

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 at least one month prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

Harry Partridge says "When discussing foreign names originally written in an alphabet order other than the Roman and attempting to find patterns based on an alphabet it is well to use the original alphabetical writing. By this criterion Khrjushev and Chernenko are both second-halfers in the Russian alphabet, which has 32 letters...for Kh and Ch (both a single letter in the Russian alphabet) are No. 22 and No. 24, respectively. Nor can Stalin slip into the first half of the Russian alphabet, because his real name was Dzhugashvili. He was a Georgian; the Georgian alphabet has 33 letters, of which the 32nd is dzh in pronunciation, but a single letter in writing." Mark Isaak notes that eleven out of the thirteen would-be presidents in 1988 are first-halfers: Babbitt, Bush, Dole, Dukakis, duPont, Gephart, Gore, Haig, Hart, Jackson, and Kemp (all but Robertson and Simon).

The Word Wurcher notes that Dmitri Borgmann omitted tautonyms when discussing internally-rhyming creatures of the wild - for example, the caracara (a Falkland Islands bird of prey) was cited twice in a recent National Geographic, and the motmot is a long-time friend. "Such creatures are legion, and legion squared if [one takes] into consideration the reduplicated Latin names of beasties and varmints."

Kyle Corbin notes that myxoxanthin, saxitoxin, Tex-Mex, and Xerox are all double-X words in Webster's Third Edition (the last three in the Addenda). To this, Trip Payne adds xenon hexafluoride and dextropropoxyphene, both in 12000 Words. He also notes the non-dictionary word Ex-Lax; there are, of course, many trade names like Exxon.

Eric Albert points out that the British family name Featherstonehaw (pronounced Fanshaw) has both a silent O and a silent R. Harry Partridge was unable to suggest family names of British gentry containing the silent letters F, J, or X, but he did mine the BBC Pronouncing Dictionary of British Names (Oxford University Press, 1971), edited and transcribed by G. M. Miller, for three geographic examples: Stiffkey (pronounced Stewky), Schjelderup (pronounced Shelldrup), and Meux (pronounced Mew). The last two of these sound decidedly non-British.

The Word Wurcher protests that Dmitri Borgmann was overhasty in casting edelstaalplaatslede into outer darkness. True, edel- does not mean "stainless," but it does mean "fine, high-quality, high-grade, refined, superrefined, superior alloy." What, then, is wrong with George Levenbach's nineteen-letter palindrome? Nothing.

Jed Martinez adds a Tummybuster: Sol noshes on noshes, until he is nauseous.

Commenting on "From A to lzzard," a list of words whose letter-scores were all different, Harry Partridge says "One of the few complaints that I have to make about the Master Logologist's logology is that he is given to numerology involving the alphabet with each letter represented by its numerical place...The equivalents, multiples, and other numerical relations thus obtained by adding, subtracting, etc., the number equivalents of individual letters in a word mean absolutely nothing...The order of our alphabet, although interesting and historically explicable, may for all purposes be considered the result of pure chance."

Kyle Corbin proposes adding a four-letter phrase to one of Dmitri Borgmann's quintets of related words: none/a few/some/a lot/many/most.

The Word Wurcher wonders why Dmitri Borgmann omitted puppet and marionette from his article "Robots on the Rampage." Jed Martinez notes that the answer to the second question should have been enumerated 9, not 6. Also, the two robots in the "Star Wars" series fall under a particular category of robot known as droids. The robot Robby on "Forbidden Planet" was not the Robinsons' faithful servant on "Lost in Space" (that was a totally different robot named, appropriately enough, Robot). Robby did, however, make a comeback on an episode of "Mork and Mindy" plus a cameo appearance in Joe Dante's film "Gremlins." Many other robot characters can be found in recent films such as "The Terminator" and "Robo-Cop." In Disneyland and Walt Disney World, many of the exhibits feature human-like characters who not only move, but talk just like people; Walt Disney gave this special process the name of audio-animatronics. Jed adds "I hope someone comes up with another robot quiz."

Jeremy Morse "much enjoyed the February Word Ways with the last of Dmitri Borgmann's easygoing pieces." He adds to "The ABCs of Logology the proper name Abchurch: St. Mary Abchurch (a church) is located in the city of London in Abchurch Lane. Harry Partridge observes that the prefix ab- (originating in the Latin a-, ab-, or abs-) always takes the form abs- before the letter C, which accounts for the rarity of ABC-words. He adds "I have often been surprised at the ignorance of such linguistic niceties on DAB's part."

