

# KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Associate Editor (note new address). All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

## Crossing the Language Barrier

"While I breathe, I hope" or as the Romans put it: DUM SPIRO, SPERO. This inspiring motto can be altered slightly by using the obscure sixth conjugation with its unusual U-ending for verbs in the first person singular. Thus from the noun AGNUS (lamb) certain pastoral tribes in conquered Etruria coined the verb AGNU, AGNURE (to make a noise like a lamb). Hence the ancient slogan DUM SPIRO AGNU (While I breathe, I bleat).

Similarly, if speakers of French have difficulty understanding the phrase PAS DE LIEU RHONE, QUE NOUS (and I'm sure they will), they'll have better luck with it if they "listen in English".

## Our Own Little New Yorker

From "Profile: Sharon Farrell" by Dale Munroe in the August 7, 1970 issue of World Cinema: "...For the past seven years Miss Farrell has been doing a slew of television roles, working opposite such notables as Lee Grant and Luther Adler. An intelligent, talented kook, this Iowa-born beauty loves to talk -- so we let her... 'I have no desire to play Joan of Arc or any of that crap. I think it's fine for exercise classes and that stuff. Someday I may change my mind and learn about parts like Medea. Isn't she the one who had snakes coming out of her head? ... Right now I'm reading avant garde works. This is what is real.'"

(No, Honey. Like you must be thinking of Medici (one of the Grogan sisters) who was zapped by Lord Percy.)

What's the Difference?

Every housewife knows the difference between BAKE and ROAST. Or does she? Since these are commonplace verbs, I consulted my favorite dictionary, The New Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary (1964) and found: BAKE: 1. to cook or become cooked in dry heat esp. in an oven. ROAST: 1. to cook (or become cooked?) by dry heat (as before a fire or in an oven). About as much difference in meaning as between FARTHER and FURTHER. Or CHILIAD and MILLENIUM. Or DIURNAL and QUOTIDIAN. Funny, though, Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines DIURNAL as "recurring every day" and QUOTIDIAN as "occurring every day". Granted that the adjectives are generally used to modify different classes of nouns, do you find any difference in their definitions? Both entries, incidentally, list DAILY as a synonym, but neither has a cross-reference to the other.

Websterian Curiosa

That's the title of a recent offering from Alden Myles of Plymouth, Mass. (could that be a pseudonym for John Standish?), who gave no street address that would have enabled me to acknowledge his unusual contribution. Mr. Myles, having read several issues of Word Ways, has the impression that authors and readers know Webster's Unabridged by heart. If any of you do, then you'll have no trouble with his quiz, consisting of some rarities that he could have gathered only by years of serendipitous meanderings through the Big Web:

1. Where does the letter combination QZR, as a single group, appear? (Hint: not in the abbreviations.)
2. What two entries consist of a word, together with the article a?
3. What two entries are pronounced backwards, i. e., in the pronunciation given, the right-hand part is pronounced before the left? (Duplicated words such as DUM-DUM are considered no-noes!)
4. What two words, anagrams of each other, mean respectively puzzle and Chinese puzzle?
5. What pair of anagrams, of respective forms 123456 and 341652, are synonyms?
6. There is a pair of four-letter words, differing only in the second letter, both of Asiatic origin but originally derived from the Latin. Though etymologically unrelated, they mean virtually the same thing. What are they?
7. What two-letter verb does the Big Web fail to conjugate?

Answers are given at the end of this issue.

## Tribute to a Logophile

My father, Jacob W. Silverman, awakened me to the beautiful vagaries of our language even before I learned to read. His ear was finely tuned to puns, spoonerisms (many of them clean), and malapropisms, of which his store was enormous. As a lawyer, he heard new ones every day. Said a client of her husband (to Dad's poker-faced merriment): "He wants his cake, but he doesn't want to eat it!" Testified a police officer during my father's apprenticeship: "The defendant was arranged for fornication." Said an insurance claim adjustor: "I'm afraid that matter's out of my Jewish diction." I recall how Dad's eyebrows rose last year as we listened to a talk-show moderator say over the car radio: "Frankly, I think he's barking up his sleeve." I've seen the same expression on the face of a philatelist who has just found a rare stamp.

