KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic Kickshaws to the Kickshaws editor at drABC26@aol.com. Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

A “Kickshaw” is defined either in a neutral manner as “a bauble, trifle, or knickknack” or more flatteringly as “a fancy tidbit; a delicacy”. The purpose of this feature is to satisfy both definitions by presenting linguistic items of light weight and vast diversity, designed to appeal to the tastes of all recreational “linguisticsians”. David L. Silverman, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1969.

GIANT KICKSHAWS

I am David, and this issue of Kickshaws has become my Goliath. Kickshaws items have been piling up over the past six months. The last two issues of Word Ways contained older items. The May issue had work by the original Kickshaws editor, Dave Silverman; and the August issue was assembled by Ross Eckler out of material that had accumulated in his files. Consequently, there are many, many new items Kickshawing around in this issue. This is the biggest column ever, two to four times longer than any previous column. It is dedicated to Ross and Faith for their tremendous work in keeping Word Ways the vital force in modern wordplay, letterplay, logology, recreational linguistics, or whatever this stuff we do is called. The Ecklers have given a forum to people whose knowledge of words went, as Dmitri Borgmann might have said, beyond language. So kickshoes off, kickshaws off, and kickshaws on.

Read All About It!

On Jay Lena’s “Headlines” one night, Lena showed the photo of an angry American patriot demonstrating against immigration and carrying a large sign to clearly express his feelings on the issue: “Speak English in ARE country!”

Extreme Redneck

The following are redneck jokes picked off the web by Ove Michaelsen, who has met a few rednecks in his travels. According to his internet research, you’re an EXTREME redneck when:

You let your 14-year-old daughter smoke at the dinner table in front of her kids.
The Blue Book value of your truck goes up and down depending on how much gas is in it.
You’ve been married three times and still have the same in-laws.
You think a woman who is "out of your league" bowls on a different night.
You wonder how service stations keep their rest-rooms so clean.
Someone in your family died right after saying, "Hey, guys, watch this."
You think Dom Perignon is a Mafia leader.
Your wife’s hairdo was once ruined by a ceiling fan.
Your junior prom offered day care.
You think the last words of the "Star-Spangled Banner" are "Gentlemen, start your engines."
You lit a match in the bathroom and your house exploded right off its wheels.
The Halloween Pumpkin on your porch has more teeth than your spouse.
You have to go outside to get something from the fridge.
One of your kids was born on a pool table.
You need one more hole punched in your card to get a freebie at the House of Tattoos.
You can’t get married to your sweetheart because there’s a law against it.
You think loading the dishwasher means getting your wife drunk.

The Ten-Square Limerick

Inspired by the news that ten-squares have been making recently, Ove has written an elegy and/or eulogy about it:

Well, someone constructed a TEN-square,
And now we all know that it’s BEEN there.
   It isn’t the first,
   Nor is it the worst.
The best? Let me borrow that PEN there.

Euphonious Word/Names

“Many people have lists of favorite words,” Ove writes. “These are mine. I added ‘beautiful’ to the list after your mentioning it in an e-mail message. Author James Joyce considered ‘cuspidor’ the most beautiful-sounding word in English. Annie Dillard, in her book Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, picked ‘sycamore’ as the most pleasant-sounding. Scottish poet Alastair Reid sent Willard Espy ‘twilight’ as his favorite; and screen legend Joan Fontaine’s choice was ‘affluence.’ On Mr. Espy’s list were ‘onomatopoeia,’ ‘murmuring,’ ‘lullaby,’ and ‘ Shenandoah.’ Film star Ellen Burstyn picked the word ‘miasma.’ ‘Fritillary’ is one of my former wife’s favorites. ‘Euphonious’ is one of mine. Here are some chosen by friends. Thanks to Mary Jo Stilwell.

Cucamonga (California)
Babylonia
Yazoo City (Mississippi)
Kalamazoo (Michigan)
Sheboygan (Wisconsin) / Cheboygan, Michigan
Paducah (Kansas and Kentucky)
Topeka (Kansas)
chalupa
jalopy
Tegucigalpa (Honduras)
Okefenokee (swamp in Florida and Georgia)
serendipity
mahogany
skullduggery
machete
scenario
ethereal
calendula
sacrosanct
catamaran
crepuscular
garbanzo beans
rutabaga
beautiful
sarcophagus
Beezlebub
Deuteronomy (the fifth book of the Pentateuch)
filibuster
sacroiliac
haberdashery
spatula
uvula
elegant
eloquent
amalgam
obsequious
apothecary
vespertine
liquid
swivel
baboon
bamboozle(d)
befuddled
conundrum
fisticuff(s)
dilapidated
macadamize
indubitably
mugwort
ambrosia
azure
cinnamon
couscous
vapid
translucent
fandango
shebang
innuendo
astonish
exquisite
bombard
coagulate
petulant
gelatinous
ebulliant
heebee-jebees (coined by U.S. cartoonist Billy DeBeck in 1923)
didjeridu
spectacular
tintinnabular
juxtaposition
effervescent
perpendicular
highfalutin
epiglottis
medulla oblongata
prestidigitation
hemidemisemiquaver (a 64th note)
discombobulated

"Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me, those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language." Quoted by Edith Wharton in A Backward Glance (1934); Familiar Quotations by John Bartlett (1968). My candidates for the ugliest words in English are just too terrible to mention." [My two favorites ever since I heard them in high school arepellucid freshet—DM]

licit Claimers: Words Rarely Used in Their Positive Form

"Something can be out of whack, but never in whack," Ove notes. "We often read "disclaimers," but never "claimers." "Heveled" is not the antonym of "disheveled," nor is it used. "Gruntled" is an actual word, meaning satisfied, soothed, or put in good humor (British dialect). "Grurtle," as a noun (Scottish dialect), means face, or the snout of a pig. Willard Espy in his book The Game of Words [1972], skillfully incorporated twelve such words into a short poem he titled "I Dreamt of Couth.") In The Book of Lists #2 (1980), Randy Alfred cited over thirty words that are rarely used in the positive form. Here are some current words, mainly from his collection, nearly all of which can be found in most unabridged dictionaries."

advertent (heedful) – inadvertent
biotic (of or pertaining to life) – antibiotic
clement (mild, lenient, compassionate) – inclement
conscientious (conscientious) – unconscionable
corrigible (correctable) – incorrigible
couth (smooth; showing sophistication) – uncouth
effable (utterable; expressible) – ineffable
evitable (avoidable) – inevitable
furl (draw in and secure to a staff) – unfurl
licit (legal, permitted) – illicit
maculate (stain; mark with a spot or spots) – immaculate
nocuous (noxious; likely to cause injury; harmful) – innocuous
odorant (an odorous substance) – deodorant
parage (equality of condition, blood, or dignity) – disparage
peccable (liable to sin or error) – impeccable
pervious (permeable; accessible to reason or feeling) – impervious
wieldy (strong; manageable) – unwieldy

Me, Robot: Robo-Verse

Ove made a major find in the field of robo-verse: "I was lying awake one night, disturbed over the few limericks there seemed to be on the subject of robots. Well, to my delight, I found there have been many such verses written; in fact, Gloria Maxson, of Whittier, California, has devoted more than seventy limericks to our steel-collar workers. Here are two of her best (from Dr. Crypton's [Paul Hoffman's] column in Science Digest, August 1983, and two by other people. Thanks to Wilder Bentley of Occidental, California, for bringing that magazine to my attention, back in the late 1900s.
A robot with lofty inflection
Read Stein in the poetry section,
But read it as "Rose
Is arose is arose,"
And thought it concerned resurrection.

This one contains contradictory proverbs.

The robotical judge never knew
Which ethical dictum was true:
"To forgive is divine."
Or "Vengeance is mine"--
So it simply rotated the two.

THE PARANOID ROBOT

A paranoid robot named 2-A
Was known to the girls as a roue,
And he'd say with a frown
When his chips were all down,
"They tell me they love me, but do they?"
--Edward Gordon

NO MATCH

Jimmy Connors said, "I'm gonna beatcha"
To the strange-looking chrome-plated creature.
But it whipped him that set,
And quipped at the net,
"Bjorn Cyborg's the name. Glad to meetcha."
--Tom Sales

A Paean to the Pun

To some, puns are a pain in the neck, but to others, they deserve a paean to their humor. Ove
sends the following limerick along with some comments on puns.

PUNS

Some can't tell a good from a bad one,
Or distinguish a sane from a mad one.
In their perfect world,
No pun would be hurled
From a depth of my mind, if I HAD one.

