EDITORIAL

Welcome, once again, to Word Ways -- with a new editor, a new publisher, a new format, and a new subscription price. The only constant in this shifting pattern is the purpose of Word Ways. It is appropriate here to quote from the first issue:

"The Journal of Recreational Linguistics has been created to provide a forum for all people interested in word puzzles and in other recreational aspects of language, a meeting ground for active minds comparable to the many books, magazines, and columns devoted to mathematical recreations."

This purpose still stands, and in this short editorial I propose a method to implement it.

Word Ways, as stated above, is a forum for the interchange of ideas in recreational logology. The most important characteristic of a forum is the opportunity for rapid response. If a reader wished to respond to an article in an issue published by Greenwood, deadlines usually delayed his answer for two or three issues -- by which time many readers had forgotten the original article. (One is reminded of the delays in communication that will be endured by the first Mars explorers when talking to the earth by radio; they will have to wait at least six minutes to obtain the answer to any question they direct at the earth. Nothing can be done about these delays because messages cannot travel more swiftly than the speed of light, but delays in reader-to-reader communication in Word Ways are both intolerable and unnecessary.)

How can communication be speeded? First, the new format is easier to prepare. Articles will be typed on an IBM Executive electric typewriter in a form suitable for photo-offset; in particular, time-consuming adjustment of the right margin will be eliminated. In fact, the preparation and printing of a Word Ways issue is expected to take no longer than one month prior to mailing.

Second, a variety of communications channels have been opened to the reader. He can write a full-length article on any aspect of word-play that interests him; generally speaking, a full-length article will consist of at least one and perhaps as many as fifteen pages.
of Word Ways. If he has a short observation or note (say, less than one page long), it will appear in the Kickshaws column (such material can be sent either to the editor or to Dave Silverman, Kickshaws editor).

If the reader wishes to comment on an earlier Word Ways article, this comment will be incorporated in a regular column of Word Ways entitled Colloquy. Colloquy items received by the editor up to one month before the mailing of a given issue will appear in that issue; in other words, the reader has up to two months to frame a correction or a comment on an article in one issue and see it appear in the next.

Finally, the reader may wish to know whether or not any work has been done on a logological problem before embarking on research leading to a later article of his own. Such a reader is invited to send in brief Queries, which will be used as fillers at the end of regular Word Ways articles as space permits. Answers to Queries will, of course, appear in subsequent Colloquy columns.

The present editor has neither the vast logological background and library of the first editor, Dmitri Borgmann, nor (as readers by now are well aware) the graceful prose style of the second editor, Howard Bergerson. Yet I feel that this need not matter too much. I will have served my purpose if I have brought together in the pages of Word Ways different people interested in the same word problem, or if I have stimulated readers to pose and solve logological problems they never dreamed of before. The frontiers of logology will remain forever obscure unless we let each other know what has been done, what can be done, and what might be done.

The creation of articles on word-play requires no special academic degrees or training -- far more important are patience, imagination and an active mind. Past and present Word Ways contributors have followed such varied occupations as actuary, college student, jazz musician, statistician and clerk in a shingle mill. (In order to emphasize the irrelevance of titles and degrees, each author is identified by no more than his name, and city and state of residence.)

The various communications channels lie open and waiting -- I urge you, the reader, to use them. Do not passively read this journal and throw it aside; respond to what you find in it. Only in this way can Word Ways be ensured a strong and viable future.