

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.

I finally made it! Today, I am a guest Kickshaws editor. I'm as rhapsodic as Maxey Brooke appeared to be in the August 1977 issue of Word Ways. Now, I happily count myself among the logological immortals: Dave Silverman (sure to be missed), Faith Eckler, Philip Cohen, Darryl Francis, Ralph Beaman, Willard Espy, Maxey Brooke, and Charlie Bostick.

Kangaroo Words

Dmitri Borgmann will not know until he reads this that one of his delightful columns in a monthly publication eight years ago helped me in my substitute teaching. I had retired from my regular job in a trade school, but after eighteen months of reading, lolling and meditating, decided to return to the classroom as a per diem instructor. In this capacity, I was often placed before a class unprepared to teach the subject required. Among the various features in Word Row, his column of logological and orthographical oddities, was a word game that I quickly adapted to the classroom: briefly, it required the reader (in my case, the pupil) to find a word consecutively spelled in a longer word, both words synonyms of each other. For example, GIANT can be found in GIgANTic, and NURSED in NoURiShED; FACE appears in both FACeT and FACAdE, and FICTION in FabrICaTION. Though veteran readers of Word Ways may find these old hat (Tom Pulliam assembled a large collection of Kangaroo Words in the May 1976 issue), my students found them novel, a refreshing change from the usual fare in English class.

Did you notice that Word Row is a palindrome? The same title is used for a logological column written by the editor for the British monthly magazine Games & Puzzles.

Word Squares

The first word square at the right	P R A T E	P R O V E
appeared in the August 1977 issue of	E A V E S	L I V E S
Word Ways. A puzzle contest pro-	E V E N T	A V E R T
moter in Philadelphia awarded a cash	V E R S E	T E R S E
prize of \$200 for the best double 5-by-	E N T E R	E N T E R

5 word square submitted in a competition that ended three months after the first word square appeared in this journal. The second word square at the right won the top prize. Examine it carefully and draw your own conclusions. By merely twisting most of the words, changing a few letters, an apparently different square was constructed -- some vertical words now read horizontally, and some horizontal words read vertically. Twisting is an old crossword constructor's device.

I've always wanted to creat a single 5-by-5 word square that would be troublesome for such experts as Boris Randolph, David Shulman and others:

1. busses
2. fifty
3. places in question
4. Christians
5. discharges (atmospheric electricity)

I hope I have succeeded with this effort. The solution appears at the end of this issue.

Out-of-Place Words

Word Ways readers are surely familiar with Ralph Beaman's extensive research on out-of-place words in Webster's Third, presented in Word Ways from August 1975 to February 1977, inclusive. However, they may not realize that a somewhat similar booklet was issued in 1951 for Webster's Second. Titled "Out-of-Place Words from M-W Dictionary", it is 68 pages long and 8 1/2x11 inches in size; today, it is almost impossible to obtain a copy except in Xeroxed form.

It differs from Ralph Beaman's in several ways, the most obvious being that it arranges words alphabetically by length -- first three-letter words, then four-letter words, and so on up to a twenty-six-letter word, pancreaticocholecystostomy. Some of its out-of-place words are easy to find: boldface words in run-on entries (not at the left-hand margin) and in separate lists (to show how various prefixes and suffixes are employed). It sometimes lists words that are the second word in two-word phrases (TOV in Yom Tob or Tov, but not SUEY in chop suey). More important, it lists many boldface words located far from their proper place (as FAYUMIC, found only under Coptic) and boldface words in subject lists (as LASA, in the grass list).

It has been of incalculable aid to me in unscrambling jumbled words. About a week before I dispatched this material to the editor, I telephoned Tom Pulliam, co-author of the New York Times Crossword Puzzle Dictionary, asking where a word containing the letters AAHRRUU appeared in Webster's Second; he unhesitatingly supplied the correct location. A slower, but equally reliable, method would have been to try various letter-arrangements (giving preference to tautonyms, since most words with all doubled letters are of this type); it would not have taken me long to find RAHURAHU, buried in the list of ferns. Now that the booklet is getting scarce, contest sponsors are beginning to use it as a source of words for their puzzles.

