COLLOQUY

Webster's Dictionary defines colloquy as mutual discourse. Readers are encouraged to submit additions, corrections, and comments about earlier articles appearing in Word Ways. Comments received up to a month prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

When sending for the Levine non-pattern word list reviewed in the February 1972 Word Ways, be sure to use the full address including Jack Levine's name: Jack Levine, Box 5548, State College Station, Raleigh, North Carolina 27607. He shares this post office box with a large number of other people.

Another word list compiled by Jack Levine is once again available after being out of print for several years: A List of Words Containing No Repeated Letters. This book contains about 55,000 nonpattern words (isograms) taken from Webster's Second Edition (the Third Edition was not yet published in 1957) as well as ten specialized dictionaries in chemistry, medicine, botany, geology, mycology, entomology and related fields. Derived words (plurals, verbs ending in -ING and -ED, etc.) and hyphenated words are included. Regrettably, the author has also inserted various phrases which cannot be found in any dictionary: two quick nymphs vex bard, very low ditch banks, musty baking powder, thick warbled song, etc. The longest unhyphenated words listed are the sixteen-letter UNCRYPTOGAMSLIKE and UNCYMOGRAPHSLIKE, of dubious validity. Only one of the 25 fifteen-letter isograms, DERMATOGYPHICS, is given in boldface in Webster's Second. It is somewhat unfortunate that Levine's two dictionaries are not based on the same stockpile of words, making comparative studies difficult. Nevertheless, dedicated logophiles will want to have this reference work in their libraries. Copies can be obtained from Robert Decker, RD #2, Box 341-A, Woodstown, New Jersey 08098 for $1.50 postpaid (make checks payable to the American Cryptogram Association).

Another book that many Word Ways readers will want to acquire is English House Names, written by Leslie Dunkling, the president of the Names Society (see Colloquy for November 1971). Although this is only a preliminary report pending the issuance of a comprehensive dictionary of house names, it classifies over 2000 house names into a variety of categories. About one-third of all names are transferred from some other locality, usually for sentimental reasons. Almost as common are descriptive names, pointing up some interesting feature of the house itself or its immediate envir-
About one-sixth of the names are imaginative blends of two or more words, and nearly as many are direct foreign borrowings. Logologists will be more interested in reversals (EMOCLEW), acrostics (KYOSAT - Keep Your Old Sticks A Tapping) and outrageous puns (BAT’N DOWN, The Hatches, Farnham, or THE HARDIES next door to THE LAURELS). Copies may be obtained for 35 new pence from Mr. Dunkling, 7 Aragon Avenue, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0PY.

While on the subject of books, it may be worth mentioning to Word Ways readers that the Normal and Reverse English Word List, edited by A. F. Brown (professor of linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania) and first published in 1963, is available in eight volumes at $10 a piece from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Virginia 22151. This work lists approximately 350,000 entries from Webster's Second Edition in reverse-alphabetic order: words ending in A, then words ending in B, and so on.

The May 1971 Colloquy discussed how the integers 4, 15 and 29 can in different ways be regarded as autological (self-descriptive) numbers. Martin Gardner recently passed along a related result, originally discovered by a group of MIT computer experts: all integers converge in English to the autological number four. Convergence in English is most easily understood by example. Take the number FORTY-ONE, which is 8 letters long; continue with the number EIGHT, which is 5 letters long; continue with the number FIVE, which is 4 letters long; continue with the number FOUR ... Note that this is a stronger result than the statement that FOUR is the only number described by its number of letters: some of the integers might have converged in English to a cycle of non-autological integers. (For instance, in Spanish CUATRO (4) is 6 letters long, and SEIS (6) is four letters long, leading to a cycle endlessly repeated.) Aficionados of this sort of word-play are referred to Problem 128 (The Pentagon) in Dmitri Borgmann's Beyond Language (Scribner's, 1967), where the analogous convergence-problem is discussed if the score of a word is not the number of letters but the sum of its letter-values (A = 1, B = 2, etc.).

Darryl Francis notes several numerical lexemes that he overlooked in his article on "Numero(logo)logy" in the February issue: FILE 13 (to replace CARBON 13 which is echoed by CARBON 14), DECEMBER 26, BIBLE OF 36 LINES, BLACK LEAF 40, BIBLE OF 42 LINES, ARGONAUTS OF '49, NOMOCANNON IN 50 TITLES, and COUTUMIER DE CHARLES VI.

J.A. Lindon points out that his palindromic poem "T. T." in the November 1971 issue is defective: Tosca is not the reverse of mascot. To repair the damage, he suggests replacing the entire line with: On, on, Harrison! No, sirrah! No, no!
ends of two arrowings. (LEW), acro­r rageous puns next door sense from KT7 O PY.

Darryl Francis's February 1972 article, "Linguistic Illusions", discussed words that appear to have two different meanings depending upon the way they are viewed (for example, RESTABLE and RE-STABLE). The ear can be fooled as well as the eye. Ask a friend to pronounce the following words after you spell them three letters at a time: REE-CHE, BAC-KAC-HE, MAC-HIN-ERY (the third word is more misleading if he is first asked to pronounce such words as MAC-DOU-GAL and MAC-TAV-ISH).

Elsewhere in this issue, J. A. Lindon discusses in detail methods for constructing a set of seven six-letter words, each of which has exactly one letter in common with every other word. Mary Youngquist independently researched this problem and came up with a fine set of words, all in Webster's Third Edition: WHUMPS WICKED BLIGHT FLUNKY EMBRYO DOGNAP CRAFTS. Note the similarity between this problem and the magician's mnemonic discussed at the end of "Levine's Isomorph Dictionary" in the February issue.

Darryl Francis proposes four improvements to L.E. Card's "More Beginnings and Endings" in the February Word Ways: AG for AGOG, EMP for EQUIP, ISH for ITCH and MAH for MASH.

Murray Pearce and Philip Cohen have called the attention of Word Ways readers to errors in Webster's Second Edition previously unreported here. The pronunciation for PHLEOPLASTIC is given as felopalstik. The definition of the word MUTESSARIFAT uses the nonexistent word muttessarif. Similarly, MICRORHOPIAS is defined as a genus of ant urens. ERCETUM and ERIACH are listed in the wrong order below the line. In at least some (but not all) printings, TUM­­MY is listed as an adjective, and CUCUSWOOD refers the reader to grandilla tree.

In Kickshaws, Dave Silverman discusses sparse words -- words with an unusually low ratio of different letters to total letters. Ralph Beaman has made the last-minute observation that the longest word in the English language (the 1913-letter chemical term for tryptophan synthetase A protein, reported in the February 1968 issue and later in the Guinness Book of World Records) has a sparseness quotient of only 0.00941.

Charles W. Karns of Vienna, Virginia points out that Leslie Card's list of 6 five-letter words using all the letters of the alphabet (see February Kickshaws) is closely allied to the Jotto problem of finding 5 five-letter words using 25 different letters (see February 1968 issue). The set BUXOM CAWS FIELD GRAPH QVINT uses 24 letters, omitting Y and Z; the addition of CRAZY produces a suitable panalphabet set. Mr. Karns finds 4 five-letter words using 20 common letters adequate for Jotto play: CLOSE FIGHT DRAWN BUMPY.