"Puns are good, bad, and indifferent, and only those who lack the wit to make them are unaware
of the fact." So claimed H. W. Fowler. It's been said that puns are expressions of "false wit."
There are people without a sense of humor who dislike comedy, and tone-deaf people who hate
music. Explain conscience to a sociopath. I'm with Fowler on this. Puns work best when
spontaneous, perfectly timed, and don't derail conversations. They seldom, if ever, work in stand-
up comedy. The quality of some puns have been hard for me to judge. The name of a device
called a Tuna Turner made me chuckle. If it had been made by a company called Icon, would
that have been going too far? The product was mentioned in the mid-80s by Letterman while interviewing Tina.

**Love Comes to the Executioner**

Ove points out an unusual movie with an unusual wordplay twist to it. The plot: Two brothers are in love with the same woman, who is also on death row. One brother, Heck, is the executioner, and the other, Chick, is facing execution himself. At his execution, Chick is asked if he has any last words, and he says he's composed a limerick for the occasion. It goes like this:

I once had a brother named Heck,  
Who deserved to get rung by the neck.  
He stole my true love  
So up his ass I will shove  
Everything but the kitchen sink.

To which Heck replies with disgust, "It doesn't even rhyme."

**Good Healthy Smoke**

Also called *Talkin' Tokin' Blues*, this poem/song by Ove speaks of the woes of the lows of *cannabis sativa*. He notes that "the chord progression wanders appropriately."

Went out to the porch for a good healthy smoke,  
And proceeded to burn out my throat with a toke.

Instead of that "magic carpet ride,"  
I sat in a tragic tar pit, fried.

Sadly, I never could learn how to roll it,  
And when I got loaded, I couldn't control it.

I found myself buzzed, but I didn't know where,  
Then talked for an hour with friends who weren't there,

Remembering things that never occurred,  
Except for some comment I made to a bird.

I watched a parade of trees going by  
And said, "Never again will I ever get 'high!'"

**The Latest Dope on Dope**

According to the New York Times (3-24-06), marijuana traffickers have top-notch advertising names for their products. Among the "brand" names used to sell dope-laced candy, according to federal agents who made arrests in March in Oakland, Calif., are Buddafingers, Pot Tarts, Double Puff'Oreo, Puff-a-Mint Pattie and Toka-Cola.

**Paradoxical Limericks**

There was a young girl in Japan
Whose limericks never would scan.
When someone asked why,
She said with a sigh,
"It's because I always attempt to
get as many words into the last
line as I possibly can."

Another young poet in China
Had a feeling for rhythm much finer.
His limericks tend
To come to an end
Suddenly.

There was a young lady of Crewe
Whose limericks stopped at line two.

There was a young man of Verdun

Martin Gardner writes: "The four preceding limericks, when I published them in my Scientific American column, prompted the British writer of comic verse, J.A. Lindon, to compose the following:

A most inept poet of Wendham
Wrote limericks (none would defend 'em).
"I get going," he said,
"Have ideas in my head.
Then find I just simply can't."

That things were not worse was a mercy!
You read bottom line first
Since he wrote all reversed—
He did every job arsy-versy
A very odd poet was Percy!

Found it rather a job to impart 'em.
When asked at the time,
"Why is this? Don't they rhyme?"
Said the poet of Chartham, "Can't start 'em."

So quick a verse writer was Tuplett,
That his limerick turned out a couplet.

A three-lines-a-center was Purcett,
So when he penned a limerick (curse it!)
The blessed thing came out a tercet!

Absentminded, the late poet Moore,
Jaywalking, at work on line four,
Was killed by a truck.

So Clive scribbled only line five.
Who Wrote Shakespeare?

Robert Service, according to Martin, wrote the following quatrain to support the conjecture that Francis Bacon was the true author of all Shakespeare's plays:

Said Jock McBrown to Tam McSmith,
"Come on, ye'll pay a braw wee dramlet;
Bacon's my bet—the proof herewith...
He called his greatest hero—*Hamlet*.

Intended Acrostic?

"The following passage is from Act 1, Scene 1, of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors,*" says Martin. "Read the initial letters up from the word 'My,' then 'My,' and down the next four starting letters. You get 'Want my baby.' A coincidence? Or did Shakespeare, who enjoyed wordplay, intend the acrostic? I owe the discovery of this acrostic to Leigh Mercer, the British word play expert who composed the famous palindrome, 'A man, a plan, a canal—Panama!'"

To bear the extremity of dire mishap!
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,
My soul should sue as advocate for thee,
But, though thou art adjudged to the death,
And passed sentence may not be recall'd
But to our honour's great disparagement,
Yet will I favor thee in what I can.

Two Unusual Rhymes by Martin

TWEEDLE D.D.

A divinity student named Tweedle
Refused to accept his degree.
"It's bad enough to be Tweedle," he said,
"Without being Tweedle D.D."

TOM'S HEIGHT

My name, good sir,
Is Horace Spencer.
My age, twelve years,
My height four ten, sir.

Ode to Apricots

The following free-verse doggerel, by Armand T. Ringer, conceals the three-letter abbreviations for the twelve months, taken in chronological order. They are the first three letters of each line. (Thanks to Martin.)
Janet brought some stewed apricots on a cold February morning for her three children, Mary, Julie, and Junior.

Apricots are delicious when stewed. Maybe you don’t think so? Junior doesn’t like stewed apricots, but Julie and Mary believe that they augment the taste of cereals and ice cream. Separately, stewed apricots are also tasty. Octopuses would surely find apricots a novel kind of fruit, but they might decline to eat an apricot once they tasted it.

A Mad Metaphor

“In my opinion,” Martin admits, “the first three lines of T.S. Eliot’s “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” contain the worst metaphor ever to deface a famous English poem:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table.

C.S. Lewis shared this opinion. He wrote:

For twenty years I’ve stared my level best
To see if evening—any evening—would suggest
A patient etherized upon a table;
In vain, I simply wasn’t able...

Two Clerihews

Jim Waters wrote the first clerihew (Gilbert Magazine, March 2006). Dale Alquist wrote the second one (Gilbert Magazine, December 2005). Thanks to Martin.

BLITZER’S FAME

After Wolf Blitzer
drank his eight brandy spritzer,
He confessed that his fame
Was due entirely to his name.

SANDBERG’S PERIL

Carl Sandberg
sat on an iceberg
Miserable the entire time
Because he was so dangerously close to a rhyme.
Clarifying Clerihews

The clerihew, a surprisingly versatile form, was invented by Edmund Clerihew Benton (1875-1956). The poem is the only one named after its creator’s middle name. The form is ideal for Kickshaws, and it offers much experimentation, such as the limerick experimentation in the limericks above. I googled “clerihew” and found 76,900 hits! According to Wikipedia, the dictionary website, G.K. Chesterton and W.H. Auden are some of the many people who wrote clerihews. Another website is attempting to write “The History of Mathematics in Clerihew,” and it invites reader participation. A third website, “Mystery Clerihews,” presents clerihews about mystery writers and tells the potential clerihwewer about Murderous Intent Mystery Magazine, which actually pays for any clerihew it uses. In the words of Nike, “Just do it!”

Sign of the Times

RESPECT: $1
HONESTY: $1
BOTH: $5

Asthma Words

On page 262 of the November issue (Kickshaws - Asthma), Richard Lederer asks if there are any words besides ASTHMA with vowels at the ends and consonants in the middle. Ross Eckler supplied ten from Webster’s Second edition. Susan Thorpe found several more examples (listed below). Most of hers can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary, Second edition, and the rest in other sources. They are variants and obsolete spellings. The letter Y is not included either as a consonant or a vowel. Many additional examples, not included here, can be found amongst the names of locations.