His trove of sentences that most high school grammar teachers would rather pass than parse was practically limitless: "He ordered the bridge to be lowered." (subject of the infinitive), "He painted the house white." (objective complement), "He was given a book." (middle voice), and "He's a friend of mine." (double possessive).

He was, in his profession, sensitive to ambiguities of expression, e.g., "The Colonel's shooting was unjustified.", "Have you gotten my present yet?", "desk-size computer", "left turn from this lane only", and was, as a result, able to draft contracts that admitted no quibbles.

One of his unrecognized contributions to his profession was the result of his personal crusade to eliminate mumbo-jumbo from legal pleadings and formal instruments. The ancient formula: "Now comes forward the plaintiff, who alleges, avers, and deposes..." he amended to "The plaintiff avers..." He never suffered a demurrer from such alterations, and the present, more streamlined California Code of Civil Pleadings is the direct result of his efforts and those of other attorneys who followed his lead.

The legal profession has no oath so solemnly binding as the physician's Oath of Hippocrates, but my father practiced law as if it had. Yesterday, October 18, 1970, in his 73rd year, he died peacefully, as he had lived.

## Levy's Lexicography: The Game of the Name

Sanford Levy of Compton, California observes that many Christian names are words in their uncapitalized versions. Some of the lower-case versions (e.g., bob, bill, pat, etc.) have several meanings.

Sandy offers a dozen for the readers to define. Score yourself, using at least a collegiate-size dictionary. Any of the alternate possible meanings is acceptable. Grade yourself as follows: 8-Fair, 9-Good, 10-Excellent, 11-Expert, 12-Levy!

anna	jenny	marcel	otto
colin	joe	martin	rick
hector	lucifer	mel	warren

### Dash It All

Darryl H. Francis of Hounslow, England, has found two hyper-hyphenated entries in Webster's Third: JOHN-GO-TO-BED-AT-NOON, and KISS-ME-OVER-THE-GARDEN-GATE. Two fivers: can anyone go Darryl one better?

Darryl points out also that a new acronym, NADGE (Nato Air Defense Ground Environment), would be more appropriately styled a macronym. The first component is itself an acronym (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). The acronymania of the last decade or two has generated an interesting backlash. Space and missile engineers have wasted many man-hours trying to acronymize project names that were never intended to be acronyms. On this count, I'll have to plead guilty. Consider the APOLLO Project. The name was selected more or less arbitrarily as the third stage in the U.S. space program, following the MERCURY and GEMINI Projects. But I find it comforting to justify the choice by designating the project Advanced Program for Orbital Lunar Landing Operations.

### It's Not So Much How You Do It As How You Pronounce It!

The following dialogue (trialogue?) was contributed by a valued correspondent who prefers to be identified simply as a word buff:

Moe: Did you know that the longest, most involved explanation of a pronunciation in Webster's Third New Unabridged Dictionary is for the word PAH?

Webster's: PAH, /an energetically released p-sound, often followed by any of several vowel or consonant sounds; often read as 'pā or 'pā/

Joe: Uh-huh.

Webster's: UH-HUH, /a disyllabic sound with m-sounds at beginning and end, an h-like interval of voicelessness between, and heavier stress on the first member; in the registering of gratification the voiced members are more prolonged, about equal in

stress, and the sound is higher in pitch/

Exeunt. Curtain.

### Challenge Met

In the August issue, I challenged the readers to find what I hoped was a unique two-word entry in Webster's Third. Copies of same were promised all readers who found alternate solutions. From Mary J. Youngquist of Rochester, N. Y., thus: "Regarding your challenge ... the solution is LOBLOLLY BOY. But the 12312114 324 pattern is not unique. Have you never heard of Dabdaddy Bay? Or the Women's Lib Mothers' Holiday -- Madmammy Day? And there is a type of extremely selective dog-breeder known as a Pugguppy Guy."

Well, all right, Mary (but how did you miss Fagfaff's Gas?). When your alternate solutions appear in Webster's Fourth, you can be sure you'll get your Komplimentary Kickshaws Kopy. Many other solvers zeroed in on LOBLOLLY BOY: Ross Eckler, Ralph Beaman, Murray Pearce all found it quickly. But the earliest solution arrived from England. Now we know Transatlantic Mail is slow; Darryl Francis has evidently reactivated some of Reuters' earliest correspondents into a Pigeon Express.

