HONORABLE MENTIONS

JIM PUDER
Saratoga, California

It would obviously be hard to overstate the impact that Word Ways has had on the development of the field that it named, recreational linguistics, over the last four decades. So much of lasting interest and value has appeared on these pages that would never even have been thought of, much less published, had Word Ways' open forum not existed over that span to stimulate and encourage such thought. And for the great bulk of this time—an improbable 37 years—that forum has owed its existence primarily to the ongoing support and dedication of Ross and Faith Eckler. Thank you, Ross and Faith, for that remarkable gift.

The general approach to the ongoing Eckler festschrift seems to be to honor Ross and Faith by putting their names through every imaginable wordplay wringer, which strikes me as being not inappropriate. In February, Darryl Francis and Susan Thorpe proficiently mined the transposals of those names, but several interesting two-word transposals of the name “Ross Eckler” remain to be mentioned. Let’s say you’re a fortune teller who specializes in divining your clients’ supposedly “ideal” occupations by reasserting the letters in their names, and that one day the 12-year-old Ross walks into your tent, plucks down his buffalo nickel, and spells out his name for you. What do you say to this earnest-looking lad? Well, after scribbling mysteriously for a bit, the chances are that you tell him, “My boy, to give yourself the best statistical chance, as determined by the mystic power of occult orthographies, of enjoying a future of wealth, health and happiness, you must focus all of your efforts on becoming...

- a creator of new breeds of large deer [an ELK-CROSSER],
- a blow-dryer specialist in a hairdressing salon [a LOCKS-SERER],
- a leading man in “B” movies [a LESSER “ROCK”],
- an insurance actuary [a LOSS-RECKER],
- a pickpocket in Albania [a LEKS-SCORER],

or perhaps even, with hard work,

- a florist’s assistant who does nothing but sit and take telephone orders for roses all day [a ROSES CLERK with CLERK SORES].”

But diverting as transposals are, these festschriftivities would be incomplete, in my opinion, without a round of the old tattarrattat, the old pizzazzip, in other words a palindromic or two. Serendipitously, “Ross Eckler” happens to be one of those favored few full personal names which is readily embeddable in palindromic passages, while “Word Ways” happens to be one of the few periodical titles I can think of which is so embeddable. Obviously, such a felicific coincidence cries out for both terms to be featured together in the same palindrome, but first things first. To lead off, here is a sort of reverse Panama palindrome for “Ross Eckler” alone:

Ross Eckler: a tsar, a tar, a star elk-cessor!

Ah, yes, to be sure, the reader may be thinking, but what exactly is an “elk-cessor”—not some sort of woodsy cow-orker, surely? Certainly not. No, with no suggestion that it is either obsolete or archaic, Webster’s Third identifies cess as a transitive verb in British usage meaning “to tax”; hence, an “elk-cessor” would literally be an “elk-taxer” (in the financial sense). But should the term be “cessor” or “cesser”? Alas, Webster’s doesn’t list an agent noun for cess.
Oxford to the rescue: according to the OED, cessor is (or was; the OED considers the word obsolete) the predominant spelling of the agent noun, with two other suffixes, -ar and -er, occurring as variants. A cessor, incidentally, wasn’t a “taxer” per se, according to the OED, but rather a tax assessor. So evidently, Ross has all along been not only an “essay assessor,” palindromically speaking, but a wapiti-evaluator as well.

Next, suppose that the Word Ways were the name of a small, all-wooden ferryboat; in that case, the following question might, conceivably, sometime be asked at, say, an inquest:

Sir, did all-lignin Word Ways yaw, drowning ill lad Idris?

And finally, here are the two featured terms together in—what else?—a feature-length palindrome, one that, as might be suspected from its stark black-and-white color scheme, is decidedly a member of that dark but fascinating genre known as...

**Palindrome Noir**

“...So Ida spots Ti—Hey! Hey, wow! News!...Not newsy? Aw...” Drowning ill-lit Sevilla, Nimes dame Magda-Erma is “dedal” to me: “First-rate, yes? A reign of ’Ross Eckler’ elapses...”

(Pale, emitting nada, I nab Lanier—a wan “Uniter” cretin—unaware in Albania. Dang nit!...Time elapses. Paler, elk-cessor Fong I ‘erase’....)

“...yet 'arts-rife, mot-laded, Siam-read, game-mad, seminal, live, still-lignin' Word Ways went on, Swen!!...Wow!!”

“Yeh. Yeh, it’s tops....Adios.”

In conclusion, I’d just like to remark that...

An editor rare, good Ross Eckler
Served decades with seldom a heckler;
   He never was reckless
   With trust won, nor feckless,
And in fact, no one could have been feckler!