Words Undefined

Besides making it hard to find words, Webster's Second sometimes supplies words but fails to define them. Many examples have been given in Word Ways, culminating in Tom Pulliam's "Web 2: Imperfect But Lovable" in the May 1975 issue. At least some of these words were orphaned when the Merriam-Webster editors deleted words to make room for others, forgetting that cross-references to the deleted words still existed. A prime example of this is the word GOLILLA. In most printings of the Second, one finds below the line the entry "golilia, golilio, (an obsolete form of) golilla" -- but no GOLILLA in the main text! However, it does appear below the line in Webster's First, where it is defined as a kind of Spanish starched collar, with the variant form GOLILLE.

Guinness, My Goodness!

How many people know that the Guinness Book of World Records, revised yearly, contains a section on linguistic records? The most obvious candidate for inclusion is the longest word in English literature; they cite a 52-letter word coined by Dr. Edward Strother (1675-1737) describing the composition of the spa waters at Bristol, England. (It also appears in Language on Vacation, evidently the source they used.)

In recent years, the subject of long words has been clouded by the proliferation of long chemical words, in particular the nomenclature of polypeptides. In Beyond Language, Dmitri Borgmann quoted a 1185-letter word (given in full in Chemical Abstracts), and in the first issue of Word Ways he constructed a word of 1913 letters from its sequence of 267 amino acids. This monster was later cited by Guinness (and written out in full there) in its 1969 through 1974 volumes; however, Chemical Abstracts has refused to print in full any words exceeding the 1185-letter one, raising the question of their existence. Can the 1913-letter word be said to exist if it has never been written down by chemists, only by logologists? Does its appearance in a book such as Guinness stamp it as a "real" word, not a logological plaything? (The latest Guinness edition cites, but does not write out, a 3600-letter word for bovine NADP-specific glutamate dehydrogenase.)

The picture is clearer for single-word palindromes. Guinness cites MALAYALAM (in Webster's Second), KINNIKINNIK (in Webster's Third), and ROTAVATOR (a British trademark) as the best English-language ones. This puts Robert Ripley in his place, for there I recall a statement that "the longest word in the English language to be spelled the same backward and forward is REVIVER" -- I at once recalled from my crossword construction days the equally-long DEIFIED, REPAPER and ROTATOR. Can readers find longer word palindromes? I doubt it, unless coinages such as DETARTRATED (also in Guinness) and REDIVIDER are allowed. (I've heard of the verb REDIVIDE and I know of a DIVIDER, but I've never seen REDIVIDER used in print.)

What about transpositions? In earlier editions, Guinness submitted the 16-letter INTERLAMINATIONS-INTERNATIONALISM and CONVER-

SATIONISTS-CONSERVATIONISTS, but these are eclipsed in the 1978 edition with the 17-letter MISREPRESENTATION-REPRESENTATIONISM. This is almost as uninteresting as the 22-letter synonymic pair HYDROPNEUMOPERICARDIUM-PNEUMOHYDROPERICARDIUM in Webster's Second; I prefer the well-mixed BASIPARACHROMATIN-MARSIPOBRANCHIATA found a few years ago by Charles E. Holding of Silver Spring, Maryland.

Floccinaucinihilipilification

When I was a boy, ANTIDISESTABLISHMENTARIANISM was widely believed to be the longest English word. Our gang thought up a riposte to any smart-aleck new kid on the block who claimed this to be so; we would gleefully shout in triumphant unison TRANSMAGNIFICANBANDANUALITY!! (Of course our word was a letter short, but who counted in those carefree days?) As you may rightly suspect, our word was a nonsense creation. Maybe some songwriter will set it to music and make a million dollars -- it's time for a nonsense song, anyway.

