

## A FOURTEEN-LETTER PAIR ISOGRAM

Can the impossible be done? Can anyone outdo the careful and tedious work by legions of logologists? Is there nothing left in logology that can be improved upon? Must one examine increasingly-obscure references to reach new heights in logology?

No, indeed. Darryl H. Francis of Middlesex, England has done what no man felt was possible: find a word of fourteen letters, the first half containing one each of seven different letters, and the second half the same letters rearranged.

In Language on Vacation (Scribner's, 1965), Dmitri Borgmann exhibited several ten-letter words having five pairs of letters: e.g., ARRAIGNING. A few words satisfied an additional symmetry-condition: e.g., HORSESHOER has the same set of letters in the first half and the second half of the word.

It is much more difficult to find twelve-letter words with six pairs of letters. Yet, the November 1968 issue of Word Ways exhibited TRANSNISTRIA, a former Rumanian administrative division listed in the Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World. Note that the additional symmetry-condition is not satisfied.

Clearly, a fourteen-letter word with seven pairs of letters seemed unattainable. In fact, Dmitri Borgmann went to great extremes to coin four words of this type.

Word Ways is pleased to honor Logologist Darryl H. Francis by presenting his "impossible" contribution:

T A E N I O D O N T I D A E

This is a boldface entry in Webster's Second Unabridged. Its fourteen letters contain seven pairs of different letters, and it furthermore satisfies the symmetry-condition described earlier.

What does it mean? It is the scientific name of a family of lower Eocene edentates (mammals related to modern-day sloths, armadillos, anteaters and aardvarks). The dictionary adds that they differ from present-day forms in that the cheek teeth have roots and enamel -- although Webster also defines edentate as "destitute of teeth".