THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE (PART 1)

DMITRI A. BORGMANN
Dayton, Washington

Varied and far-flung are the concerns of logology. The kaleidoscopic diversity of the problems to which recreational linguistics addresses itself are reflected in the pages of each issue of Word Ways.

Close to the heart of logology, if not at its absolute center, is the field of transposals or transpositions: the art of rearranging the letters of a word or name to form one or more others, as when MONDAY is turned into DYNAMO, or TEGIVERSATION is perceived to be either INTERROGATIVES or REINVESTIGATOR in disguise.

Anyone who enters the domain of transposals soon begins to look for the kingpin of them all, for that letter combination producing the largest number of different words and names. Finding it and then exploiting it to the hilt becomes an extraordinary challenge. The dedicated transposer senses that this is the point at which logology acquires the ability to break through all barriers, soaring into the wild blue yonder. It follows that the discovery and maximization of the archtransposal becomes the ultimate adventure in the realm of logology, representing its finest hour and demonstrating its greatest power.

For the past half century or so, there has been a vague awareness on the part of many logologists that the letter combination yielding the largest possible number of transposals is the group AEGINRST. That this particular set of letters should claim the championship is eminently reasonable. If we accept as our standard that table of relative letter frequencies beginning ETAISONHR ..., we see that the specified letter group includes six of the seven most common letters in English. The one letter omitted, O, is the least common of the first four vowels in this frequency arrangement. It must be omitted in order to keep the ratio of vowels to all letters in line with the typical ratio in English words (about 40%). The two added letters, R and G, are the two letters that permit the largest possible number of derivative words to be formed: words involving prefixes, suffixes, and combining forms such as RE-, -ER, and -ING.

While there has been a certain measure of recognition accorded to the AEGINRST combination as the ultimate one, never have its depths fully been plumbed, and logologists as a whole are totally unaware of the almost unbelievable riches that can be extracted from the superficially innocent eight letters A, E, G, I, N, R, S, and T. It is the purpose of this article to bring that incredible wealth out into the light of day -- for the first time anywhere.
He who chooses to explore the AEGINRST transposals, resolutely and systematically, finds his basic conceptions of language changing and expanding in the process. He develops insights into the nature of words from which lesser mortals are forever excluded. Language takes on a more dynamic, more flexible character for such an individual.

Listed in this article are 130 AEGINRST transposals: a truly astonishing number far beyond that which can be evolved from any other group of letters, smaller or larger. Comparatively few of the words and names are the sort of common terms given in boldface type in the latest edition of The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (more popularly referred to as the M-W pocket dictionary). Consequently, the list is presented in annotated fashion, to the extent deemed apropos.

There is one crucially important aspect of exploring the AEGINRST letter combination that cannot be brought out adequately within the framework of the annotations alone. Up to now, it has been customary to divide all words into two categories: dictionary words and coined words. Dictionary words include not only those words printed in boldface type in some dictionary or other standard reference work, but also all normal inflections of such words, irrespective of whether or not the inflectional forms are spelled out (or at least indicated in some abbreviated style) in the authority consulted. For example, WINDS is considered a dictionary word, in its status as plural of the noun WIND, and would be so considered even if no dictionary ever published had chosen to specify what the plural form was of the noun WIND. Coined words, by contrast, are those formed, usually but not always, either by attaching common prefixes, suffixes, and combining forms to dictionary words, in accordance with the rules governing English word formation, or by similarly forming hyphenated compound terms of reasonable meaning. There are some exceptions, as when a solitarily-written word is formed by combining two word elements each of which is ordinarily a root or stem in its own right.

