertices of a face (or more than one face) are all labeled on a turn, they must spell a word cyclically, clockwise or counterclockwise from some point.

Example:

SMITH versus Jones

1. R
2. a
3. G
4. e
5. O (forming GORe)
6. p (forming paGe)
7. I (forming RIpe)



8. Stumped. Jones cannot label the last vertex in such a way as to make three "face words". The three faces he would have to complete are -apI, IRO, aGO. Had Jones found a legitimate letter he would have won. (In Variant 1 below, he would win with L.)

Variants:

1. "Face words" need not be cyclic.
2. Other Platonic solids can be used: a tetrahedron or octahedron for beginners, an icosahedron or dodecahedron (five-letter words) for more advanced players.
3. Label edges, not vertices (labeling faces, the third possibility, is equivalent to labeling vertices of another Platonic solid).

The Warp Between the States (H)

When Alaska and Hawaii were admitted to statehood, one of our neatest and niftiest mnemonic patterns was shattered. When the names of the 48 contiguous states are alphabetized, 24 start with the initials A-M and 24 with N-Z; 16 start with A-L, 16 with M-N, and 16 with O-Z. Besides being most helpful in tracking down overlooked states, this accidental symmetry was so satisfyingly elegant that it has seemed our logological duty to suggest ways of reconstituting it.

The simplest and most obvious way is probably not politically feasible: to return Alaska and Hawaii to their former territorial status just won't work. So we must think in terms of 54 states, 27 of which start with A-M and 27 with N-Z; 18 with A-L, 18 with M-N, and 18 with O-Z. Mathematically alert readers will have deduced that this means that 9 states (instead of the present 8) must have names starting with M, and 9 with N.

First let us accept the deplorable fact that Alaska and Hawaii are here to stay, increasing A-L from 16 to the target 18. Next, let us agree that neither the District of Columbia nor such remaining territories as Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam are likely to qualify for statehood, so we dismiss them from our calculations. Finally, let us select four existing states ripe for splitting, and assign them appropriate new names.

California is the first that comes to mind, both for its large population and for the antithesis (and antipathy!) between its northern and southern halves. Let us recommend that it be divided along the existing county boundaries just north of Delano and that the resulting states be named (unimaginatively but sensibly) Northern California (preponderant in area) and Southern California (with a majority of the population). As Sacramento is in the north, the south would need a new capital, centrally located but away from Los Angeles; San Bernardino seems a likely choice.

The next obvious candidate is Texas, notorious for its size and for the schism between southerners and westerners in its population and its economy. A curving line from the mouth of the San Antonio river to Wichita Falls might approximate the land-use frontier, but the Texans will have a glorious time battling over the details, perhaps pushing it east far enough to put Dallas in East Texas and Fort Worth in West Texas. Then whichever half is not stuck with Austin can select its own capital intersecinely.

Now let's see where we stand alphabetically. A-L has gained Alaska, East Texas, and Hawaii, but has lost California and so stands at the ideal 18. M is unchanged at 8, but N has acquired Northern California, reaching the desired 9. O-Z has lost Texas but gained Southern California and West Texas; like M, it needs a further gain of one.

There is much to be said for splitting New York, the second most populous state, where New York City and upstate alternate in desiring to divorce each other. Long Island would obviously have to stay with the city, and Westchester county probably would opt to. What would remain would still be called New York, as prefixing a compass designation would be too unwieldy; the new metropolitan state would need new names both for itself and for its chief city, and Manhattan comes readily to mind. The present borough of that name could revert to its original New Amsterdam. With Albany upstate, the new state would need a capital outside the metropolis; what better way to shed its city-slicker image than to choose Hicksville?

With the M thus achieved, we look around for one final state to split, and we find the Upper Peninsula of Michigan clamoring to secede and become, presumably, Upper Michigan, just as western Virginia seceded to become West Virginia. That it has no centrally located town large enough to make a plausible capital is no concern of ours; with its U we have completed our self-imposed mission.

