COLLOQUY

In May of 2007 the United States Postal Service did away with all the cheaper rates for foreign mail. All mail now must go at air mail rates, sometimes as much as nearly $10 per issue. In addition certain United States special rates have been abolished. Word Ways must now be delivered by first class mail to domestic subscribers and by air mail on a sliding scale to foreign readers. Please check our new rates on the inside front cover. These rates are designed so that Word Ways can break even in its production — we do not aspire to a profit.

ANIL writes that he is an admirer of Chris McManus' Sudoku puzzles that have appeared recently but would like to point out his own contribution in the November, 2005 issue.

Stuart Kidd writes “Readers of the excellent ‘Pairagrams’ in the May Kickshaws are referred to my extensive lists at ‘Importunate Permutation’ in the August 2003 issue.”

Jeff Grant writes:

“I was particularly interested in ‘Near-Heterogrammic Double 5-Squares’ by Rex Gooch (and Susan Thorpe) as it is an area I have worked on myself. It is a real tragedy that Rex is not around anymore.

I have always felt that a 5X5 square containing 23 different letters is possible. However, with all due respect to Rex and Susan, I would have to reject several squares because of the dubious terms used. Having corresponded regularly with Rex, and knowing his standards, I find it hard to believe that he would accept abbreviations (BFMPS, HDVIG, FMCGS, FDKTA, FITZB, SBANK), Roman numerals (MDCXV, XDLB, XLVII), or foreign words (PFLOC, VIJGH, SPIJK) in this particular challenge.

That eliminates all the squares with 24 different letters and half those with 23, leaving only the KHVAZ, SKWEZ and SZPAK examples. I think the second of these is the best (SKWEZ square), composed entirely of OED words and ‘stand-alone’ place-names (ie, not part of a longer name). However, the KHVAZ and SZPAK squares do have a slightly more ‘English’ look, with words like REFIX, BLOCS, UPGET, WORMY, PRIDE and AMNIC.

Note that in the GWAHN square, GROSZ is also a polish coin (Web3), and in the SZPAK square, KYGTH should be defined as ‘vf’kith’ n. = knowledge - OED’, as shown in the SCULD square (it may be a variant of ‘kite’ somewhere in OED, but it isn’t in boldface as a variant, as it is under ‘kith’).

Solomon Golomb reports on the history of the limerick. “As Ove Michaelsen points out, Edward Lear did much to popularize this verse form, but Lear's limericks usually ended the fifth line with the same rhyming word as in the first line, a deficiency that was later corrected. I don't know whether anyone has ever credited Sir William S. Gilbert for his
contribution to the history of the limerick for the following two-stanza example from one of the G&S operas, which I quote from memory:

My name is John Wellington Wells,
I'm a dealer in magic and spells
   And blessings and curses
And never-filled purses
   And prophecies, witches and knells.

If anyone anything lacks
He'll find it already in stacks
   If he'll only look in
On the resident djinn,
Number 70, Simmery Axe.

I'm not sure of all my spellings, and I haven't tried to ascertain the date this was written, but it was almost certainly earlier than 1907. I suspect that a thorough search will uncover earlier examples of de facto limericks than any of Lear's. This could be a challenge for the readers of WORD WAYS."

Sir Jeremy Morse comments on the May issue: "Another rich issue in May, on which a few comments. I send them to you for Colloquy because I understand that that column deals with comments on previous articles whereas Kickshaws is for original contributions. If I am wrong, please forward this letter to Dave Morice, and I shall know from where my comments appear what to do in future!

p. 90 Liddell & Scott's Greek Lexicon and OED concur that the adverb is BOUSTROPHEDON, not BOUSTROPHON. This delightful word means "as the oxen turn in ploughing", i.e. alternately to right and right to left.

p. 96 In Jeff Grant's typically enjoyable article, EM/NV is rather limited. Better in my view are AS/TO (a phrase) and IN/SO (four different parts of speech, i.e. IN prep., SO adv., IS verb and NO adj.

p. 121 In standard English – see, e.g. Chambers Dict. – ANGER (ngg) and HANGER (ng) are definitely not exact rhymes, as also are not FINGER (hgg) and RINGER (g). One finds ngg universally in words ending – NGLE, and usually in –NGER, including common comparatives like LONGER, STONGER, and YOUNGER. But nouns formed from verbs in –NG make ng, as would a rare comparative like WRONGER.

p. 128 The best transposed quartet I know is the headline from the trade paper DISCOUNTER INTRODUCES REDISCOUNT REDUCTIONS.