ALSSWA (also) ANNGRE (anger) ANCKLE (ankle) ANGGRE (angry) ARHTHE (arghth) ARMTHE (poverty) ASSCHE (ash - tree)
ELLHWU (a Chinese fiddle) ENGHNE (eye - organ of sight) ELLDRE (elder - older)
ERMTHHE and ERMTHU (both ‘poverty’) ERRNDE (errand) ERSCHHE (Irish) ESSSSE (ashes)
INCKLE (linen tape), INGHEL (catamite), INSCHE (small island), RSCHE (Irish), ISSCHU (issue - forth)
OVMBRE (umber) OWGHTE (oft) OWMPRE (umpire) OWNCHE and ONSCE (both ‘ounce’)
UNCKLE (uncle) USSCHA and USSCHO (both ‘issue’)

These are non-OED examples:

ABSMHO (Webster’s Second); ARTHRA (Pulliam & Carruth’s The Complete Word Game Dictionary); OMBGWE - flute (Bloomsbury Thesaurus); UMPKWA (Hodge’s Handbook of American Indians)

Stocking Filler

“Here’s a ‘stocking filler’ for the Festschrift Issue,” Susan writes. “It sounds a bit like a newspaper headline.”
CHAIN OF EVENTS

ROSS - LOSS - BOSS - BOWS

Homophonic Relationships

"Take the word SWEETS. The word EAT sounds the same as the EET in SWEET, and sweets are eaten, aren’t they? Other examples are: NAPPY (pee), FORESTRY (tree), MISTAKE (missed). Can readers offer further examples?”—Susan

The Ten Commandments of the Business World

My manic-depressive brother-in-law was my boss for three years. I learned a lot about the meaning of the word “boss” from him—enough to fashion ten unholy commandments:

I. I am thy Boss. Thou shalt not have strange bosses before me.
II. Thou shalt not take the name of Boss in vain.
III. Remember thou keep holy the payday.
IV. Honor thy Boss and thy Boss’s wife.
V. Thou shalt not go postal.
VI. Thou shalt not have an affair with thy Boss’s secretary.
VII. Thou shalt not embezzle.
VIII. Thou shalt not bear false whistleblowing against thy co-worker.
IX. Thou shalt not covet thy co-worker’s assistant.
X. Thou shalt not covet thy co-worker’s office supplies.

Conversation at the Zoo

Bill Brandt composes stories using fictitious names of people. Three of these stories appear in this issue of Word Ways. The other two appear in different parts of Kickshaws. About this first one, Bill writes: “When I was at the zoo I noticed that if I strung the names of the zoo keepers together they seemed to form a conversation.”

Visitor: Ferris D. Lyon
Keeper: Anna D. Cage
Visitor: Viola Bars
Keeper: Wanda B. Safe
Visitor: Isadora Locked
Keeper: Titus Kanby
Visitor: Kenney Gadoot
Keeper: Noah Wae
Visitor: Ken I. Pheedum
Keeper: Donna Trycet
Visitor: Bud Wye
Keeper: Lionel Bite
Visitor: Annie Authers
Keeper: Ivan L. Leefant
Visitor: Ivana Ciem
Keeper: Luke Dare
Visitor: Wayne DeBeck
Keeper: Nadia Ciem
Visitor: Obadiah Dewe  
Keeper: Celeste Won  
Visitor: Arthur Moore  
Keeper: Darcy R. Madillos  
Visitor: Don Giovanni Bigger  
Keeper: Ali Gators  
Visitor: Fred O'Dem  
Keeper: Donna B. Scared  
Visitor: Shirley Dersmoore  
Keeper: Anne T. Lope  
Visitor: Olive Doze  
Keeper: Juan D. Peehum  
Visitor: Connie Really  
Keeper: Carmon Tri  
Visitor: Ottis S. Nice  
Keeper: Vera Finnished  
Visitor: Ida Goodtime  
Keeper: Alma Glad

Transposing Stars into Medical Terms

Darryl Francis writes: “The transposal ERIC CLAPTON = NARCOLEPTIC has been known for a while. I’m not aware it’s been published before, but I’ve just discovered PATSY CLINE = CINEPLASTY. CINEPLASTY is in Webster’s Second, where it’s defined as the art of shaping a muscular stump following amputation.”

Literary Hoax

Darryl sent a news story with references to an acrostic and an anagram that appeared on the front page of The (London) Sunday Times. Rarely does wordplay make the big Times, but here is the story:

“IT’S a fair cop.” With these words, the writer Bevis Hillier confessed that he was the Betjeman hoaxer who duped the poet’s latest biographer into publishing a spoof love letter. The Sunday Times reported last week how AN Wilson had included in his new book a letter purportedly written by Sir John Betjeman to a mistress.

The biographer had failed to notice that the first letter of each sentence spelt “AN Wilson is a shit”. Hillier was the main suspect, but until now has denied being the hoaxer. The letter was the culmination of a sharp feud with Wilson, mainly pursued over the pages of bitchy book reviews.

Hillier, who spent 25 years researching and writing his own magisterial three-volume biography of Betjeman, finally decided to act when Wilson managed to bring out his book not much more than a year after his publishers had announced it. “When a newspaper started billing Wilson’s book as 'the big one', it was just too much,” said Hillier, 66.

The letter, which was sent to Wilson last year as he was researching his book, appeared to come from a woman called Eve de Harben, who enclosed what she said was a passionate love letter written by the married Betjeman in 1944 to a wartime work colleague, Honor Tracy.

De Harben said she had got it from her father, an old friend of Tracy. Wilson had not seen the insult
hidden in the letter. Nor had he noticed that Eve de Harben is an anagram for “ever been had”.

But why did Hillier, seemingly a mild-mannered man who had won the Gladstone Memorial Prize at Oxford and gone on to edit The Connoisseur, an antiques collecting magazine, want to dupe Wilson? Initially, he had been angered by a review of his second Betjeman volume, which came out in 2002 and was described by Wilson in The Spectator as “a hopeless mishmash”.

It was the flattering announcement of Wilson’s book last year in a national newspaper, however, that finally pushed Hillier into hatching his plot. “I wanted the acrostic love letter to spell out ‘AN Wilson is a shit’ and then built sentences around that,” he said. “I also needed to ensure it seemed valid.”

For authenticity, Hillier included phrases such as ‘Tinkerty-tonk’, which he knew Wilson would recognise as one used by Betjeman in the 1920s.

After The Sunday Times revealed the hoax last weekend, Hillier composed a short sequel which he was going to send to Wilson. “It said, ‘My French letter has leaked’, ” revealed Hillier. “In the end I decided against sending it since it was perhaps one letter too far.”

Pangrammatic Sentence Spotted

Darryl found a pangrammatic sentence in one of the articles in The Sunday Times (28 May). The title of the article is “Global warming might not be so bad, if we keep our cool.” The sentence in question, with brackets delimiting the entire alphabet, is “In his ne(w book Revenge of Gaia, he scares himself into the apocalypse lobby by gazing at the ubiquitous J-curve of carbon dioxide emissions as it shoots off the top of the graph.” The full article can be viewed at http://www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0.,176-2200308,00.html

Modern Supermarket

Found on the Internet by Raymond Love: “The new Supermarket near our house has an automatic mister to keep the produce fresh. Just before it goes on, you hear the sound of a thunderstorm. When you approach the milk cases, you hear cows mooing. When you approach the egg case, you hear hens cackle. So far, I have been afraid to go down the toilet paper aisle.”

You’ve Got Mail...

…but what does it mean? In the middle of an unusual yet grammatically correct prose piece that appeared in my email, there is a list of things. If you can you identify what this message is all about, please let me know. Here it is:

And he had come as fast as he could, pushing his old Ford wagon to seventy in spite of the front-end shimmy that developed as speeds over fifty, but in the end it had all been for nothing. If there was a man in all England with a heart stouter than that of her beloved My Lord, then it was Geoffrey - yet his voice trembled like the voice of a woman on the verge of hysterics.

INDUSTRIAL MINERALS
Symbol: IDSM.0OB
Current Price: .16
Five-Day Target:  .90
Rating: STRONG Buy.
He saw her sitting in here and scooping ice-cream into her mouth, or maybe handfuls of half-congealed chicken gravy with a Pepsi chaser, simply eating and drinking in a deep depressed daze. He looked sixty-five but might be eighty; he might be the senior partner of a law firm or the semi-retired patriarch of a construction company, but was more likely a rancher or a realtor.

**Word Puzzles, With Numbers**

Dianna K. Fisher writes: “Do you know what kind of word puzzle this is?” Her question is accompanied by two lists, the first one being 72113183 crepe, tea, griddle, sourdough, bananas, jam, flapjacks and the second one being 9229 rhubarb, biscuit, cheddar, blueberry, juice, bread, hashbrown, ham. All are foods and all have an odd number of letters, but I fail to detect a linguistic rule that applies to one list but not the other—can you? The fact that ham is on one list and jam on the other makes a distinction particularly difficult. I don’t know if the numbers are pertinent.

**Wordsworth’s Rainbow, The Short and Long of It**

Jeremy Morse points out that “Wordsworth’s well-known poem ‘The Rainbow’ is remarkable for having an average word-length of 3.08 letters. There are 11 consecutive words in the middle of the poem that have less than four letters each. My version that follows has no words of more than 3 letters, and its average word-length is 2.34 letters.” Reading Jeremy’s version, I couldn’t resist going the other direction with a parody of his parody in which longer words replace the short ones. Mine appears across from Jeremy’s. It has no words of fewer than 8 letters, and its average word length is 10.55 letters.