"But hold on," you say; "suppose Quebec secedes from Canada, and the English-speaking provinces west of it are admitted to the United States of North America. What happens to your elegant new set-up then?" Calm yourself, I respond; we merely adjust our targets upward to 60: 30-30, 20-20-20. Our 2 new A-L names are Alberta and British Columbia; Manitoba is our M, while the Northwest Territories and Yukon hyphenate to form our N; Ontario and Saskatchewan bring O-Z up to par. It's obviously predestined. "That's all very well," you snarl enviously; "but what about all those Atlantic Provinces -- Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland?" You'll just have to work that out for yourself, I shrug loftily; I've run out of space.

The State of the Rebus (M)

The rebus, with its backward brother the suber, seems to be the favorite type of puzzle for the members of the National Puzzlers' League. Example: the word BISMARCK can be represented in rebus form by B = M) K, translated as "B is M, arc, K", and as a suber it can be given as K SIB, translated as "K, cram SIB". The following rebuses and subers are all states of the U. S. A. Try your hand at deciphering them (answers at the end of the issue).

1.

WY/K
2. (suber) R
3. I
4. (phonetic 9MWN suber)
5. (suber) HU
6. U = IA
7. DLW
8. (suber) DI
9. 6RIGA

flipping it over, leading us and all other logologists to proffer the equally long and much commoner CHECKBOOK. Sober reconsideration of Phil's care in such matters, however, led us to check Webster's Second and confirm our suspicion that he must have written OKEECHOBEE, only to be betrayed somewhere between inspiration and publication. Both words, oddly, use permutations of the same six letters, ignoring the other three "floppables" D, I, and X (yes, if a DODO-CHEEKED CHICK-BODIED Southern belle were to be DIXIE-BEDDED, she'd be unique -- logologically speaking, of course, but unimmortalized in dictionaries as yet). Did somebody mutter "Unflappable, though" ? (interrobang).

On the previous page (176) William Sunners mused on GIGANTIC and CONCURRENCE, words "in which the same consonant is pronounced in two different ways." Perhaps more noteworthy are words such as ACCEPT, SUGGEST, and NEWSSTAND, in which such consonants are consecutive; compare POWWOW, SNARLEY YOW, WITHHOLD, MISSHAPEN, JACKKNIFE, and OUTTHINK.

Finally, for headlines with double meanings, Mary spotted this in our local newspaper: DOCTORS' TOOL SHEDS LIGHT ON INNER ORGANS (damaging them severely?).

Recommended "Reading" (H)

The Crossworder's List Book, compiled by John E. and Margaret H. Brown (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1978; \$3.95) is based (though it doesn't say so) on British dictionaries, and hence does not duplicate comparable American reference works such as Morehead's and Baus's. 5 1/2 pages of "Ecclesiastical and Religious Terms" (arranged in order of length) or 1 1/2 pages of "Weapons" are helpful; columns of "Welsh Sovereigns and Princes" and of "Air-Marshals", less so; but it is a useful addition to a solver's library, especially if one tackles British crosswords.

Chambers Words, compiled by Frank Muir (W.&R. Chambers Ltd., Edinburgh, 1976; \$1.50) consists of 115,000 entries from Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (excluding forms derived by adding -s, -ed, -ing, -ly, etc.) grouped by word-length and alphabetized. It is blurbed -- accurately but misleadingly -- as comprising words "from 2 to 45 letters": after "pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis" it drops abruptly to 31 -- "dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane" (DDT) -- and 29 -- "floccinaucinihilipilification" (see August 1978 Kickshaws) -- before starting lists of 23 and fewer letters. Incidentally, one of this 23 group is "transubstantiationist", the correct singular of the word misspelled "transubstantialists" in Jeff Grant's palindrome on the same page.

All in a Daze, Work! (M)

Eavesdropping on conversations in offices and elevators can yield some linguistic gems. One such that I recently heard: "He'd go to great ends to get that." Another: "I think that's beyond the pall."

