A NEW 100-LETTER WORD SQUARE

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Since my first report on the attempt to construct a modern tautonymic 10 x 10 word square, Darryl H. Francis and I have continued to work on the project, and we are happy to report a second solution to the problem. The new word square overcomes all of the esthetic objections leveled against our first effort, and exhibits other improvements as well:

1. Of the words in the square, 60% are recognizable at sight as being English
2. The square employs five different words, each appearing twice horizontally and twice vertically
3. All of the sources are works published within the past five years, making the square as current as is humanly possible
4. The five words are taken from five different sources
5. All five words are independent terms, as contrasted with a word that appears only as part of a two-word term
6. Proper nouns have been excluded, and the square consists entirely of English words
7. Instead of being exclusively hyphenated words, the terms display a pleasing variety of "internal" punctuation

Here is the unique word square that has emerged from our joint labors:

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An interesting fact is that not even one of the five words in our new square appears in our first one.

Definitions and sources for the five words, listed alphabetically, are given below.

A SAIL! A SAIL! -- Familiar Quotations by John Bartlett, 14th Edition,
Revised and Enlarged, published by Little, Brown and Company (Boston and Toronto, 1968). The quotation including our tautonym is from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, probably his greatest poetic work. The following lines appear in Part III, Stanza 4:

I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

BASSA-BASSA -- Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect by Frank A. Collymore, published by Advocate Company (Bridgetown, Barbados, 1970). This glossary defines BASSA-BASSA as general confusion, noise, and, in some cases, exchange of blows. "Boy, when the spree over, we going make bassa-bassa." The origin of the word is obscure, possibly an importation from Trinidad. For those who might argue that the dialect of Barbados lies outside the pale of English, we must point out that Barbados, an island in the Lesser Antilles of the West Indies, was a British possession from 1605 to 1966, and is now a member of the (British) Commonwealth of Nations, in the same way as are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom itself. The 1973 Edition of The Official Associated Press Almanac calls Barbados "perhaps even more British than Britain." English is the official and universal language of the island.

BISON BISON -- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language edited by William Morris, published jointly by American Heritage Publishing Company, Inc., and Houghton Mifflin Company (Boston; New York; Atlanta; Geneva, Illinois; Dallas; Palo Alto, California, 1971). BISON BISON is the scientific (genus + species) name for the bison, a hoofed animal of western North America (see definition of "bison").


And greetings in the markets,
and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

May we feel that this gives our word square divine sanction?

Perfection in logology, as in other fields of human endeavor, is impossible to attain. The editor contends that the two phrases A SAIL! A SAIL! and RABBI, RABBI, although appearing in literary
works of unchallenged merit, can not be found as entries in any English-language dictionary. Nevertheless, we feel that a logological project, launched with a specific goal in view, has been brought to a reasonably successful conclusion.

Yet, every end is only a beginning. What reader of Word Ways will have the courage to embark on the next step, the construction of a 12 x 12 tautonymic word square, using six different words, each one appearing twice horizontally and twice vertically? You, perhaps?

PALINDROMIC PUBLICITY

1973 has been a vintage year for the palindrome aficionado. In addition to being featured in Bergerson's Palindromes and Anagrams (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), palindromes have been the subject of articles by Michael Gartner in the Wall Street Journal (March 7 and April 3), and by John Ciardi in the World Magazine, later merged with the Saturday Review (May 22, September 25, and October 9). Both authors complained in their initial articles about the paucity of palindromic specimens, citing less than a dozen apiece, most of them well-known to Word Ways readers (though I'M, ALAS, SALAMI and CAMUS SAW I WAS SUMAC may be new). Predictably, both authors were inundated with mail from palindrome addicts pointing out the full flowering of this literature, necessitating follow-up articles.

Gartner comments that a surprising number of palindromes have to do with sex. Both he and Ciardi quote the short but uncommonly fine palindrome SEX AT NOON TAXES. No doubt this has been independently discovered by many people (Dmitri Borgmann claims to have noticed it ten or fifteen years ago), but can any one cite a printed reference prior to January 14, 1973? Palindromic personal names may be more common than previously suspected; Gartner reported Leon W. Noel, Neil Lien, and the double palindrome Bob Notton.

A LOGOLOGICAL VICTORY

The London Times of May 5, 1973 reported that the little railroad station with the longest name in the world, Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch, Anglesey, was reopened the day before. It was a triumph for Aethwy rural council, which had pressed for its reopening ever since it was closed by the Beeching axe. Besides its great length (58 letters), the name is logologically unusual in that it contains four L's in succession.