MINIMAL RAINBOW (AFTER WW, BY JM) MAXIMAL RAINBOW (AFTER JM, BY DM)

A joy it is for me to see
A bow set in the sky:
So was it for me as a boy;
So is it now I am a man;
So let it be in my old age,
Or let me die!
Lifelessness.
For man, I see, is son to boy;
And I’d add day to day and so
Go on and on as I was set to go.

Ecstatically, happiness visualization
Rainbow arranging skylights:
Existentially sprouting youthfully;
Currently experiencing adulthood;
Permitting sameness agelessly,
Alternatively: Euthanasia’s
Adulthood becoming offspring;
Additionally diurnally recreating
Continuance, preparationally departing.

**Trans-Matching**

Jeremy offers the following challenge: “Readers tired of transposals, transadditions, and transdeletions may like to try their hand at ‘trans-matching’, i.e. finding pairs of different words with as many letters identically placed as possible. Below are two lists that run through the months of the year and the days of the week. Only in the case of THURSDAY have I failed to find a match exceeding 50%; and the average match is 69.1% for months and 63.1% for the weekdays. What about the surnames of American Presidents?”

MONTHS: JAGUARS, TEXTUARY, MATCH, SPRIG, MAD, JUNK, DULY, ADJUST, SEPTENVIR, OCTAVES, REMEMBER, REMEMBER.
Two of a Kind

Gordon Bonnet made an amazing discovery: “I was going through some genealogical records, and I ran across a marriage record for Edward DeVere Stewart and Etta Grace Staggers. It was only when I was putting the names in my database that I noticed something odd about them. What is it?” To figure out the answer, type the two names (without capitalization).

3-Letter Body Parts

Jeff Grant writes: “I was told many years ago that there are only ten permanent human body parts with three letters in their common names: arm, ear, eye, gum, hip, jaw, leg, lip, rib and toe. Ross Eckler’s tree in the November 2006 Kickshaws includes the slang terms ass, bum, gut and tit, as well as lid (short for ‘eyelid’) and lap, an occasional body part. A stronger case could possibly be made for vas and fat, a part of many bodies! Anyway, here is my list of 134 three-letter body parts, including slang and obsolete words, but not words for excretions and secretions (eg tic, zit), ‘add-ons’ (eg tat, tattoo, rug, hairpiece), and parts of parts (eg bit, tip, top). The ‘naughty bits’ are well-represented, with 17 terms relating to the female genitals, and 31 to the male ones. Most words can be found in The Cassell Dictionary of Slang, Jonathon Green, 1998. Some on the list may be debatable, and there are no doubt others that could be added.”

abc (vagina)  eye  leg  pez (hair)
abs (vagina)  fan (vagina)  lid (eyelid)  pha (penis)
arm  fat  lip  pie (vagina)
ass (penis)  fax (hair)  lob (penis)  pin (leg)
axe (penis)  fig (vagina)  log (penis)  pit (armpit)
bag (scrotum)  fin (arm)  lot (male genitals)  pod (stomach)
bar (penis)  fiz (face)  lug (ear)  pot (stomach)
bat (penis)  fud (pubic hair)  man (penis)  pow (head)
bot (buttocks)  fun (buttocks)  map (face)  pud (penis)
bow (penis)  fur (vagina)  maw (stomach)  pup (breast)
box (vagina)  gab (mouth)  nut (hand)  rag (tongue)
bub (breast)  gam (leg)  mop (hair)  rat (vagina)
bud (nipple)  gan (mouth)  mug (face)  rib
bug (vagina)  gap (mouth)  nab (head)  rig (male genitals)
bum  gat (anus)  nad (testicle)  rod (penis)
bun (buttock)  gee (vagina)  nag (penis)  sac (scrotum)
can  gig (vagina)  nap (head)  set (breasts)
cap (mouth)  gob (mouth)  neb (nose)  sex (penis)
cat (vagina)  gum  nec (head)  she (vagina)
cha (vagina)  gun (penis)  nib (mouth)  tab (ear)
cob (penis)  gut  nip (nipple)  tat (tooth)
cod (penis)  ham (hamstring)  nob (head)  ten (toes)
coo (vagina)  hat (vagina)  nog (head)  tit
cou (vagina)  hip  sub (neck)  toe
dob (penis)  hog (penis)  mug (breast)  tom (penis)
dog (penis)  box (hamstring)  nut (head)  toy (penis)
dop (head)  jam (vagina)  orb (eye)  tri (triceps)
dot (anus)  jaw  ova  tum (stomach)
dug (breast)  jib (tongue)  pan (face)  vas
ear  key (penis)  pap (breast)  viz (face)
eel (penis)  kit (penis)  paw (hand)  wap (breast)
geg (head)  lad (penis)  pec (pectoral muscle)  web (between fingers)
end (penis)  lap  peg (tooth)  wig (head)
          pen (penis)  yap (mouth)

Huge Mistake

Jeff sent a photocopy of a novel by A.E. LANGSFORD, described as "fiction based on fact." As he tells it, "The most remarkable thing about the book, from a logological point of view, is the misprint of the title on the cover and spine. The book is correctly titled H.M.S. INFLExIBLE. The misprint apparently occurs only on the front cover and the spine of the softcover edition. The correct title appears on the back and throughout the book." And what is this incorrect title? H.M.S. FLEXIBLE, in nice, big letters above the artwork on the cover front and on the spine, instead of the correct INFLExIBLE.

Word Squares and Google Hits

Jeff comments on word squares: "Got a surprise to see my 4x4 square with 16 different letters in the May 2006 Word Ways (p123). I discovered the middle one of the three a long time ago. It was published, along with its variant, in the November 1980 issue (p212). I remember getting quite a buzz when I found it. The NAGS square is very nice too, with all words in the Concise Oxford. The rarest term in this square appears to be ACHY, but it's more common than RULY in my square. RULY does have an obvious meaning though, and it is listed in medium sized modern dictionaries. I think most people would know what they both mean, which may not be the case with ECRU, even though it has more Google hits. Interestingly, total Google hits for the 8 words in the NAGS square is just under 200 million, whereas the GRID square totals nearly 6 billion! I wonder if there is an even better example lurking somewhere? I guess it would have been found by now using a computer program with common words.

I don't really think the Google search method is a valid way to compare squares. You could have a square with several extremely common words and several obscure or capitalized ones, which would rack up a good score, but still (in my view) be inferior to a square with all averagely common words. Scores are also distorted by the fact that not all hits relate to the word as it appears in square. There are also hits on the Net for personal names, fantasy names, company and website names, etc. etc. As an example, using the Google count method to compare my GRID square and the NAGS square, it appears that the GRID one is greatly superior. However, all words in the NAGS square can be found in a fairly small dictionary, namely the Concise Oxford (a check of small American dictionaries would be interesting), whereas even though seven of the words in the GRID square are very common, RULY isn't. It's meaning is obvious however, and it is listed in medium sized dictionaries such as Chamber's Dict and the American Heritage Dict. RULY was once considered obsolete, but appears to have made a bit of a comeback as a back-formation from UNRULY. The modern usage is recorded in OED, American Heritage, etc. Actually, I still prefer the GRID square (but I suppose I'm biased!)."

Promised Land

"I enjoyed Darryl's PALINDROME transdeletions article in the November 2006 Word Ways. As I've mentioned to him, no doubt some gaps can be filled with place-names and surnames, or by using other dictionaries. For example, the EDD lists the verb RAMPLE (to romp or scramble),
hence RAMPLED and RAMPLIN’ (in EDD quot.). Has anyone ever noticed that
PALINDROMES is a transdeletion of PROMISED LAND? Kind of appropriate for someone
who has been fascinated by them all his life!”—Jeff

Words Gone Wild

“You have no doubt seen items like this doing the rounds, supposedly ‘proving’ that it doesn’t
matter how you spell words as long as the first and last letters are in position,” Jeff says. “It’s
esay with sorti wdors, but not wenh tehy are legnor. For empaxle, can you dipecher the scennete
bleow? (Even if you think you’ve solved it, you could be wrong because ‘pentaral’ has three
plausible options.)”

Unrustload precutis ullusay atelavile pentaral aspinerphones.

Hairbrained Questionaire

As a follow-up to the previous exercise on words gone wild, here is a list of words that Jeff sent
along with the simple question: Which are misspelt?