Congratulations to the nine other solvers. For those readers who like working out isomorphs, which are really nothing more than mini-cryptograms, here are five more (only the first two are dictionary entries):

1. Identified with Katherine Hepburn: 12332 3435
2. Often causes insomnia: 1233423115311
3. No arachnophile, she: 123314 5266 578843
4. Handles seating arrangements: 12345 6789818T 8553147
5. Oh, well, there's always another street car:  
12 34 15 67 87 9T E5, 57 94 16.

### Josepha's Japing Jabberwocky

Josefa Byrne, chafing at Webster's "syntactical permissiveness" (she has nothing against slang -- she simply wants slang identified as such) and aroused over the brouhaha that attended Merriam Editor-in-Chief Philip B. Gove's "lexicographical Summerhill", has written an hilarious parody that Lewis Carroll would surely have admired, the unusual spelling and pronunciation of logomachy in the penultimate stanza, notwithstanding. Mrs. Byrne's poetic license expires December 31, 1970.

## GRAMMARBOOKY

'Twas Webster's Third that vainly strove  
 To keep alive its once good name  
 All mimsy was the Doctor Gove  
 The more the wrath outcame.  
 "Beware the Grammarbook, my sport!  
 The laws that bind the clause to hang!  
 Beware the orthodox, but court  
 The frumious banter, slang!"  
 He took his vorpal pen in hand  
 Long time he wished the language dead  
 Instead of lexicography  
 He should of stood in bed.  
 Then suddenly, the Grammarbook  
 (Who, not a single vowel, heard)  
 Came Strunking through the tulgey wood  
 About to be de-Fowlered.  
 One, two! One, two! And through and through  
 Spell., gram., and pron. were snapper-snipped!  
 He left it moribund at last  
 And finalized its crypt.  
 "And hast thou slain the Grammarbook?  
 Come to my arms, come take my hand  
 O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!  
 Ain't logo-machy grand!"  
 'Twas Webster's Third that vainly strove  
 To keep alive its once good name  
 All mimsy was the Doctor Gove  
 The more the wrath outcame.

A Logophile's Library

Josefa Byrne's lovely bit of Attic honey reminds me of a project I've long wanted to recommend to the readers of Word Ways. Let Editor Eckler know your favorite logologically-oriented books, so that a comprehensive Logophile's Bookshelf can be compiled. Two of my own candidates would be Fowler's Modern English Usage and Strunk's Elements of Style. My own shelf includes word-play, language history, etymology, and difficult-to-classify odds and ends such as You English Words by John Moore, Chadwick's The Decipherment of Linear B and Edmund Wilson's Night Thoughts, mentioned in the last Kickshaws column. What about yours?

## The Ghost Library

And while you're about it, why not send Kickshaws your contribution to my collection of non-books? By that I mean famous "books" of which nothing was ever written except their titles. Those familiar with the stories of Howard Phillips Lovecraft will understand what I mean when I mention the dreaded Necronomicon by the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred. Another is The King In Yellow (can anyone refresh my memory regarding the author in whose works this non-book appears?). Also, I believe some non-books recurred consistently in the writings of Baum, Lofting, Tolkien and Conan Doyle.

## More of That Nonsense (What's the Question?)

Here are another pair of answers. You're invited to pose the most plausible queries that might have elicited them.

1. A youthful figure
2. Black

## Word Association

In my opinion, standard word association tests are not specific enough to enable the tester to make valid conclusions about the testee. There should be two words for each association. A cigar could connote Groucho Marx, and a paintbrush could connote Grandma Moses, but how about a cigar and a paintbrush? Winston Churchill, who else? A wig might make you think of Marie Antoinette or Samuel Johnson. A hatchet might call Lizzie Borden to mind. But a wig and a hatchet: obviously, George Washington. Now you're ready for the Kickshaws Word Association Test. Think carefully before you check your character evaluation. Your words are APPLE and FIG.

