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HARMONIOUS OPPOSITES

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1973 Word Ways articles by Mary J. Youngquist and R. Robinson
Rowe have taken pairs of words opposite in meaning and scrambled
them into phrases or sentences unrelated to the original words in mean-
ing. The problem presented to solvers has been to unscramble them
and find the original pairs.

A careful examination of the scrambles reveals the fact that there
is something odd about them. First of all, the obvious goal of such
scrambling should be to produce words, names, or other dictionary
entries, real or at least simulated. Yet, of the 100 original scrambles
in these two articles, only one has achieved this goal -- SOUL WESTER.
Surely, it ought to be possible to do better than that!

Naturally, not all pairs can be scrambled so successfully. If it is
impossible to achieve the highest level of success, one must turn to a
secondary goal: scrambling the opposites into phrases or sentences
that are both meaningful and cohesive. The authors of the two previous
articles have displayed a remarkable indifference to this secondary
goal, the attainment of which is mandatory. Because this secondary
goal can always be achieved, failing to reach

Many or most of the original 100 scrambles exhibit faulty grammar,
deliberate misspellings, an excess of internal punctuation, invented
names, extreme tenuousness of thought or even a complete absence of
thought, and related defects.

It need not be so. To substantiate my view, I have taken 100 brand-
new pairs of opposites, scrambling them properly. The new scrambles
are presented below. The correct solutions are to be found in Answers
and Solutions at the end of this issue.

The scrambles are arranged in order of letter length, beginning
with the shortest ones (four letters) and ending with the longest ones
(fourteen letters). The greater the number of letters in a pair of op-
opposites, the easier it is to turn them into an acceptable scramble, but
the more difficult it is for the solver to find the original words. For
both reasons, I have stopped at the fourteen-letter level.

Those scrambles representing genuine dictionary entries -- there
are 24 of them -- are indicated by means of a single asterisk. Those
scrambles representing simulated dictionary entries -- there are 17 of them -- are indicated by a double asterisk. Accordingly, 41 of the 100 scrambles have reached the primary goal. The remaining 59 scrambles have achieved the secondary goal of being both meaningful and cohesive: they involve a minimum of proper names and of internal punctuation, and both grammar and spelling are perfect.

Which is the most difficult scramble to solve? In my opinion, it is number 95.

1. daze*
2. heat*
3. arise*
4. nosey*
5. radon*
6. Albert*
7. germal*
8. Lowden*
9. too new
10. ion trap*
11. lewison*
12. overmen*
13. a desman
14. Pa swore
15. spurt on!
16. befriend*
17. doweling*
18. foldouts*
19. genderer*
20. oversaid*
21. Parkdale*
22. tail ends*
23. ten-armed*
24. wardlike*
25. flailers*
26. hut tiler**
27. name tabs**
28. subyield**
29. a red knit
30. arm maids!
31. a shy dear
32. fen dikes
33. lot ached
34. old fines
35. she has to!
36. song data
37. tie a crew
38. tie maces
39. refined**
40. impactees**
41. lead mines**
42. pavedness**
43. semifloor**
44. a thief led
45. a wet rider
46. damn dudes!
47. deck a land
48. hated fans
49. lace lions!
50. blow earth
51. the morons
52. wares sank
53. yes, I mourn
54. heart lines*
55. insect care**
56. rebateward**
57. rum-browned**
58. twin lakers**
59. world-borne*
60. a deep curse
61. a supertuft
62. bandy clips!
63. can a pin fly?
64. err on those
65. fast oaring
66. field crime
67. madly cured
68. mere devils
69. reputed oil
70. see the shot!
71. swear or lie
72. watch Edsel
73. stepparents*
74. a final creed
75. a popish deer
76. "die!" I sing out
77. his elf trips!
78. offer a beret
79. rice vendees
80. seat marvels!
81. see hell, Dora!
82. ten dour hags
83. tribes tweet
84. true antlers
85. war on litter!
86. yet so proper
87. counterseals*
88. superconduit**
89. uncoiledness**
90. a Nepali purse
91. I hate rooters
92. inexact rente
93. pure hit shows
94. gremlin-raised**
95. star-promising**
96. ogle not a three
97. shiver, entente!
98. to finger a yine
99. a created tavern
100. I swear tar is wet!