ALRIGHT
BROCOLI
CALENDER
DIARRHEA
EXTASY
FORSAlID
GAYETY
HAIRBRAINED
IDIOSYNCRACY
JUDGMENT
KOHLRABIES
LEGENDRY
MINISCULE
NARRATER
OMBRELLA
PUBLICALLY
QUESTIONAIRE
RESTAURANTEUR
SUPERCEDE
TIEING
UKELELE
VERTUOUS
WISTARIA
XOSA
YODLED
ZENOPHOBIA

Posterior Place-Names

Jeff has located some interesting place-names, but they have double meanings: “On the subject
of risque sounding (or looking) “posterior” place-names, such as Arsy (France), Poo (Spain) and
Bum (Russia) - all listed in The Times Index-Gazetter (1965) - I recently came across the
humorous Upper Big Bottom, the name of a bend in a river in Humphreys County, Tennessee. (It's listed on the NIMA Internet database of American place-names.)

Miscellaneous

"Hope you're getting plenty of material for Ross and Faith's tribute," Jeff writes. "I've just read the latest Word Ways - hard to believe it's Ross's last as editor, but I know he'll keep contributing. As usual, lots of interesting Kicks haws items. Just a few comments:

Lee Keith: I have used Lee's books over the years and had no idea she was a woman! Amazing that she is still going. The work involved in compiling the word lists from Web2 is mind-boggling!

Dictionary Collector: Web3 defines bibliophile or bibliophiliast as 'a book collector', so by analogy I would say a 'dictionary collector' (I'm one myself) would be a lexicophile or lexicophilist.

Alphabetical Panama: The 'x' example can be improved using Web3: 'A xat, a top, a sapota-taxa!'

Terminal-MT

DREAMT ends in -MT. Jeff wants to know if there are any other words like it. Ross said it is very rare, more so than the infamous terminal -GRY, and came up with one other example, the last name of the 19th century painter Gustav KLIMT. Are there any other -MTs out there?

Middle -NG

One day, for reasons I don't remember, I noticed an unusual, possibly unique, relationship between three common words. CHANGER beheads to HANGER beheads to ANGER. In each of case, the -NG- is pronounced differently. Are there any other words that work this way using any bigram?

Rare Homophonic Pairs

Rich Lederer has found an unusual type of word: "I can think of only three homophonic pairs in which no letter is shared and in which the first item in all three is a personal pronoun: I-EYE, YOU-EWE, and WE-OUI. However, is OU1 listed in any English dictionary? Without the personal pronoun element, a fourth example is EAU-OH. Any others?"

Twisted Word Puzzle

Rich asks if you can identify "a seven-letter word that has a double letter in the middle and can be a noun or a verb. Remove the double letter and you will have a five-letter word with a different double letter in the middle. This word is also a noun and a verb and is a synonym of the first word.

Verbs That Can Only Be Reflexive

Rich writes: "The verb to pride, for example, must be followed by a reflexive pronoun, as in 'I pride myself in my logological abilities.' The three additional examples I can think of are distance, recuse, and perjure. I'll welcome more from readers."

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Participles That Can Be Adjectives But Not Verbs

"I've done less work on participles than can be adjectives but not verbs. For example, one reads a *rollicking* novel, but novels don't rollick. Again, I'll welcome examples from readers."—Rich

Counting Time

Last April, Rich sent me a time/date phenomenon that hasn't appeared yet in Kickshaws or (presumably) anywhere else. It's worth rolling back the months and taking a look at it:

"Tomorrow, Wednesday, at two minutes and three seconds after 1:00 in the morning and the afternoon, the time and date will be 01:02:03 04/05/06! That won't happen again for exactly one hundred years." Back in the 70s, I noticed a few days before it happened that there was a similar moment, but without the zeros—12:34 5-6-78. It also occurred in the morning and the afternoon, and it won't be repeated for a century.

Conversation at the Computer Store

About this second conversation, Bill Brandt writes: "When I went to the local computer store to look for a new printer, I noticed that if you made a list of the names of the clerks they seemed to tell a story."

Customer: Heywood U. Alpmae
Clerk: Noah Prabloom
Customer: Anita P. Sea
Clerk: Annie I. Dias
Customer: Connie C. DeLapptoms
Clerk: Harris A. Nuwan
Customer: Arthur Moore
Clerk: Rhonda Beck
Customer: Ivana C. DeBest
Clerk: Diesel B. Deim
Customer: Emerson Goodwins
Clerk: Norma Lee Fast
Customer: Anita Moore Ram
Clerk: Will Addum
Customer: Kenny Liftet
Clerk: Donna C. Wyknot
Customer: Olive D. Waite
Clerk: Viola Entrest
Customer: Lester Carrie
Clerk: Wanda Byeet
Customer: Emma Chisit
Clerk: Juan Tausen
Customer: Otis S. Knottieep
Clerk: Stella Bargun
Customer: Shirley U. Jest
Clerk: Lois Price
Customer: Don Giovanni Chieper
Clerk: D. Vernon Lower
Customer: Alma Takit
Clerk: Shelly Wrapeet
Dogs and Their Countries

This poem about canines is dedicated to the greatest canine in movie history. You know which long-haired beast I’m referring to, so I won’t even mention the name. Some of the countries in the poem are actually cities, but dogs don’t know the difference. To really experience the poem, read it with an accent. Any accent. I prefer Governor Schwarzenegger’s accent.

In Colombia, people like playing with Collies.
In Germany, bold German Shepherds chase trolleys.
In Hungary, hungry old Huskies get fitful.
In Pittsburgh, they have to put up with the Pit Bull.

In Chicago, at Christmas, Chihuahuas are browsers.
In Syria, people own serious Schnauzers.
In Boston, the Boxers get browner and browner.
In the Weimar Republic, it’s "Heil, Weimerauner!"

In Lapland, they have many lab-rats and Labradors.
In Belgium, the Beagles just growl, bark, and rattle doors.
In the Gold Coast, it’s 10 karat Golden Retrievers.
In Denmark, Dalmatians crush dams of the beavers.

In Bulgaria, Bulldogs are always named Fritz.
In Switzerland, people should not tease a Spitz.
In Berne it is easy and never too hard
To go on a binge with a large St. Bernard.

In Scotland, each citizen owns a Scotch terrier
Except for the mayor who wants dogs to be hairier.
In America everyone seems to be bound
To avoid commie bites of a Russian Wolfhound.

But best of all, madam, in dearest old France,
French Poodles might rip off the brave Frenchmen’s pants,
Including the girl dogs who love the man, man,
And the boy dogs who howl when the girl dogs can-can.

Grant Wood: A Parody

This parody resulted from an email correspondence between Louis Phillips and me. Grant Wood painted some of his works on wood. I live in Grant Woodland. Here’s a tribute to the regionalist master:

HOW MUCH WOOD
WOULD A GRANT WOOD CHUCK
IF A GRANT WOOD COULD CHUCK WOOD?
Do You Know Jokes

Good-bye, knock-knocks. Move over, blondes. There's a new type of joke on the block—
invented by Louis Phillips.

Do you know Whistler's mother?
That woman's off her rocker.
He's smart as a whip.
Do you know the Marquis de Sade?
I'm bound to meet him.
Do you know Roy Rogers?
I hear he's trigger happy.
Do you know Casey at the Bat?
I hear he's striking out on his own.
Do you know Albert Einstein?
I know his relatives.
Do you know Tom Thumb?
He'll be here shortly.
Do you know Karl Marx?
He's got class.
Do you know Lamont Cranston?
That poor man is just a shadow of his former self.
Do you know Eli Whitney?
Yes, and frankly I don't cotton to him.
Do you know Houdini's first name?
It escapes me at the moment.
Do you know the cowboy star Gibson?
Nobody gives a hoot about him.

And the Winner Is...

Louis Phillips writes: "The following was the 1993 winner of the Bulwer-Lytton contest for the worst conceivable opening line for a novel (named after Bulwer-Lytton's "It was a dark and stormy night", beloved of Snoopy). "She wasn't really my type, a hard-looking but untalented reporter from the local cat box liner, but the first second that the third-rate representative of the fourth estate cracked open a new fifth of old Scotch, my sixth sense said seventh heaven was as close as an eighth note from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, so, nervous as a tenth grader drowning in eleventh-hour cramming for a physics exam, I swept her into my longing arms, and, humming 'The Twelfth of Never,' I got lucky on Friday the thirteenth."

The Dyslexic Faust and More

(Some quick quips by Louis Phillips)

Has someone told you about the dyslexic Faust? He sold his soul to Santa.
What did the shopper reply when he purchased a square much?
I don't get a round much anymore.

What's the difference between twins being interrupted during a private conversation and a mental patient who feels everyone is plotting against him?
One is a pair annoyed, and the other's a paranoid.

What's the difference between the star of the movie – THE TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON and zip code 43739?
One is Glenn Ford; the other Glenford (OH).

What's the difference between a video tape of a con man playing three-card monte on the streets of New York and the capital of Uruguay?
One is a monte video, while the other is Montevideo.