Now for your rating. Adam and/or Eve: normal. No association at all: normal. Isaac Newton (falling apple and fig newton): hi, fellow weirdo. Isaac Newton plus Adam and/or Eve: same as previous rating. An association other than Adam and/or Eve or Isaac Newton: Hoo Boy!

## News From Sweet Home

Watch the bookstands in the early part of 1971. Former Editor Howard Bergerson of Sweet Home, Oregon is under contract with Dover to produce an anthology of anagrams, palindromes and other

logomaniacal gems. Those who are familiar with Howard's work will find it as indispensable an item on their bookshelves as Borgmann's books. The man can construct an anagram at the drop of a hat. I know, because I dropped a fedora, and he immediately came up with HEY DOG! RUN! : GREYHOUND. Without giving away too much, I can say that readers of Howard Bergerson's new book will find that the author has extended permutations and palindromes to new and higher dimensions.

### John

Judging by the spread of his name to all countries of the Western World and its predominance among male Christian names (second in popularity among female names), the impact of the Apostle John (Aramaic: Yochanan) and his writings was enormous. I remarked once to Murray Pearce of Bismarck, North Dakota that Ivan, Sean, Jean, Juan, Giovanni, Hans, Ian, Jan and Ignatz were equivalents of John (respectively) in Russian, Gaëlic, French, Spanish, Italian, German (diminutive of Johannes), Scottish, Dutch and Polish. Murray expanded the list considerably. Aside from other English diminutives such as Jack and Johnny, Zane is another form. Ioan is Bulgarian; Jan, Janos, Janko et al, Czech; Jehan and Jeannot are other French forms; Giannos et al, Greek; Jani et al, Hungarian; Gian is an alternate Italian version; Jonas et al, Lithuanian; there are numerous variants in Polish, Russian and Ukrainian; Joao is Portuguese; Ioan is Rumanian; Johan, Jens are Norwegian; and Jonam, Jens are Swedish. The list is far from complete.

### English As She Is Spoke

That's the title of a recent reissue by Dover of what is "ostensibly a Portuguese-English phrase-book". To attempt to describe to you its beauty is beyond my powers. Instead, let me quote what Mark Twain had to say about the 1883 edition and then give you a couple of samples. "One cannot open this book anywhere and not find richness . . . Nobody can add to the absurdity of this book, nobody can imitate it successfully, nobody can hope to produce its fellow; it is perfect, it must and will stand alone: its immortality is secure." Remember who is talking here: a man who had perfect pitch for the sonic booms that accompany amateurish attempts to cross the language barrier. Reread Innocents Abroad, or Twain's retranslation of "The Celebrated Jumping Frog" from its French translation.

From page 39 of the book: "Yesterday at evening, I was to bed so late that I may not rising me soon that morning. Well! what you



have done after the supper? We have sung, danced, laugh and played. What game? To the picket. Whom I am sorry do not have know it! Who have prevailed upon? I had gained ten lewis. Till at what o'clock its had play one? Un till two o'clock after mid night. At what o'clock are you go to bed? Half pass three ... " Here we have what the author calls "a familiar dialogue". I can't comment on the quality of the Portuguese on the left side of the page, but the English on the right is too "good" to have been a put-on. There was some suggestion at the time the book was written that it was a deliberate sham, but Twain maintained authoritatively that it was devised "in serious good faith and deep earnestness, by an honest and upright idiot who believed he knew something of the English language, and could impart his knowledge to others". One more quote, from an "anecdote" on page 98: "Two fines spirits of profession both two greats philosophers and warm disputers, were to dine to France marshall who, satisfied, to be a good warrior, did not offended him self not quite to be learned, to the middle of the entertainment, here are my philosophers to be fighting; they begin at to animate one's one gainst other, and keep him upon a tone which had get out of the bounds ..." For your own sake, buy it.

### He Laughs Best ...

I was tossing around the names of various wars in which both the opponents appear: Spanish-American, Franco-Prussian, Sino-English, Russo-Japanese, Arab-Israeli, Judaeo-Roman, Anglo-Norman, and Graeco-Roman. Is it a quirk of historians or merely a coincidence that the opponent named first was always the loser? It would appear that a country about to embark on war would do well to see that the war is named before the fighting starts, with the enemy named first!