No one came up with the placename Deerneck, proving that resistentialism is still alive and well in logology. George Scheetz was

intrigued by the article because his wife's maiden name was Durlay (variant Durleigh), an Old English placename meaning "deer wood" or "deer clearing." Jeremy Morse believes that the concept of resistentialism was originated by the British humorist Paul Jennings in the 1960s.

The Word Wurcher would like to point out that any parent with living children who commits suicide is committing parricide with respect to his children, a form of self-parricide. Self is a rather flexible prefix or, at least, an ambiguous one. The Word Wurcher refuses to speak of self-addressed envelopes (they do not address themselves) or self-storage cubicles (it is not oneself that is stored in such spaces). But who wants logic in language? George Scheetz comments that the entry leeching in "Death: A Logological Perspective" was misspelled leaching. "Of course, leaching itself would be a terrible way to die."

Trip Payne writes of "A New Approach to Transpositions" in the February issue "I love the idea here!" He suggests that Boston is better transadded to "unboots" than "to bonus"; Austin transposes to "Unitas," the football star, leaving a free letter for use elsewhere. "Cattle horn" is an entry in Webster's Second. Emulating the May and August 1982 Word Ways issues, he also demonstrates how to transadd the nine planets with only nine extra letters.

Kyle Corbin observes that "Mystery Mammals" left out bo (a male human); compare this with lass (a female human), which Borgmann did include.

Harry Partridge once overnigheted at Zzyzx, the last placename in Dmitri Borgmann's Z-list in "Facing the End." "Zzyzx Hot Springs (to give the place its full title) turned out to be some sort of retreat run by a fundamentalist preacher who had simply appropriated government land and some buildings, added others, and used the site as a place for his followers from Los Angeles to come and meditate, eat healthful food, and abstain from the fruit of the vine and the distillations of barley, corn, agave, and sundry other raw materials which, when chemically processed, become mind-altering substances. The most interesting artifact that graced this staid caravanserai was a mechanical exercise-horse that had once adorned the Calvin Coolidge White House. The preacher, whose name I forget, has since, after many a court battle and legal struggle, been dispossessed. The place is now some sort of public park and much less interesting than...when it functioned as ashram-cum-hotel." According to Trip Payne, Zavalla is spelled Zavala in the 1988 World Almanac.

Following up on the February Colloquy, Kyle Corbin has succeeded in finding two Merriam-Webster words containing twenty-three different letters (all but Q, V, and Z): FORMALDEHYDESULPHOXYLATE(S) and BACKJAWING. Only the plural form is shown in Webster's Second, but the singular can be inferred.

Following up the February Colloquy, Timothy Wheeler says "I've evolved a system somewhat like Mr. Sunners', and it may be useful for other kinds of anagramming. I jot down the letters in an irregular cluster, vowels in the middle, probable beginning consonants on top/left, probable ending consonants on bottom/right. It also helps to clump likely consonant and vowel-pairs. I find this cluster arrangement of letters very easy to scan for probable answer words. Its very irregularity seems to make it easier to decipher than the zig-zag word shapes that appear in a regular, Boggle-like letter grid."

Responding to the February Colloquy, Jeff Grant says that *stera* appears in an old formist word-list list with the source given as Dunglison's Medical Dictionary. When he wrote Murray Pearce for confirmation of the word, Pearce replied "I cannot locate *stera* [in my copy of] Dunglison's Medical Dictionary, Revised Edition, 1866." Perhaps it is in an earlier edition, or buried in some unlikely place; however, Grant is unwilling to cite Dunglison until *stera* is definitely located therein.

In "Mixcellaneous Quiz" in the November Kickshaws, Dave Morice asks readers to "unSherlock" (that is, solve) a word-problem. George Scheetz takes him to task: "As an avid Sherlockian (or Holmesian, as the British would say), I doth protest! The allusion to Sherlock Holmes is well and good, but any Sherlockian worth his or her salt would understand unSherlock to mean 'not solve.' Sherlock Holmes, after all, is synonymous with finding solutions. To quote Morice, give this neologism a Quick Pshaw."

 , a cargo of such cinders. But the first case is most curious. The Chilian miners were so con-copper pyrites contained not a particle of copper, aughed at the Englishmen for their ignorance, ed in turn, and bought their richest veins for a .. It is very odd that, in a country where mining xtensively carried on for many years, so simple a gently roasting the ore to expel the sulphur pre-cting it, had never been discovered. A few im-; have likewise been introduced in some of the chinery; but even to the present day, water is om some mines by men carrying it up the shaft in ags!

The article "Rivers of Type" in May 1986 inspired Mark Isaak to pay more attention to the spaces between words in text. The longest straight "river" cited in that article was eleven lines long. He has found a twelve-line river on p. 277 of the Harvard Classics edition of Darwin's The Voyage of the Beagle, illustrated at the left.