Research on the AEGINRST transposals has led to the astonishing and extremely significant discovery that there is a third group of words, intermediate in status between dictionary words and coined words. The members of this new group can best be described as inferred words, because their existence is clearly inferrible from information included in dictionaries. The AEGINRST transposals about to be presented include quite a number of inferred words. For the purposes of this article, inferred words will be treated as having the same degree of authenticity or realness as do conventional dictionary words. Each inferred word in the list is identified by means of an asterisk immediately preceding it. The inferred words included, each one carefully explained, will better serve to elucidate their nature than could any generalized description of their character inserted here. What is of overriding importance at this point is the fact that their discovery opens new vistas and opportunities to the logologist determined to reject coined words, no matter how seductive the siren call of such artifacts.

On the basis of the new classification of words into three groups instead of two, there is not a single coined word among the AEGINRST transposals. Previously put many times this follows is a verity.

Yet, it is only of language attentively awaiting heartfelt plea for research for further elucidation of future issue of.

In order to the general proposals, and the it, are set for

Extended and deepens or.

A transposal has letters comprising occupy along a has proved to proposal is any close to one another blank space, im-

ference from each is increased. The position or arr.

The separate trans-

IZED, while ex-

stitute two differ-

letters. Parent-

meaning and in-

Full advantage the AEGINRST trans-

Transposal for particular lang-

a transposal of a dyed-in-the-wo-

foreign-lang-

their rep-

AEGINRST trans-

languages of wo-

icing on the cal-

Naturally, the names. Of the other langu-

ful are French.
transposals. Since the list is roughly 2 1/2 times the length of any previously published collection of genuine AEGINRST transposals, and many times the length of any non-AEGINRST transposal list, what follows is a veritable miracle, unlike anything ever before exhibited. Yet, it is only a modest beginning. Lurking beneath the placid surface of language are large numbers of additional AEGINRST transposals, patiently awaiting their turn to be discovered. This, then, is an earnest, heartfelt plea to all readers of Word Ways to join in the continuing search for further AEGINRST transposals. All finds should be communicated to the editor as promptly as possible, for publication in a future issue of Word Ways.

In order to keep the required annotations within manageable limits, the general principles followed in compiling the list of AEGINRST transposals, and the significant linguistic techniques employed to advantage in it, are set forth in a series of further introductory paragraphs.

Extended consideration of the AEGINRST transposal set broadens and deepens one's understanding of the true nature of a transposition. A transposal has, up to now, been thought of as a rearrangement of the letters comprising a word or name, changing the order that the letters occupy along a straight, horizontal line. This definition of a transposal has proved to be an unnecessarily limited one. More properly, a transposal is any change in the position of the letters comprising a word relative to one another. If a hyphen, or some other punctuation mark, or a blank space, is inserted between two of the letters in a word, the distance from each other of the letters on the two sides of the interruption is increased. This constitutes an undeniable change in their relative position or arrangement, qualifying the altered ordering as a distinct, separate transposal. For example, the words UNIONIZED and UN-IONIZED, while exhibiting the same letter sequence, nevertheless constitute two different arrangements or transposals of the same set of nine letters. Parenthetically, the two words also differ sharply both in meaning and in pronunciation.

Full advantage has been taken of this insight in preparing the AEGINRST transposal list exhibited here.

Transposals have generally been thought of with reference to one particular language, such as English. Since there are many languages, a transposal effort confined entirely to one language reflects a provincial attitude on the part of the individual engaged in it. For this reason, dyed-in-the-wool logologists are always enthusiastically on the lookout for foreign-language specimens of the art with which to adorn and enhance their repertoires. In line with this philosophy, the following AEGINRST transposal list includes examples drawn from the principal languages of western Europe and the Americas. They represent the icing on the cake, so to speak.

Naturally, the primary focus of the list is on English words and names. Of the 130 terms included, 113 are English, with only 17 from other languages. The two foreign languages that seem to be most fruitful are French and Latin, with a smaller number of examples from...
German, Spanish, and Italian.

In deference to those who abhor the thought of a babel of tongues, the foreign-language examples have been segregated in a separate list. Foreign words identical in spelling with English words have been listed only if they differ in meaning. Accordingly, a word such as the French GRANITES, identical both in spelling and in meaning with the English word GRANITES, has been excluded from the foreign-language list.

