

## COLLOQUY

Ed and Gudrun Wolpow, have had many connections with the Ecklers over the years and add to the celebration of their retirement. “To choose what to say about the Ecklers, well, each word weighs. The French speak of *le violon d’Ingres* – Ingres’ violin – the violin a hobby for the famed painter, but a consuming one. Ross and Faith played our (and their) violins – a delight in our avocational worlds that we sometimes envied for our main callings. Many thanks for this joyful flourish at the edge of our “real” lives – reminding, as in a great painting, how important are the edges.”

Pages 150 and 151 of Susan Thorpe’s “Shifting Vowels & Consonants Independently: were interchanged in the May issue – a printer’s error. We remind readers that Thorpe’s essay “A Survey of American Indiana Logology” runs currently on our webpage ([www.wordways.com](http://www.wordways.com)). We plan to permanently place the historical “New York Times Crossword Goofs” by Will Shortz on the site also. Any corrections or additions noted by readers of these articles (or any others) will also appear there. A correction to “Magic Word Dice” is already running.

Jim Puder writes:

One way of looking at the word graphs generated by your magic word dice is that they are word ladder networks having the interesting property of being self-continuous—i.e., their top edges are continuous with their bottom edges, and their left edges with their right edges. As you point out, such a network can be thought of as covering the surface of a torus without interruption.

At the level of four-letter words, the greatest challenge to the constructor of a network of the SALT-MINE kind would seem to lie in finding a reasonably common set of dictionary-listed words to use in it. In that respect, your SALT-MINE graph is nearly optimal, with 15 out of its 16 words being listed in Webster’s Third New International Dictionary (only SINT is missing), and with 13 of those words also being listed in Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. The two networks shown below slightly improve upon those numbers: in both, all words are listed in Webster’s Third, and in both, all words but one may be found in Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate (the two exceptions are TANE and POTE).

CANE	CANS	CONS	CONE	CANE	CANS	CONS	CONE
CAPE	CAPS	COPS	COPE	CATE	CATS	COTS	COTE
TAPE	TAPS	TOPS	TOPE	PATE	PATS	POTS	POTE
TANE	TANS	TONS	TONE	PANE	PANS	PONS	PONE

Can any reader construct a self-continuous four-letter-word word ladder network of this kind (i.e., in which the letters change according to this pattern) in which *all* of the words are taken from a collegiate dictionary?

Ross Eckler comments:

A bumper crop of Kickshaws! Here are a few comments.

Back in the 1970s Philip Cohen sent me a bunch of engineering conversations from some magazine:

1 mentality = 100 centimentalities  
2x10<sup>6</sup> pinpricks = 1 MHz  
3 camp beds = 1 tricot  
10<sup>9</sup> antics = 1 gigantic  
3 unicorns = 1 triceratops  
10<sup>6</sup> feet in the mouth = 1 megawatt (Watt was an Interior Secretary proneto gaffes)  
1/2 lavatory = 1 demijohn  
10<sup>-12</sup> surprises = 1 picaboo  
10<sup>-12</sup> dillies = 1 picodilly  
2 tribes = 1 diatribe  
10 glassfuls = 1 decanter  
1 1/2 dice = 1 trice  
2 itches = 1 bitch  
10<sup>6</sup> cops = 1 megapolis  
1/2 Soviet news agency = 1 demitasse  
10<sup>-15</sup> homicides = 1 femtofatale

I pronounce c-h-anger three different ways--see W R Espy, Words to Rhyme With (2001, Checkmate Books): hanger ANGER, anger ANGGER, changer ANJER.

The solution the Swift riddle is "the vowels"--see Mark Bryant, Dictionary of Riddles (Routledge, 1990)

EULOGISE is a remarkable midpoint in the word list of 8 letters with 5 vowels-- there is only one earlier example in Alan Franks's "The Middle of an Alphabetic List" Word Ways Aug 1984.

Daniel McGrath's Letterplay Looking for a Name is simply a generalization of Pyramid Words (1 letter appearing once, 1 letter appearing twice, etc.). Susan Thorpe's "Geometrical Words" in the Aug 1997 Word Ways calls words such as RHODODENDRON Triangle Words. Ralph Beaman in the Feb 1973 Word Ways called them Pair Pyramid Words.

Ross also adds:

Here are a few emendations to another fine issue with an impressive variety of articles(100 pages!):

Puder: interestingly, I once considered the job of actuary (LOSS-RECKER).

Hauptmann: a fuller account of the Alpher-Bethe-Gamow paper is given in "Wordplay in Astronomy" in the May 2006 Word Ways. The bottle-smashing incident has an echo in the story "Three Little Sacks" by the Word Wurcher (Harry Partridge) in the August 1983 Word Ways. The opponents of Jose Fernando de ABASCAL, an early viceroy of Peru, was sent three little sacks containing salt, beans, lime, which in Spanish are SAL, HABAS, CAL. This is pronounced "SAL, ABASCAL" which translates to "Get out, Abascal"!

Thorpe: "Spooneristic Variations" recalls some four-way Spoonergrams in the National Puzzlers' League early 1980s Enigmas:

he weighed my band; we made by hand (Ross Eckler, Jun 1981)  
sad way he did; Dad say we hid (Fred J Schwab)  
white cliffs of Dover, lad; light whiffs of clover, Dad (Mary Hazard, May 1982)

These are typically clued in verse, such as the third example:  
A family group sailed to England from France,  
Watched at the rail for the first glimpse of land.  
"These are the FIRST! Give them more than a glance!"  
Later the son, as the shore breezes fanned,  
Said, "Oh, I caught LAST, and of meadows in bloom!"  
"No," replied Pa, "That's your mother's perfume!"

Of course, these only partially meet Susan's request for a set of four four-way Spoonergrams.

A quick addendum to McManus's "Sudoku Patterns" – One can insert in the three diagonal 3x3 regions three double word squares with no words in common: SPA/ORT/DYE, SPY/ARE/DOT and ROD/APE/STY.

Eric Harshbarger comments on portmanteau words (invented by Lewis Carroll) for celebrities like "Bennifer" for Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez. Eric claims these combinations "make him cringe" but has coined a metaportmanteau word to describe these: NATALIEPORTMANTEAUX words. The editor is reminded of combos like MECKWELL to name expert bridge partnerships.

ANIL is currently writing a book and this will cut into his contributions to *Word Ways* for a time but he still tries to read everything and particularly liked the May articles of Grant, Gutmann, Eckler, Golomb, Kahan, Hauptman, Puder and Andy Liu's "Canadianisms". Since Karol Wyness of Tilden Lake, Ontario also liked this last name quiz, Liu's fame spread about 11,500 miles across the globe.

David Dillon reports that our companion website ([www.oscarthumpbindle.com](http://www.oscarthumpbindle.com)) has had 1000s of hits since its inception several weeks ago. It will be updated with novelty items from time to time and will contain the answers to Oscar's small 9x9 filler crosswords from the Journal.