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A handful of people responded to William Sunners' prize contest in February to find a word having two synonyms inside it, each spelled in correct order. The first respondent, and the winner of the \$200 prize, was Kyle Corbin, with PASTILLE, containing PASTE and PILL. (Pastille is defined in Merriam-Webster as (1) "aromatic paste" and (2) "lozenge.") He also suggested FRANGIBLE, containing FRAGILE and FRAIL (all meaning "fragile"), and PATTLE, containing PATE, PAT, and PIE (all meaning "small flat food item"). Jed Martinez weighed in with the four-way NEGATORY, containing NO, NOR, NAY, and NARY, and Alan Levine suggested PERAMBULATE,

containing RAMBLE and AMBLE. Finally, Dale Morrison came up with BEHINDHAND, containing BEHIND and HIND.

Oops! Four lines of the second poem in "Four From Four Isn't Zero" were inadvertently omitted. Here is the entire poem:

Here once more.

"¡Mira allí!"

One's eyes gaze long.

Late, this moon sees Puno yawn, then doze.

Next, Lima sees this same pale face peer down amid snow caps
Upon Perú.

Inca land,

Niño land,

Coca land,

Amor land.

Also, Liechtenstein was misspelled in "Country Talk" in the November Kickshaws.

Jeff Grant has succeeded in improving his 23-word set of mutually non-crashing four-letter words, reported on in the May 1982 **Word Ways**: replace IDDY (umpty) with IDDO, ECKO with ESOX, and add UCKY. Iddo is in Webster's Second, and the other two words are in the OED. Now, if one could find an all-OED 24-word set...

Elsewhere in this issue, one can find two transdeletion pyramids starting with 17-letter words in which each transdeletion consists of the removal of a letter and the thorough mixing of the remainder to form a new word. If the latter requirement is waived, allowing simple deletions, beheadments, or curtailments, Kyle Corbin has constructed an 18-letter pyramid, the start of which is given on the left below. He has also found one that starts at the 21-letter level, but which truncates at the 14-letter level, given on the right:

preidentifications

reidentifications

denitrifications

identifications

dentifications

entifications

infectionist

confinities

infections

....

superacknowledgements

superacknowledgments

superacknowledgment

preacknowledgements

preacknowledgment

reacknowledgment

acknowledgement

acknowledgment

(first word not Websterian)

Finally, he has found a transdeletion of a 22-letter word which does not involve a beheadment, curtailment, or deletion: PENTAMETHYLENEDIAMINES to METAPHENYLENEDIAMINES.

Joe Leonard writes of "Anagrams, Anyone?" in the May 1987 **Word Ways**: "It's truly an impressive article in every respect. I was amazed that you describe the process by which you make up your

anagrams, so that others in turn can make them up. I'm impressed by your adding and subtracting, as the occasion demands. Likewise for your keeping the anagram in the same grammatical relationship as the original. Similarly for your avoiding the use of a C to stand for see, and your avoiding the use of apostrophes when none is called for. Of all your anagrams, I liked the transposition of I LOVE NEW YORK the best (VERY OK NOW? LIE!), even if Mayor Koch were to hate you for it!...I love your topping that one with DIANA PERSHING [who was HANGED AT PARIS]! Simply superb, quite humorous even though not true, and intensely ingenious of you! Keep up your excellent work..."

In the November Colloquy, Maxey Brooke gave a nonce-word with many hyphens from a Wodehouse story. Trip Payne passes along the following jawbreaker from John Updike's short story "A&P": ...then they all three of them went up the cat-and-dog-food-breakfast-cereal-macaroni-rice-raisins-seasonings-spreads-spaghetti-soft-drinks-crackers-and-cookies aisle..."

Way back in February 1970, Andrew Griscom noted a handful of English words which could be converted to words of one more syllable by removing two or more letters: staged to aged, shrugged to rugged, plague to ague. In a recent issue of *The Enigma*, Eugene Ulrich came up with a near-miss example: greengage to reengage.

CLASSIC AMERICAN GRAFFITI

This collection of graffiti from the walls of rural outhouses in the western United States and Canada, collected by Allen Walker Read in the late 1920s, was issued by Maledicta Press (331 S. Greenfield Avenue, Waukesha WI 53186) in 1977, and reviewed in Word Ways in February 1978. Reprinted in 1988, it can be obtained for \$7.50 postpaid from the address given above. From the earlier review: "Despite the gamy nature of his material, Professor Read has written a text of impeccable scholarship and dignity."