The shift from one language to another sets up a barrier between two words identical in spelling such that, if they differ in meaning, both must be included in the transposal list.

There is no single dictionary, encyclopedia, atlas, gazetteer, or other reference work that is all-inclusive, that speaks for the English language as a whole. The editors of the Merriam-Webster dictionaries once estimated that our language embraces a total of possibly 3,000,000 different words. The largest number of entries ever included in one dictionary was only 550,000 -- in the main section of the Second Edition of the Merriam-Webster Unabridged dictionary. This is a rather small fraction of the total. Then, too, the estimate of 3,000,000 words was made in the 1940's. A large number of new words has entered the language since that time, and more words are added each year.

In recognition of these circumstances, the following transposal list has drawn words and names freely from a wide and hopefully representative selection of published reference works.

To dispense with the inconvenience of a formal bibliography list, each one is identified succinctly in a first mention, and by a suitable abbreviation in any subsequent mention or mentions.

So-called dictionary words and names are those taken from published reference works. Does a reference work need to meet certain standards to qualify as an acceptable source? A reference work is thought of as something with a considerable degree of permanence. For that reason, some logologists look askance at reference works which they regard as ephemeral. In particular, they feel a pronounced aversion for telephone directories. It is true that telephone directories are generally revised annually. However, the bulk of the entries in any particular directory finds its way into the one published the following year. There is no wholesale replacement of the entries, merely a revision. The same is true of dictionaries, encyclopedias, and atlases. Nowadays, most encyclopedias are revised annually. Atlases and dictionaries tend to be revised once every five or ten years. Even if a particular work is revised only once every five or ten years, the difference between it and an annually revised telephone directory is one of degree, not of kind.

As for the entries that are found in telephone directories, they are names of human beings. Biographical dictionaries, which also consist of names of human beings, are accepted unquestioningly by discriminating logologists. The individuals listed in biographical dictionaries are, by and large, human beings. Even if they could go about being, the fact that they are not is one of degree.

From these considerations, telephone directories are entitled to a feasible reason for their exclusion. The transposal list has drawn freely from a wide and hopefully representative selection of published reference works. What, exactly, is a dictionary? What is a dictionary entry? These terms are, by and large, human beings. Biographical dictionaries, which also consist of names of human beings, are accepted unquestioningly by discriminating logologists. The individuals listed in biographical dictionaries are, by and large, human beings. Even if they could go about being, the fact that they are not is one of degree.

From these considerations, telephone directories are entitled to a feasible reason for their exclusion. The transposal list has drawn freely from a wide and hopefully representative selection of published reference works. What, exactly, is a dictionary? What is a dictionary entry? These terms are, by and large, human beings. Biographical dictionaries, which also consist of names of human beings, are accepted unquestioningly by discriminating logologists. The individuals listed in biographical dictionaries are, by and large, human beings. Even if they could go about being, the fact that they are not is one of degree.
of tongues, a separate list. In the French language list.

There are, by and large, more important than those listed in telephone directories. Even if we set aside the philosophical question as to how one could go about measuring objectively the worth of a particular human being, the fact still remains that the difference between telephone directories and biographical dictionaries, in point of content, is again one of degree, not of kind.

From these considerations, the conclusion follows inescapably that telephone directories are legitimate reference works, and that logologists are entitled to use them. Recognizing the fact that there is no defensible reason for ignoring phone books, the AEGINRST transposal list has drawn names from those of various major cities in the United States and England, entirely without any reservations or compunctions.

What, exactly, is a dictionary word? The first impulse is to think of a dictionary word as one that appears in some dictionary, in boldface type. This is a lamentably superficial view. Most dictionaries include three types of words printed in lightface type that do not appear as boldface entries, even though they are just as authentic. One group of such words, generally printed in italics, appears within the brackets for the etymologies of the words defined. Included are both older forms of English words, and some foreign words.