A good source of ideas for word puzzles has often been technical reports I'm reading or editing. A few weeks ago I came across the unusual class of chemicals called the "heretocycles". After another look, I realized that a heterocycle had been metathesized. Dandy key word for an Enigma puzzle! Another oddity, for which I've found no good puzzle use: the word BIOSYNTHESIS contains the letters of BOYISHNESS + IT.

Some scientist in a daze must have dreamed up this one (sent in by Phil Cohen, who found it in Amazing Stories and recalls seeing it elsewhere also):

- Hydromicrobiogeochemist - one who studies small underwater flora and their relationship to underlying rock strata by using chemical methods
- Microhydrobiogeochemist - one who studies flora in very small bodies of water and their relationship to underlying rock strata by using chemical methods
- Microbiohydrogeochemist - one who studies small flora and their relationship to underlying rock strata by using chemical methods and SCUBA equipment
- Biohydromicrogeochemist - a very small geochemist who studies the effect of plant life in hydrology
- Hydrobiomicrogeochemist - a very small geochemist who studies wet plants
- Biomicrohydrogeochemist - a very small, wet geochemist who likes lettuce

Mini-Colloquy (H, M)

We recently got a letter from a puzzling friend, who makes several good points which he agreed to let us publish here: "I've just received my August Word Ways and was pleased to see your lambasting of Borgmann's 'paratransposition'. . . (I have a feeling that even Borgmann would have a rough time finding a paratransposition for CWM! He may . . . have to settle for a status one notch lower than Einstein.) Now he's developed something called 'virtual transposition', and has the gall to say 'In practice, certain refinements [for which, read "idiosyncratic variations"] . . . are permitted.' Next will come the nonvirtual transposition (any word can be changed into any other word of the same length), and then the . . . ad libitum transposition' (so what if the two words aren't the same length?)" Hear, hear! Such pseudo-logy would be less objectionable if written tongue in cheek, instead of foot in mouth.

The Cliché Ran Away with the Spoon(erism) (M)

How would you describe the behavior of a person who served rodent meat at dinner and belatedly offered the beverage? He passed squirrels before wine, naturally!

The motto (mutter?) of an oarsman with a leaky boat: Whatsoever a man roweth, that shall also seep.

Julia Child's advice regarding the mythical animal, the spoth:

Too many cooks broil the spoth.

What was the score between the rival college teams, Pitt and Earl? Pitt one, Earl two.

How did the Lone Ranger describe Tonto? As his wear-feather friend.

How did the shipper mark a package containing a luminary and a rabbit? This side up -- candle with hare.

What notice was on the office wall of the obstetrician who didn't believe in contraception? Boast no pills.

Complaint of a bird-watcher near the shore: Oh, what is so rare as a jay in dune?

The motto of the successful wig-shop owner: A hairy mart maketh a cheerful countenance.

Puzzlement (H)

In Finnish the suffix "-toista" is equivalent to our "-teen", being added to numerals 1-9 to make numerals 10-19. The word "puoli" means "half". By what logic, then, does "puolitoista" mean $1\frac{1}{2}$? (Marjorie Friedman says "-toista" obviously means "stick a 1 in front of it"; irrefutable, but not quite what I had in mind. Any other suggestions?

Word Quiz (M, H)

When is a cow a horse? Answer: when it is a hippopotamus. Both "river horse" and "sea cow" are thus defined in Webster's Third. Here are some more questions for you to ponder (answers to the imponderable are at the back of this issue):

In what common word is the sequence CHS pronounced SH?

In what word is G before A pronounced J?

In what two words is MP pronounced N?

Phil Cohen asks: What past tense is made by changing (phonemically) present tense CH to J?

Acro-Equations (H, M)

At the recent NPL convention in Princeton, we introduced a challenge based on a suggestion by George Grieshaber. Puzzlers stayed up late solving our 20 and composing additional ones, several of which we have incorporated below; we thank Phil Cohen, Arthur Harris, and David Rosen for lists.