Palindrome about Bambi Poachers: Deer greed.

Palindrome about what humans do to get close to fawns: Name no X in reed. Red rum! Peer creep, murder deer. Nix one man.

What the Bronte Sisters were doing during the winter of 1847: Weathering withering reviews of Wuthering...

Moussaoui entertained thoughts of martyrdom—is a sentence containing 5 different vowels in a row.

Palindrome guaranteed to raise eye-brows: Lad, I've rogered ere Gore Vidal

CAPSULE CRITICISM:
I saw, I saw
I do! I do!
I did! I did!
Adieu, adieu.

Anti-Dis-Re-Hyphen-Ization-Al-Ism

Frank Hogan has written a wordbook called SOUND ALIKES. Midwestern American English Homophones. As he describes the book, "it includes 1,291 'hah-muh-fonz' sets totaling 2,824 words defined or illustrated in simple sentences. I believe the market for this little beauty includes Word Buffs in general and English as a Second Language types. So far, alas, I've been unable to find an interested publisher. In doing my research (the bibliography is four pages long) I discovered a phenomenon that may interest Word Ways readers: The peculiar property of a hyphen changing entirely the meaning of a word, especially those beginning with RE-. Each word on the following list has a totally different meaning when the hyphen is removed. You will find that many other RE- words mean the same with or without a hyphen."

RE-BUFF RE-CYCLE RE-FUND RE-POSE RE-TIRED
RE-CALL RE-DRESS RE-FUSE RE-PROVE RE-TREAT
RE-COLLECT RE-FINE RE-LEASE RE-SENT RE-RETURN
RE-COUNT RE-FLEX RE-MARK RE-SERVE
RE-COVER RE-FORM RE-MOVE RE-SIGN
Dirty Birds and Double Meanings

Ross sends a Kickshaw that appeared in the Oct 29 NY Times business section: "A Honolulu company, Grumpy Girl, sells a kit that is intended to make it easier to clean bird droppings from vehicles... The product's slogan, penned by the company's owner, Allison Takeshita, is a model of reassurance 'Go ahead. Park under that shady tree. Everything is going to be just fine.' The kit, Ms. Takeshita said, was inspired by her own frustrations with Hawaii's inconsiderate birds, who too often treated her car like their own private lavatory... Ms. Takeshita outfitted the kit with a water-filled spray bottle and towels, as well as a tube of auto wax, so the afflicted area could be buffed to a high shine. They also threw in a number of Ziploc bags for the safe disposal of stained towels, as well as antibacterial wipes for post-removal hand sanitizing... The kits, at $28.95, went on sale in September."

What's in a Name

Several readers have independently noticed that Brad Pitt's daughter, Shiloh, has an unfortunate phonetic spoonerism. The fact that numerous people saw it and reported it to Kickshaws doesn't bode well for the baby. This type of humor is the prime rib of grade school mockery. Sorry, Piloh... Blame your logologically insensitive parents for not being subscribers to Word Ways.

The Difference Between Dogs and Cats

I've heard two jokes about the difference between dogs and cats. (1) A dog has a master, and a cat has a staff. (2) A dog looks at his owner, who feeds him, provides shelter, walks, etc., and thinks, "He must be a god." A cat looks at her owner, who feeds her, provides shelter, etc., and thinks, "I must be a god." With those things in mind, I wrote a story that explores the natural distinctions between the two creatures:

Picture a dog bounding clumsily across the kitchen floor, toenails clicking, tongue hanging out of its mouth as it rolls over on its back, tail wagging frantically, head emitting a happy woof every couple of seconds. Picture a cat stepping majestically into the living room, toenails silent, mouth creased arrogantly, tail curled into a question mark with the tip flicking every couple of steps, then it lies on its side, licks its fur, eyes scanning the room critically. The dog bounds into the room like one of the Three Stooges, hops over to the cat, barks wildly. The cat emits a throaty growl like Mae West. The dog stomps its front paws against the floor countless times, rolls over on its back, reaches out to the cat. The cat's claws zip out like tiny stilletos. The dog sticks its muzzle into the cat's personal space. The cat hisses a sharp reprimand, then deigns to clarify the issue by raking the dog's big, wet nose with but a single claw. The dog blinks, yelps, and gallops out of the room to find its master in the kitchen. It jumps all over, whimpering, rolling, doing whatever it can to tell its master about the unfortunate incident with the cat. The cat steps proudly into the kitchen, slinks over to the dog's plate, smells the few remaining crumbs of inferior food, then turns to its own plate, which is more than half full. The dog barks, barks, barks at the cat. The cat looks up at its human, blinks one eye, licks its lips one time quickly, turns its head to its plate, and stares at it. The dog stands forlorn near the back door, suddenly finding itself abandoned. Its master is feeding the cat. The cat looks over at the dog and flicks its tail at the human sets before it a new plate overflowing with a sumptuous offering of vastly superior food fresh out of the can. The cat takes a single bite, then leaves the room. The dog is puzzled, astonished, dejected. Its plate is still empty! How could this be? The cat steps back into the kitchen, sits down next to its plate, and stares at the dog. The dog can't stand it. The dog turns and bounces out the kitchen door like one of the Three Stooges. The cat emits a throaty growl like Mae West. It starts raining. The dog doesn't know how to open the closed kitchen.
door from the outside. The cat knows how to block the door shut from the inside. The difference between the two creatures is infinite.

The Sound of W

"Mikey Kline asked about the source of the pronunciation of 'W',' Mike Morton writes. "I don't know, but without it my brother's friend Wynne Wood would have much less fun spelling his name out for people. He says (try this fast, aloud), "W Y double-N E W double-O D".

The New Hokey Pokey

In the golden years, certain elements of life are fool's gold. Ove Michaelsen wrote the following take-off on The Hokey Pokey titled The Creaky Geezer. It glitters with fool's gold.

You put your dentures in, you take your dentures out,
You take your hairpiece off, and you shake it all about.
You do the Creaky Geezer as you try to find the stage,
That what it's...how does that go?

Madman With Bad Domain Names

From an unknown website, an insane webmaster named Michael searches and lists really bad domain names. He introduces his website with a threat to the reader:

You are not seeing this site as I have designed it. I would really like to be nice here, but you leave me no choice. Why in the bloody world are you still using IE6 or below? It's really your choice, but Internet Explorer 6 is NOT a standards compliant browser, and therefore this site will look lame. If you persist, I will be forced to block you and your crappy ass browser from my site. Get a better browser like Opera or Firefox!

Who Represents? A database for agencies to the rich and famous: www.whorepresents.com

Experts Exchange, a knowledge base for programmers: www.expertsexchange.com

Pen Island, for pens(?): www.penisland.net

Therapist Finder, for people in need of therapy: www.therapistfinder.com

An Italian Power company: www.powergenitalia.com

Mole Station Native Nursery, based in New South Wales: www.molestationnursery.com

Victoria's Latest Secret

According to a pop-up screen on my computer, Victoria's Secret is now selling "Bra Tops" for $19 and up. How much are Bra Middles and Bra Bottoms?
Mr. "Fined Six Thousand and Five Hundred" Changes His Name

From the AP, HANOI, Vietnam (July 7) – After nearly two decades of ridicule, a father has agreed to change his son's name from "Fined Six Thousand and Five Hundred" - the amount he was forced to pay in local currency for ignoring Vietnam's two-child policy. Angry he was being fined for having a fifth child, Mai Xuan Can named his son Mai Phat Sau Nghin Ruoi after the amount he was forced to pay - 6,500 dong, or 50 cents, said Dai Cuong village chief Nguyen Huy Thuong. In 1999, local government officials tried to persuade Can to change the name because the boy was constantly being teased by classmates at school. But Can, a former People's Committee official, refused to back down, Thuong said. They appealed to him again recently, and this time it worked. "I told him that as his son is growing up, he should have another name - not that weird name - and he finally agreed," Thuong said. The son, now 19, finally got a new name: Mai Hoang Long, which means golden dragon.

Goose and Gander

Ross Eckler has become the Internet's favorite nursery rhyme parodist, in which he rewrites a traditional rhyme by excluding one or more letters. When readers noticed that Goosey Gander was missing, Ross corrected the problem by cooking their goose with half the letters of the alphabet (ADEGHINORSTUW). Here it is, served up piping hot:

A goose and a gander, I run through the door;  
Neither outside nor inside, no Tootsie ignore!  
I saw there a grandsire who dissed his Herr Gott;  
When I hoisted his thigh—downstairs he shot!