A second group consists of words used by dictionary editors to define boldface entries. The vocabulary of editors far exceeds the vocabulary selected for inclusion in their dictionaries, and editors find it necessary to draw on this more extensive vocabulary in writing their definitions. To cite an example, there is a plant similar to the yucca known as the SOTOL. The definition of the word in Webster's Second Edition describes it as YUCCALIKE. The word YUCCALIKE has never appeared as an entry in any dictionary of the English language. Yet, it is a legitimate English word, a fact proved by the use just cited. There are, it is estimated, thousands of other words in the same category.

The third group consists of words appearing in quotations illustrating the use of dictionary entries. It includes old and variant spellings of the dictionary entries, not shown elsewhere in the dictionary.

The AEGINRST transposal list does not limit itself to boldface dictionary entries. Instead, it willingly accepts lightface dictionary terms, wherever they may be found.

The English language ranges far and wide: by no means is it limited to standard, nontechnical, common words in use today throughout the English-speaking world. Rather, it embraces technical and obscure terms; slang and colloquial words; provincial and dialectal words; and English words used chiefly or exclusively in Canada, Australia, Scotland, or some other peripheral area of the English-speaking world. It also includes those words in the process of being retired from active present use: archaic or obsolete words. Beyond that, it includes words that belong to earlier periods of the English language: to Middle English and even to Old English. In this connection, it must be kept in mind that Old English comprised a number of different dialects, each
with its own name. For instance, there was West Saxon, the chief literary dialect of Old English in pre-Conquest England.

The AEGINRST transposal list recognizes most of the strands entering into English in its totality, by including Old English, Middle English, provincial, Scottish, technical, and other terms in its all-encompassing folds.

A peculiarity of Old English is the fact that the letter G was pronounced in four different ways: as a voiced guttural stop, as a voiced palatal stop, as a voiced guttural spirant, and as a voiced palatal spirant. Lexicons such as The Oxford English Dictionary use four different symbols to indicate the various pronunciations of the letter G in Old English, but this does not alter the fact that each of the four symbols stands for the letter G. Several of the transposals in the AEGINRST list happen to be Old English words in which the G was a voiced palatal spirant, represented by a special symbol in the OED.

Another idiosyncrasy associated particularly with Old English is the appearance of asterisks in front of some of the words within etymology brackets. An asterisk indicates that the word following it is a form not actually found in Old English, but the existence of which was inferred on philological grounds either by the dictionary editors or by English scholars. The weight of the authority behind such inferred words makes it obligatory to include them, whenever possible, in a collection such as the AEGINRST transposal set. Incidentally, it also provides official sanction for the fundamental principle of inferring the existence of words not actually found in print: it justifies the category of inferred words introduced to readers in this article.

Most of us accept the fact that some concepts are represented by single, solidly-written words; that others require the use of letters in combination with diacritical marks such as accents, circumflexes, and cedillas; that still others require the use of letters in combination with punctuation marks such as hyphens, apostrophes, and periods; and that some concepts are even represented by a combination of two or more separate words. That all dictionaries (and other reference works) acknowledge this fact is evidenced by their choice of entries, which include a large number of terms other than single, solidly-written words free of any adjunctive marks. What is universally accepted by language reference works must also be accepted by transposers and other logologists.

Just as phrases consisting of two or more words are considered fair game by the transposal hunter, so are the individual parts of such phrases. A term such as ROISIN DUBH (an allegorical name for Ireland, given in Webster's Second Edition) yields three usable items for the logologist: (1) ROISIN; (2) DUBH; and (3) ROISIN DUBH.

