Both David Morice and Arthur Schulman have new books out. Dave’s The Great American Fortune Cookie Novel (Sackter House Media) will be reviewed in the next issue of Word Ways. Meanwhile Arthur has supplied us in this issue an article gleaned from his entertaining book Websterisms, 2008, Free Press (with an informative introduction by history professor Jill Lepore of Harvard University).

Susan Thorpe gives many congratulations to Dave for the 1000 pages of Kickshaws under his editorship — truly a magnificent achievement.

Ross Eckler writes:

Another fine issue! I especially liked "Accidental Tautonyms" and Hauptman's mixed metaphors. In Kickshaws, the rhyming pairs (and triples) with no letter in common are remarkable—reminiscent of rhymes with terminal letters all different ("Oh, Say" Feb 1976, May 1976 Colloquy). In "All End-Letters Different in a Poem" in the Aug 1986 issue, Willard Espy cited Starbuck's 15 long-O sounds poem and wrote one with 12 long-A sounds. Anil's Anguish Languish on university departments was very ingenious.

In Kickshaws, Susan Thorpe must have examined Philip Cohen's "The One-Letter Rebus" in the May 1976 Word Ways—he similarly could not find phonetic rebuses for H, W and Z. R E LEE - POTATO PEELER is a classic.

The Joycean scholars mentioned in Tanaka's article may have read too much into Finnegans Wake with respect to the existence of pi. This is reminiscent of Paul Maxim's articles in Word Ways in which he extracted historical information on comets and the Crimean war from a few lines of Mallarme's poems.

Were you aware that "Foshee Magically Interpreted" revisits Martin Gardner's "Mysterious Precognitions" in the Aug 1998 Word Ways? In similar vein, did Anil forget ("Fibonacci Words: Howl, Sex Orgy Poet!", Aug 2008) that he had already discussed Fibonacci words in his Aug 2003 article?

"Three Jog Knight" and "Two Knights A-Jog" are special examples of a new variety of wordplay--networks in which letters are assigned to links and each node is labeled with the letters associated with its incoming links. Has this type of wordplay previously appeared in Word Ways? I can't think of any example. One can devise another application: assign different letters to the links on the Platonic solids, such that each node has a word consisting of the letters of its incoming links. For a tetrahedron it is trivial: assign A,T,I,S,E R and form the words SAT ARE TIE SIR. For a cube, assign A,R,L,O,N,P,G,D,B,I,D,U with words RAN PAL LOG SIP ORE DIG DUE SUN; for an octahedron, assign A,L,T,P,S,E,N,Y,D,W,R,O to form PLAT WORD WAYS PONY TERN SLED. I leave the icosahedron and dodecahedron as an exercise for the reader.
I had a go at Dick Hess's puzzle, and came up with the unsurprising HAPPY HOLIDAYS, extracting the words EXHAUST ROTATOR TRAM PROSE EAST CHEST LINGO (EL)CAMINO RABBI PUDDING ACORN YULETIDE VISTAS. Ingenious!

**Simon Norton** comments on several back issues.

**Difficulty of languaged (p168):** The phrase "it's Greek to me" stems originally from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, where it is put into the mouth of a Roman. So should we conclude that Greek is considered a more difficult language than Latin, either by Romans or by the English (i.e. Shakespeare)?

**Misheard Beatles Tunes (p188):** Till reading this I thought that the lyric was "She's got a ticket to Rye", not knowing whether Rye (Sussex, England) or Rye (Westchester, New York) was meant.

**Five Jog Knights (p257):** There are other 5 move hops from d8 to d1, though all of them either involve continuing a move in the same direction (e.g. c6, b4, c3, b2) or going upwards (e.g. c6, d4, c2, e3).

**Colloquy (Obamanastics p258):** Charles Babbage did of course have a collaborator by the name of Ada Lovelace, daughter of Lord Byron. From the article's point of view, a pity they didn't marry!

**Kickshaws (p266):** More on presidential names. The new president's forenames are similar to the names of former leaders of Israel (Ehud Barak) and Iraq (Saddam Hussein). Does this bode well for peace in the Middle East?

**Scrabble (p272):** I looked at the 1785 move for some time wondering if the position was legal. There are 99 tiles on the board so there can only be 2 players and the other can only have 1 tile left, which means he/she must have played 6 or 7 the previous move. However there are several ways in which this could have been done, of which my favourite is to add R and IFIED to EQUAL.

But this suggested some puzzles to me. What's the simplest (i.e. fewest letters) possible for a position which can't be reached legally, with or without stipulating the position of the central square? To start with any word rectangle of dimensions 3 X n for n at most 8 can be reached legally wherever the central square is: start with the 3 letter word containing it, then extend the left and right columns to length n, then fill in the middle column.

Can the 5 X 5 squares at the bottom of the page be completed legally? The first certainly can: the last move could have been to insert the N and E of UNMEW, and the one before the I and E of TINES, before which the diagram unpicks easily.

**Bistate names (p275):** how about those that are names of real places? Excluding those US names of places near state boundaries that were deliberately concocted from the
names of the relevant states, and fairly trivial cases like Alaska + Washington = Alton, a remarkable example is California + Connecticut = Calicut (a city in India). Incidentally the name Ohippi occurs in the Ellery Queen book "The Devil to Pay" as a portmanteau of Ohio and Mississippi, though these are the names of rivers rather than states.

Bionyms (p323): I'm not sure whom it would apply to, but how about "A Wish called Fonda"?

**Ron Kon** writes:

I am shocked and disappointed at the blatant political bias demonstrated by your magazine's reporting that Sarah Palin was a logologically poor choice for Vice President (Nov 2008, p252). Using the 3rd Edition of Websters Unabridged the Rectangle

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  I M A M S
  S C R I P
  O C O T E
  P A L I N
  A I L E D
  G N A R S
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fairly leaps into creation.

Sarah Palin is clearly as logologically qualified to run this country as she is in other ways, maybe moreso.