Word Order Limerick

Limericks are versatile little poems. They can be written using only one vowel throughout, or excluding the letter e, or as a letter-order palindrome (which would be very difficult). In the following limerick, I added the requirement that the limerick be a word-order palindrome, with the words reading the same in both directions. Does anyone want to try writing a letter-order palindrome?

There once was this maiden whose hair,  
Free, was as long as she was so fair.  
So fair? So was she,  
As long as was free  
Hair, whose maiden this was once there.

DDT

The Random House College Dictionary defines DDT as an insecticide, a scabicide, and a pediculicide and says that it’s also called by a 31-letter word. Where I grew up, DDT was only an insecticide, but it could do funny things if you sniffed too much of it, and that's what this poem is all about. It can be sung to "The Irish Washer Woman."

AN INSECTICIDE SONG

If you like DDT and you have half a brain,  
Why you'll jump on a train, and you'll fly in a plane,
And you'll act quite insane and explain quite in vain:
“It's Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane!”

Idiot Sightings

The following tales from the Internet are probably true. They have no reason to be false. They come with this warning: STAY ALERT! They walk among us... and they REPRODUCE.

I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: "Too many deer are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing anymore."

My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for "minimal lettuce." He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg.

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, "Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?" To which I replied, "If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?" He smiled knowingly and nodded, "That's why we ask."

The stoplight on the corner buzzes when its safe to cross the street. I was crossing with an intellectually challenged coworker of mine. She asked if I knew what the buzzer was for. I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, she responded, "What on earth are blind people doing driving?"

This happened at a good-bye luncheon for an old and dear coworker. She was leaving the company due to "downsizing." Our manager commented cheerfully, "This is fun. We should do this more often." Not another word was spoken. We all just looked at each other with that deer-in-the-headlights stare.

I work with an individual who plugged her power strip back into itself and for the sake of her own life, couldn’t understand why her system would not turn on.

When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. "Hey," I announced to the technician, "its open!" His reply, "I know - I already got that side."

Conversation at the Hospital

About this third conversation, Bill Brandt says: "Recently when I was sitting in the waiting room at the hospital I saw a lot of patients and staff coming and going. If I rearranged their name tags they seemed to tell a story."

Patient: Anita Doktur
Nurse: Agatha Emdee
Patient: Inna Hooin
Nurse: Juan D. Havaseet
Patient: Obadiah Kennott
Nurse: Wyatt S. Datt
Patient: Eva DeBoils
Nurse: Lem Easy
Patient: Ida Wanna
Nurse: Izzy A. Prabloam
Patient: Ester Lakaishone
Nurse: Ken U. Telmie
Patient: Anna D. Butt
Nurse: Don B. Bashfull
Patient: Kenny C. DeDoktur
Nurse: Harris DeDoktur
Patient: Ken U. Elpnee
Doctor: Ben Dover
Patient: Darcy DeBoils
Doctor: Ike N. Seam
Patient: Walter U. Doo
Doctor: Lance DeBoils
Patient: Wilma Buthurt
Doctor: Justin D. Beginnin
Patient: O. Howard Hurts
Doctor: Vera Pfinaished
Patient: Gladys Overwitt
Doctor: Ken U. Holden
Patient: Isadora Moore
Doctor: Stella Bilapae
Patient: Emma Chisit
Doctor: Juan Tausend
Patient: Payne N. DeButt

Henry Gibson

Anil asks, "Is Henry Gibson the real name of that delightful and comic poet of "Laugh-In" fame? Or is it a clever pseudonym deliberately chosen as a homophone of Henrik Ibsen?"

It's Not All Greek

"There are more than enough English letters to spell out the Greek alphabet," Anil notes. "How many more, and how quickly can you name them?"

Spooner-Like Wordplay

Here are two quotations that Anil ran across that almost sound like Spooner’s work: (1) Sir Thomas Beecham, the conductor, admitted, "I prefer Offenbach to Bach often." (2) And Francis Bacon ordered "Champaign for my real friends, real pain for my sham friends."

Shakespeare, The Punmeister

"Shakespeare punned famously and shamelessly," Anil says. "Like this 'semi-curtailment' pun from Hamlet: 'a little more than kin and less than kind'. But you knew that."
Etymology Gag, A

Anil writes, “Gaga is derived from the French for bed-wetter (gâteur), hospital slang for a demented person. I was so gaga when I learned this that I peed my pants.”

Love ‘Em and Leave ‘Em, What’s the Difference?

According to Anil, “Love and leave are etymologically related! That’s leave in the sense of permission or furlough, however, which is also related to believe and ultimately to libido and perhaps to liberal. Leave as in go away is unrelated.* But the latter is related to live, which is usually the lover’s reason for leaving, thus setting up an etym. ‘synonym’ cascade; Love...leave...live! This would also be a sentential word ladder if we could consider “ea” to be a single letter/diphong like “e”. It can also be read more sanguinely as a love story in which the lovers fall in love, “leave the rest of the world behind” and live on the fruits of love.

* Leave thus constitutes an approximate coincidental self-synonym that I overlooked in my earlier study (04-45): go away and permission to go away. Leave meaning permission to go away is <ME leve <OE leaf, furlough, >Dutch (oor)løf, Gm. (or)laub, (ver)laub. Leave meaning go away (or let stay in place, leave behind) is <ME leve(n) <OE laefan <laef, remain(der) > Frisian leva, OHGerm. leiban, etc, and is a root of eleven and twelve. As well, or alternatively, the two leaves might be considered coincidental contronyms (04-49)—permission to go and ‘permission’ to stay. (Afterwards what remains? Why, everything that’s left, of course. How fitting then that AFTERWARDS is a left-handed word on the keyboard.)

A Much Longer Synonyms Word Ladder

“The synonyms ladder GLISTEN—GLISTER—GLITTER is child’s play,” Anil writes, “compared to this ladder of nineteen approximately synonymous onomatopoetic words from Webster’s Third NI meaning an abrupt usually metallic striking sound, mostly sharp, some more dull or sustained:


CLOCK can mean strike or ring a bell, or the sound so made, or the bell itself. It also means CLUCK, a hen’s call, which in turn also means make a clicking sound with the tongue. Related but not synonymous words that fit in or branch onto the ladder include CRANK, a grating, creaking or raucous sound, CRONK, the honk of geese or the croak of ravens, GLUCK, a gurgling or gurgling sound, and PLUCK, to cause a plucking sound.”

Illogical Logic (Puns, You Might Say)

“EVERY OTHER ONE and EACH OTHER, both taken literally, mean “all but me (or mine); each and every other one but.” — Anil

A Phonetic Word Palindrome: A Definition

Anil provides the following word and definition: “DOE: deer’s dear (or dear deer’s dough?) (This assumes that in the US deer have the opportunity to get as rich as everyone else.)”
Two Ordinary Palindromes

(1) Ail ebola, lobelia? [Lobelia was one of the most potent of all herbal medicines and was widely used until some undesirable side-effects appeared. Might it work against this horrendous disease?] (2) Kinsey: ‘yesnik’ [He said yes to a more open discussion of sex and helped inaugurate the sexual revolution.]—Anil

When Lower is Tops and Upper is Bottom

“Half lines often occur at the top or bottom of my computer screen. Impressed at how readable they were I did the following exercise: Slice through the middle of the alphabet horizontally. Assume the midlines of B E e F G H P R are centered and seen from both halves but that the cross-bars of f and t are seen only from the top. Now notice, by using a straightedge if necessary, how many of the letters are unambiguously identifiable from the top versus the bottom halves and “lower case” score better from their top halves. Of the upper case letters 21-24 are identifiable from the bottom half: all but IT and possibly YOU (but not ME!)—but only 13 from the top half: ACDGHKMNSTVWZ. (The ambiguous letters from the top are BPR EF IJLU OQ XY. However, IJLU from the top and ITY from the bottom are sometimes differentiable by lateral spacing, and the top of B is a bit wider than P and R.) For lower case, 22-24 letters are recognizable from the top: all but ij and arguably vy—but only 19-20 from the bottom view: all but fltmm and possibly r. Helvetica gave the same results as Times New Roman (except BPR tops), but other fonts may yield different results.”—Anil

Woe to the W

Anil w----s: “If you read my Anacrograms Prolegomenon in May, you’ll note that Mikey Kline is not the only one who has a problem with the letter “W,” but for very different reasons. I mercilessly dubbed it a logological pest—even though the acronym for Word Ways itself could be dubbed “double you, W!” Double-damn-U, I’d say, at least when I’m doing anacrostics. As to Mikey’s point, I was bemused at a very young age by the carved inscription on my home town PUBLIC LIBRARY.”