The underlying rationale is that each of the components in a phrase of two or more words is independent word, its independence being attested to by the fact that it is not connected with any other word by means of a hyphen or other punctuation mark. Its independence estab-
In the same way that study of the AEGINRST transposal set enhances one’s understanding of transposals themselves, so does it yield new insights into the nature of the words being transposed. One of the perceptions gained as a result of the study is the recognition that a noun, standing by itself, is an incomplete entity. To round out its meaning, it needs an article, definite or indefinite, preceding it and limiting or individualizing it. This means that a word such as KIMONO does not convey a complete idea. Completeness of thought suggests the strong desirability of perfecting the concept represented by the "naked" word by particularizing it either as A KIMONO or as THE KIMONO. With this desideratum firmly in mind, it has been found possible to include a number of truly perfect AEGINRST noun transposals in the present collection.

There is, unfortunately, an obvious limitation to the use of indefinite articles: they identify only one specimen of the entity designated by the following noun. In the case of a plural noun, some other kind of identification is frequently required. The most common form that such identification takes without actually describing the subject noun is that of an attributive cardinal number: TWO, FIVE, or whatever. Accordingly, at least a token bow in the direction of cardinals was called for in constructing the AEGINRST transposal list, and it includes one example of a plural noun preceded by an attributive cardinal.

As with nouns, so with verbs. Except in the case of an infinitive, no inflectional form of a verb is complete without the pronoun to which it corresponds preceding it. In some languages, Latin for example, the inflectional form of a verb includes within itself the meaning of the concomitant pronoun. Take the Cartesian dictum, COGITO, ERGO SUM ("I think, therefore I am"). There are no pronouns in the Latin statement: they are superfluous, because the verbs alone say it all. In a defective language such as English, where pronouns must be inserted into sentences in order to convey their full meanings, a complete verb form is one that includes its pronoun as an adjunct. Again, with this thought as a guiding light, it has proved possible to include a number of genuinely complete verbs in the AEGINRST transposal list.

There is yet another view that can be taken of a word: namely, the view that a word is not really complete without its definition. Unless a definition is provided, how will someone unfamiliar with the word know what it means? There are any number of words that can be transposed in such a way as to form a word followed by its definition. For example, MULATTOS can be rearranged into TOTAL: SUM, and GRIMALDI (a type of prehistoric man) turns into MAID: GIRL. Once again, diligent effort has triumphed, and there is, indeed, an example in the AEGINRST transposal list of a word appearing with its definition.

Proper names are just as much a part of language as are other words. Almost all dictionaries include names of persons and of places
in addition to ordinary words, with many of them listing the proper names in one alphabetical sequence with all other entries. For most individuals, their own names just happen to be the most important words in the language, and place names such as those of the city or town and of the country in which they reside are indispensable concomitants of daily living. There is no one who can use language without using proper names. It follows that the logologist is compelled to admit them to his universe.

Proper names, like all other nouns, are used both in the possessive singular form and in the nominative plural form. Each of these two forms involves addition of the letter S to the nominative singular form (with the nominative plural form subject to a variety of occasional irregularities). Think of the capital of England: what was LONDON'S population in 1930? Alternatively, consider the SPRINGFIELDS of America: you may be referring either to all of the cities and towns in the United States named SPRINGFIELD (there are dozens of them), or to cities such as one of them -- for example, to cities such as SPRINGFIELD, Massachusetts.

The same principles apply to names of persons. What is JOHN'S last name? Are the ALICES of this world any different from the BARBARAS? Have you invited the BROWNS to dinner?

Proper nouns also form their plurals in less usual ways, as sometimes do common nouns. Of particular interest in connection with the AEGINRST transpositional problem are some proper nouns ending in the letter Y. Common nouns ending in a Y preceded by a consonant almost always change that Y to an I, then adding ES (CITY, CITIES). In the case of proper nouns, there is an undercurrent of reluctance to alter the spelling of the proper name when pluralizing it. Illustrating the problem is the case of Germany, divided into two separate nations after the Second World War. There have been innumerable joint references to these two nations in print. Usage has been fairly evenly divided between the two GERMANYS and the two GERMANIES. An example of the -IES plural occurs on Page 619 of The World Almanac & Book of Facts 1976: "Travel restrictions between the 2 Germanies were eased slightly ..."