Had we been in England rather than America, we might have responded with FLOCCI-NAUCI-NIHILI-PILI-FICATION. This fine word, first used by Sir Walter Scott, means "the action or habit of estimating as worthless", and appears in the OED (hyphenated) and Chambers (unhyphenated) but in no unabridged American dictionary. It's not even necessary to say the word any more; there's a T-shirt now available with the word blazoned in white across a navy blue background, issued in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Oxford University Press. (Send \$3.49 to Oxford T-Shirt Offer, Box 10084, Stamford CT 06904, and be the first on your block to own one -- specify small/medium/large/extra large size.)

Besides being the longest word in the OED, what's unusual about this word? It doesn't have a single E. Did Ernest V. Wright use it in Gadsby?

Transubstantiationists

Speaking of long words, how would you like to try and work this one into a palindromic sentence? It can't be done, you say? Listen to what Jeff Grant, the Guinness-cited author of the longest palindromic composition (10,620 words), did with it:

Before leaving Scotland, Ma McLeod, an aged and deeply religious Labour supporter, was asked if she or any members of her family intended visiting the NASA installations while on holiday in the US:

"No," suggests Ma, "no I -- tait Nats bus nar to NASA. No transubstantiationists egg us on."

Definitions of the more obscure words, all in the OED, include no I (not I - Scottish), tait (lively, active - obs. Scottish), Nats (Scottish Nationalists - in OED Supplement), bus (travel by bus), and nar to (near to - Scottish).

The Saints Preserve Us!

Many people pray to their patron saint for intercession and protection. Some people might not be quite sure as to which saint will hear their plea. If you need help (and your faith is strong), Virginia R. Hager of Normal, Illinois suggests the following appropriate ones:

St. Amp - postal workers	St. Roke - golfers
St. Agger - alcoholics	St. Encil - designers
St. Accato - musicians	St. Ein - beer mug designers
St. Age - actors	St. Ruggles - fighters
St. Agnant - dullards	St. Randed - bus missers
St. Amen - flower children	St. Irrup - equestrians
St. Amina - jocks	St. Ocking - hose manufacturers
St. Udent - college coeds	St. Ockmarket - brokers
St. Ealthy - crooks	St. Omach - dieters
St. Adium - football players	St. Ory - liars
St. Anza - poets	St. Rangulate - muggers
St. Arlet - young actresses	St. Ubborn - belligerents
St. Ork - expectant mothers	St. Ylist - designers of clothes
St. Ubble - hay makers	St. Ructural - builders
St. Ump - politicians	St. Etson - cowboys
St. Upid - foolish folk	St. Atistic - mathematicians
St. Eak - butchers	St. Atement - bill collectors
St. Ring - kite fliers	St. Ation - locomotive engineers
St. Rain - athletes	St. Aphylococcus - bacteria hunters

Two Italian Acronyms

More than twenty years ago, I learned that the letters in the word FIAT, a popular make of foreign car, were really an acronym formed from the words *Fabricato Italia Automobilia Torino* (auto manufactured in Torino, Italy). This information instantly reminded me that the oft-used term MAFIA is also an acronym. In 1956, when I first toured Europe, an erudite elevator operator at the Flora Hotel, on Via Veneto in Rome, informed me that every Sicilian, especially the residents of the capital city Palermo, were familiar with the words whose initials formed the acronym. It appears that during the eighteenth century when France conquered certain sections of Italy, the Gallic soldiers ravaged young brides and other fair damsels. Their grooms and swains banded together and wreaked suitable vengeance on the wicked despoilers. After each murder of a Frenchman, or the burning of a castle, a card would be attached to the front portal bearing the five cryptic letters MAFIA. Relatives of the midnight victims were informed by the Sicilian avengers that the message meant *Morte Ai Francesi Italia Agogna* (Death to the French! Italy lives!).

This origin of MAFIA has been corroborated by a Fulbright scholar, Pasquale Varrano, an Italian language instructor at Brooklyn College. However, he cautioned me that this was merely the popular Sicilian explanation of a word that today possesses evil connotations throughout the world. Tom Pulliam believes that the letters MAFIA may well have a totally different origin, and that the above story was a national white-wash of the dreaded term. Both Webster's Second and Third state that

this world-(in)famous term is of uncertain origin.