The Ongoing War Against W (and All Those Other Nasty Letters While We’re At It)

Continuing the anti-W crusade, Anil writes: “Pursuant to 06-74, 06-122 and the present Kickshaws item above, I say let’s strike preemptively and drop the damned letter W from the language altogether. (And people called W too, many would say.) Without replacing it if the w is silent, as in hollow, replacing it with u if it’s sounded, as in were. The “double-u” is actually pronounced as a single u as in tutu (or double o—but the symbol using two connected o’s is already taken): egt, uere, uurk, uent, uindo, uallo, bu, huat, huen, huere, hue, uith, uue, etc. Besides, 25 is mathematically more useful than 26. (Card players and calendar reformers may argue this.) While we’re at it, how about 24—drop the Q too? Hell, let’s go for an even 20—drop Q, J, X, Y, Z, and replace them with ku, g, ks/ts, i/ui and s/ts. Wouldn’t this make logology a lot easier! Especially anagragming and pangramming. I bet Mike Keith could quickly find a 20-alphabet pangram window of not a lot more than 20 letters. 20-letter pangram concoctions would proliferate, like this hasty feeble effort: SCRIMP, VET, HALF-BUNK DOG. (“Please save on my kennel bill.”)
Anagrams

Katrina “Ain’t ark!” or ANTI-ARK. (Where was Noah when we needed him?)

Soul sisters EARTHA and ARETHA differ by a simple metathesis.

Anagrams in definitions The August 2004 Kickshaws asked if IMPREGNATE—PERMEATING were the only sizeable anagrams of which one (p.) appears in the dictionary definition of the other (i.) Will Nediger (05-26) offered LATENT which appears as an example of TALENT. It’s a toss-up as to whether that is a sizeable word, but here’s another pair that is surely not: NOTE—TONE go one better than either of the above and appear reciprocally in each other’s definitions in both Web-3 and Macquarie. (In RH tone is under note but not v.v.)

A conservative charade FORBEAR FOREGO FORESTER FORELAND! – for bear, for ego, for Ester, for eland.

Seen on TV: Mum’s the word: I saw this logo on a research car heading to a secret fossil find: M(USE)UM (That is, after all, kangaroo country.) [USE has an oval around it in the actual logo.]

A synonyms word ladder GLITTER GUSTER GLISTEN They’re all of the same root, but still unusual. Any others?

Ostrich Words

“We have kangaroo words,” says Anil. “Now meet ostrich words, which bury their heads to form anagrams (like Eartha: ArEtha). Here are some definitive examples. I should find more M-Z later.

Left-facing ostriches (bury the first letter):
ASTRIDE: sat, ride
BAIT: a “bit”
BRANDED: ® banded
“CAME”: acme
DIS-OWN: is down [...] on.
DISSIPATE: is sip date.
FLEDGELING: ledge fling [Learn to fly now!]
GALA DINNER: a glad inner
LEG-OVER: eg, lover [“eg” meaning all sex isn’t love]
LAMBERTING: Am blasting
LIMITED: I’m “it” led.
LITIGATION: It? Litigation! [‘tying’ into someone]
LOATHED: oath led
LOCAL TIME: 0 call time [no time charges on local phone calls (yet!)]
LONELY: O, Nelly!! [suggesting this related igpay word: LONELY: “Only lay!”]
MAUNDER: Am “under” [...] the influence
OTHER: the “or”
SAME: as me
SCoured: coursed
THATCHER: hatchet’r
"Big-headed" ostriches (bury the first two letters):

ABSOLUTION: so ablution
DEICIDE: I decide!
DUTIES: Tied us.
FELICITATIONS: "Life!" citations
IRATE: at ire
A LODESTAR: ode's altar [a poetic big-headed ostrich (first two letters buried)]
"RATSHIT": Trash it.

Right facing ostriches (bury the last letter):

AIDES: a side
ANOTHER: "a" nor "the"
DOMINATE: Do me in at.
GRITS: grist
INCUBATE: in cube at
LIBIDO: Lo, I bid!
LAZY: Lay, Z...
LICHEN: "L" niche

Ostrich antonyms (first letter only):

ABET: beat
ADMIT: Dam it.
DO WELL: owed ££
FOREPLAY: of replay
FUNERAL: unferal [feral (arch.) = funereal]
ONES: noes

Some Beheadment Opposites, Of Sorts

Anil has found some words that turn into their opposites when the first letter is removed. Here are three "anti-beheadment pairs":

OPACIFICATION—PACIFICATION  cloud vs. clear the air
BANANAS—ANANAS  Ananas is the genus of the pineapple
EVERYONE—VERY ONE

Pumpkinification

"There's a word you don't see every day," Anil claims. Not in any of my dictionaries, it sounds like a word I'd make up and be roundly censured for. However, it's in the Chambers Biographical Dictionary in the literal translation of a work by Seneca, Apocolocyntosis divi Claudii (The Pumpkinification of the Divine Claudius), a scathing satire. Should we tolerate this senecaification of our language? Or you may wish to exploit the enlarged vocabulary and pumpkinify the President." [Google has 582 hits for the word "pumpkinification," and all of them, so it seems, refer to the Seneca satire—DM]

Spooners Crowns? (Crooner, Suppose?)

Anil wonders whether "Bishop Spooner looks down from Heaven with pride that he has become so famous for being stupid? Or is he not that stupid?"
Tails You Win, Heads You Lose

“This is the clever title of a German movie (2000) in which two wives kill their husbands,” Anil writes. “But I like it better as a less violent joke: fools for love.”

The Great Zoo Escape

Anil tells a tale of an animalistic nature: “The animals outfox the keepers and weasel out, duck out, flea out, fly out, fish out, worm out, ferret out, bear out, pig out, chicken out, slug out, tapir out, leech out, and conch out.”

Some Surprising Etymology

“CATARRHINE and CATARRH are not related,” Anil notes. “Actually, they’re half related, sharing the prefix ‘cata-’ (Greek kata, down). But ‘rhine’ means nose while ‘rh(ein)’ means flow. Yet they’re related in spirit through a down-flowing nose.

HEBETIC (of puberty) and HEBETUDE (dull, lethargic) are likewise unrelated. The former is from Greek hebetikos, youthful, while the latter is from Latin hebes, dull. But they also have a strong affinity in adolescent scholars.

EMERITUS professors are (often) worthy of praise, yet MERIT isn’t the etymology. Should be! Emeritus: Merit use. (A circular charade and sort of an ostrich anagram.)

Anti-Logology Slogan (From Joseph Addison?)

‘Don’t be a letter bug!’ (Actually, that would be a neat name for a regular logologue column, The Letter Bug.)—Anil.

Old Game, New Name

“Instead of scissors-rock-paper I prefer playing sword-pen-paper because pen always wins: it’s mightier than the sword and it walks all over the paper.”—Anil

Some Rebus

Can you solve Anil’s rebus?

1. n n n
   n n n
   n n n

2. ‘its end elf?’

3. 31 + 6 =

4. urr

Ice Cool High School Revisited

In each of these questions and comments by Anil, there is an underlying truth.

Why is a prisoner on the inside but a jailer on the outside?

Do languages have different gibberish?
STUDENT: I betcha anything this very sentence has never been written before in all of history. I’m number one!

TEACHER: How odd. Even if you were number two.

Was it called the feudal system because it was bound not to last?

When shorts were shocking, were shorter shorts less shocking?

Was Malcolm X really the tenth Malcolm in his family?

If Afghanistan was a premature evacuation, was Iraq a preemptive ejaculation?

TEACHER: Is Islam an especially warmongering religion?

STUDENT: Nothing is more frightening than a mathematical formula.
TEACHER: ...except a philosophical formula!

That That That That That Modified

"I love donuts. It’s good to have a round around—a round around a round hole."—Anil

One Word Sentences

Each of these sentences is composed of one word used more than once. Dmitri Borgmann composed what is perhaps the first one word sentence—Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo. Here are two by Anil:

Peer Peer peer. (House of Lords latrine duty)
Post post-Post post. (Put the poster not on then mail/box but on the next pole along)

A Four-Sentence Word

“A whale has two large flat lobes on its tail. These are not there by accident. They are caused by a parasitic flatworm in its liver. (The whale shouldn’t have eaten the flatfish!)” The four sentence word is fluke, of course."—Anil

Double Warning Against Brothels

“Redolent of your Inferno item in the May 2006 Kickshaws,” Anil writes, “the Macquarie Thesaurus of 2001 offers a double omen by listing brothel, whore and all their synonyms as item 666.13! Indeed, the whole of section 666 is on sex, and a friend suggested that this was too ‘convenient’ to be a coincident and was deliberate. If so, it involved a very impressive manipulation of the book’s contents.”