Example: S + M + T + W + T + F + S = W (Answer: Sunday, Monday, etc. = a week). Answers are given at the back of this issue, but give them a fair try first -- don't peek! They're fun, and challenging; a few may take some lateral thinking. They are arranged in approximate order of difficulty.

$$1. R + O + Y + G + B + I + V = S$$

$$2. M + NH + V + M + RI + C = NE$$

3. $4J + 4Q + 4K = FC$
4. $M + B + B + Q + SI = NYC$
5. $A + P + A + T + G + C + L + V + L + S + S + C = S$ of the Z
6. $GW + TJ + AL + TR = F$ on MR
7. $M + V + E + M + J + S + U + N + P = P$
8. $S + H$ of R = USC
9. $JL + PM + GH + RS = B$
10. $LS + LM + LH + LE + LO = GL$
11. $M + M + L + J = 4G$
12. $D + R + M + F + S + L + T + D = N$ of the S
13. $H + A + N + K + X + R = IG$
14. $A + N + AF + MC + CG = AF$
15. $S + S + G + H + D + D + B = 7D$
16. $G + E + L + N + D = P$
17. $P + N + D + Q + HD + D = USC$
18. $M + J + B + A = LW$
19. $P + C + L + A + G + E + S = 7DS$
20. $C + L + A = 3F$
21. $N + P + SM = S$ of C
22. $H + Y + P + C + D + C + P + B = IL$
23. $A + P + A = 3M$
24. $M + O + O + C + S + T = 6N$ of the I
25. $M, M, T, U = H$ on the W

Problems (H)

Which one of these eight verbs does not belong with the others, and why: bring, buy, catch, draw, fight, seek, teach, think?

What adjective, used to describe some people, and derived from a noun, implies that a person thus described has less of the noun than his antonym has (as though a "hairy" man had less hair than a bald man)?

How Do I love Thee? (M, H)

The cardiologist: with all my heart
 The sailor goes overboard
 The marathon runner: all the way
 The Indian: without reservation
 The contortionist: head over heels
 The psychoanalyst: unshrinkingly
 The mathematician: constantly
 The seafood dealer: selfishly
 The wheelwright: tirelessly
 The dieter: through thick and thin
 The hotel manager: sweetly
 The defeated politician: devotedly
 The elephant trainer: roguishly
 The former radio operator: ecstatically
 The mink farmer: furtively
 The farmer: whole hog
 The couturier: in my fashion

The wine-merchant: cordially
 The separatist: discreetly
 The optician: at first sight
 The grammarian: intensely
 The nomad: intently
 The weatherman: vainly
 The typesetter: boldly
 The money-changer: tenderly
 The bus driver: changelessly
 Sir Lancelot: nightly

"Time's Bawdy Hand Upon the Prick of Noon" (Romeo and Juliet) (H)

For reasons obscure to me, the French call the south of France the Midi, or midday. This is certainly not a self-evident or universal equivalence, yet the Italians analogously term the south of Italy the Mezzogiorno; why? Obviously, the sun is due south at true noon in the northern hemisphere, but it is quite a jump from that fact to the nomenclature adduced. Notice, too, that though the terms are etymologically parallel, one has four letters, the other eleven.

AN EXALTATION OF LARKS

James Lipton's charming book of this name, originally published in 1968, was reissued in expanded form in paperback by Penguin Books in 1977 to include many contributions sent in by readers. Most readers know that collective nouns (such as a clowder of cats, a gaggle of geese, a pride of lions) have been applied to groups of animals or birds, particularly those associated with hunting and the chase, for five centuries or more. It is not as well-known that people have been adapting this form to wordplay for an equally long time. The Book of St. Albans (1486) contains many collective nouns applied to occupations which were clearly coined in a light-hearted fashion: a converting of preachers, a doctrine of doctors, a sentence of judges.

In Lipton's view, such coinages should illuminate the object: a trance of lovers, a piddle of puppies, a wrangle of philosophers, a sneer of butlers. He eschews examples such as an essay of Trollope's or an anthology of prose, which may be clever puns but do not add to our knowledge of prostitutes. One of the most appealing features of this book is the many carefully-selected illustrations by Dürer and Grandville.