Pass The Word . . .

Older readers may remember a parlor game that was popular before television provided so much of today's so-called entertainment. In the game, the players sat in a straight line, side by side, and the master of ceremonies whispered a short sentence into the outer ear of the first player. He would turn to the person on his other side and, cupping his mouth, would whisperingly repeat the same sentence to him. So it went, from player to player, and the last individual in the row would announce the sentence as he had heard it. Invariably, the final version was so different from the words spoken by the master of ceremonies that it was a source of unrestrained merriment. In one game, I recall that "General MacArthur is a show-off" changed into "Jennie, make Arthur shove off".

The above game reminds me of a story I used to relate to my students to impress upon them the importance of le mot juste. In a small town with four gossips, the first heard that Tom Brown won \$5,000. The first gossip phoned the second news distributor that Tom Brown got \$5,000. The third listener heard it from the second that Tom Brown took \$5,000, and passed it on to the last of that gossiping quartet that Tom Brown stole \$5,000. Each verb is a plausible synonym of the preceding one, but oh what a transformation from a notable achievement to the commission of a heinous crime!

Quickies

Did you notice that GIGANTIC in an earlier Kickshaw is a word in which the same consonant is pronounced in two different ways? How many other words can you think of that possess this peculiarity? Just off the top of my head, I can think of scores of S-words ending in -ism, as SOCIALISM, SECULARISM, etc., where the second S employs the /z/ sound. How about C? CONCURRENCE is one, and EPISCOPACY is another I just noticed in the Pocket Dictionary. X ought to be hard, but how about XERXES, in which the first X is sounded /z/, but the second one /ks/?

What do groups of ships and cars have in common? Many things, but from a wordsmith's viewpoint, each can be correctly defined by the collective noun FLEET. Groups of airplanes and angels are both called FLIGHTS -- there must be some relationship between these airborne entities? MUSTER pertains to groups of peacocks and soldiers -- both strut resplendently? And a group of nightingales or sailors can be correctly designated as a WATCH. Any other shared groupings?

The word CLONE, the asexually-produced progeny of a single parent, has recently come into the public eye as the result of David Rorvik's controversial book, In His Image, supposedly describing the first successful cloning of a human being. (Erica Jong, author of a best-seller of three years ago, also wrote a poem about the clone.) No one, however, seems to have noticed that the word CLONE can be successively beheaded to produce LONE and ONE, two words strongly suggest-

ed by the meaning of the original.

Joseph T. Hogan called the editor's attention to a column by Sydney J. Harris (Field Enterprises) which states "...laughter is perhaps the oddest word in the English language -- can you think of another verb whose noun form ends in -ter?" (Presumably he excludes verbs ending in -t to which -er can be added to form a noun of the he-who-does-this variety, as plot - plotter.) The only other one he could think of is chat - chatter; are there any others?

Maxey Brooke submits the following 18-letter abbreviation from Newsprints in Chemical and Engineering News for July 18, 1977: WHOUSPHSICSSDMSROHS, short for World Health Organization / United States Public Health Service International Collaborative Study of Dental Manpower Systems in Relation to Oral Health Studies. Guinness gives an example only one letter longer, of a Malaysian government worker thrift society.

Philip Cohen wants to know: is OKECHOBEE the longest possible word having vertical symmetry (unchanged when viewed through a glass swizzle-stick)? He also mentions a George Carlin record, "Toledo Window Box", which deals with oxymorons of a special kind: self-contradictory terms like JUMBO SHRIMP, GUEST HOST, and MILITARY INTELLIGENCE. (This sounds something like Dave Silverman's Pseudo-Opposites in the February 1970 Kickshaws: MATERNITY DRESS / PATERNITY SUIT, NIGHT HAWK / MOURNING DOVE, CATWALK / DOGTROT, LOWLANDS / HIGH SEAS, but compressed into a single phrase.) Any others?

