

A FIFTEEN-LETTER PYRAMID WORD?

PAMELA H. BRANG

In *Word Ways*, way back when in May 1970, Kickshaws introduced the problem of a 1-2-3-4-5 Pyramid Word. This is a word having a letter pattern such that there is one of one letter, two of a second letter, etc., up to five of a fifth letter.

Now that Levine's Pattern Word List (see *Colloquy*) has reached twelve-letter words, the tension mounts. We know not if one will appear in the next and final volume of Levine's amazing work.

But the strain is too great! What might be possible contenders for this honor? If logologists must fill a gap with a coined word, which might be the most logical, the most reasonable, the most acceptable?

The initial reference gave the clever KNELLLESSNESSES, "referring to the respective conditions of those church bells that have ceased to sound because of mechanical defects or other reasons", coined by Dmitri Borgmann. It's difficult to editorialize on this. The coinage KNELLLESS grates; yet the triple L pleases.

The suffix -LESSNESSES certainly aids greatly in forming a likely word. For there are more nouns than one might have guessed appearing in dictionaries with this ending.

Webster's Third recognizes the verb NOLLE. This is a shortened form from NOLLE PROSEQUI, now a noun meaning "no further legal action will be taken". Thus one might form NOLLELESSNESSES, "states of no longer not taking further legal actions". But that double negative!

Further, Webster's Second gives LINNE (capitalized L, acute accented E), meaning "a small lunar crater". In these days of moon exploration, one might hear a future astronaut complaining about the LINNELESSNESSES of the exploration sites. Surely understandable as "states of not having small lunar craters".

Our search, however, is not restricted to the -LESSNESSES words. Consider the common word TATTLETALE. The plural is well-known as those who inform on others, and also as what they say. Now the prefix TELE- means "by long distance communication". Therefore, we form TELETATTLETALES, understandable as "persons or their statements revealing by telegraph, telephone or television gossip about others". This has a certain amount of charm, for the letter frequencies are 5-4-3-2-1 in order of appearance from

left to right.

None of these appeals strongly to me personally. They may be logical words, but I wouldn't expect to find any even in the largest unabridged dictionary.

My candidate is a word where the odds are nearer 50-50 that it is a real dictionary word. I'm sorry to say **it** isn't. But it is formed from common and usual fragments.

The word SUPPRESS is known to everyone. Webster's Second gives both RESUPPRESS and SUPPRESSER. Hence I have no qualms about the non-dictionary word RESUPPRESSER. With the finally achieved accent on women, and defending our rights to be heard and distinguished, I now offer "a woman who suppresses again" -- RESUPPRESSERESS. Note that this is 5-4-3-2-1 in order of appearance from right to left.