Updates

The OED version of FLOCCI-NAUCI-NIHILI-PILI-FICATION given in an earlier Kickshaw is an example of a multi-hyphenated word. These have been occasionally mentioned in Kickshaws -- JOHN-GO-TO-BED-AT-NOON and KISS-ME-OVER-THE-GARDEN-GATE (November 1970) from Webster's Third, HAR-U-PU-KA-KA-SHARU-SHA-BAU (August 1975) from Cooper's Archaic Dictionary, and WILLY-WITH-THE-WISP-AND-PEGGY-WITH-THE-LANTERN (August 1972) from the English Dialect Dictionary. The new hyphenation champion is Jeff Grant, who looked further in the latter source to find KITTY-COME-DOWN-THE-LANE-JUMP-UP-AND-KISS-ME (a name for the cuckoo-pint plant) and MEET-HER-IN-THE-ENTRY-KISS-HER-IN-THE-BUTTERY (a name for the pansy).

According to Darryl Francis, the INTERABANG (also spelled interrobang) appears in both A Dictionary of New English and 6000 Words. According to Time magazine (July 21, 1967), it was coined by Martin K. Speckter, an advertising-agency president and hobbyist printer, who had long brooded over the proper punctuation for such rhetorical questions as "who forgot to put gas in the car" and "what the hell". INTER-ROBANG is a blend of interro(gation point) and bang, the latter being printer's slang for the exclamation point.

In the last Kickshaws, Ralph Beaman asked for examples of ambiguous headlines that occur in real life. Mary Fontaine of Venice, Florida sent in an excellent example from the May 24, 1978 issue of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune: AGGRAVATED BATTERY CHARGE. "What else," she asks, "can you do with an aggravated battery but charge it?" Equally good is the New York Times headline of November 12, 1976 noted by Richard Lederer: ZONING REGULATIONS TO CURB PORNOGRAPHY SUBMITTED BY BEAME (I never realized the Mayor was a dirty old man). Many headlines are deliberately ambiguous by playing on words, such as IRON BARS MIGHT SOON HOLD BRASS in the Cincinnati Enquirer, reporting on a potential contempt citation against the city, JUDGE REFUSES TO PRESS PANTS SUIT in the Morristown Daily Record, relating the legal action brought by a doctor exposed in an airplane bathroom, and RAIN CLOUDS WELCOME AT AIRPORT. George Grieshaber's comment on the first of these was "My wife thought a new alloy had been discovered!"

Mary Fontaine noted that Ralph Beaman overlooked the Pocket Dictionary word kerosINE in Hidden Sins, and Jeff Grant offers HETERO/TRANS/PLAN/TAT/IO/N as a 21-letter reverse rhopalic, with all fragments in Webster's Third and the OED.

As for EX-WIFE or EX-HUSBAND, both Darryl Francis and Jeff Grant observe that the 1976 Supplement to the OED shows the former in lightface type under the entry EX-, giving two supportive illustrations (one from 1876). In the OED itself, there are quotations using EX-BEAU and EX-SPOUSE; the Supplement lists EX-FLANCEE. Apparently the word EX is regarded as a synonym for EX-WIFE or -HUSBAND: "Phil was your first husband, was he?" "Yes: he's my ex."

Ralph Beaman introduced the subject of numerical double plurals with ELEVENSES (a light lunch) and SEVENSES (the plural of SEVENS, a synonym for fan-tan that is "singular in construction"). Darryl points out that FOURSES is a type of meal also in Webster's Third, and ONESIES, TWOSIES and THREESIES are terms in the game of jacks specifically given in the American Thesaurus of Slang.

Leroy F. Meyers of Columbus, Ohio feels that DISINTERMEDIATION is a rarer seven-syllable word than many ending in -IBILITY or -ABILITY (INDIVISIBILITY, UNDESIRABILITY, etc.). Ralph's word fails to make the Kucera and Francis million-word sample, which does contain the eight-syllable INSTITUTIONALIZATION.