Since the -IES plural is a permissible form, it may be applied to any proper name ending in a Y preceded by a consonant, a fact noted in preparing the AEGINRST transpositional list.

Time was when abbreviations were regarded as pariahs or outcasts, consigned to lead a shadowy existence on the fringes of language. Not so any more: Webster's Third Edition has changed all that by removing the stigma attaching to abbreviations. The dictionary has entered them in its main section, in one alphabetical order with regular words. No longer need the lowly abbreviation skulk along the periphery of language, leading a catch-as-catch-can existence. It may now mingle with high society!

Admittedly, 8-letter abbreviations are a rarity, and it would be well-
A word used as a word is known as a quotation noun, or citation form, or hypostasis. For instance, if we look at a printed page, we can ask how many AND'S appear on it. As the example illustrates, the nigh impossible to find one that happens to be an AEGINRST transposal. However, AEGINRST transposals do exist, consisting of two or more elements, one of which is in the form of an abbreviation. In compliance with the current Websterian ukase, such transposals have cheerfully been accepted into the society of the AEGINRST set. The days when discrimination was an acceptable policy are over.

All of the so-called unabridged dictionaries include words the definitions of which begin with phrases such as "error for" or "erroneous form of." The fact that such words are entered in the unabridged dictionaries proves that the erroneous forms appeared either in handwritten manuscripts that have come down to us from the time before the invention of printing, or in printed, published works. The existence of the erroneous forms represents faith on the part of the author or scribe or printer, and on the part of at least some of the readers, that the word as given in the text was correct. The appearance of the word in the material that has survived to the present day, and the attendant faith in its correctness, are sufficient reasons for accepting as legitimate transposals erroneous forms recorded in dictionaries. As in the case of many other word categories, the AEGINRST transposal list doffs its hat to erroneous forms by including one of them.

A phenomenon characteristic of English is the gerund, also known as a verbal noun or substantive participle. It is formed by taking the present participle of the verb, ending in the suffix -ING, and using it as a noun. For example, the present participle of the verb "to win" is WINNING. If the word is used as a noun ("the winning of the West"), it becomes a gerund. In its status as a noun, the gerund forms its plural by adding the letter S, in the same way as do other English nouns. Thus, actions of taking are called TAKINGS.

According to The Century Dictionary, first published in 1889 and continued in publication until 1914, in later years in an expanded form entitled The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia, the suffix -ING is of Anglo-Saxon (Old English) origin and is used to form nouns from verbs, expressing the action of the verb. SUCH NOUNS MAY BE FORMED FROM ANY VERB WHATEVER. The dictionary goes on to say that all verbal nouns, being independent words, and no part of the verb, should be entered and defined separately in dictionaries, but that their great number, limited only by the number of verbs, makes this impractical. Furthermore, their connection with the verb (from which their meaning can always be inferred) makes such a practice unnecessary.

It is quite true that even the largest dictionaries enter only some gerunds, omitting the majority. However, since gerunds can be formed from all verbs without exception, their existence is understood by knowledgeable speakers and writers of English. This understanding has been accepted and acted upon in the search for AEGINRST transposals, with the results exhibited in this article.

A word used as a word is known as a quotation noun, or citation form, or hypostasis. For instance, if we look at a printed page, we can ask how many AND'S appear on it. As the example illustrates, the
plural of a quotation noun is formed by adding an apostrophe and an S to the word being cited. Citation forms are commonplace in English, appearing in such ordinary expressions as the order to do something without any if's, and's, or but's, or in the saying to the effect that one should mind one's P's and Q's (the letters in this admonition were originally considered as letters).

Every single word in the English language can be used as a hypostasis, and pluralized accordingly. The AEGINRST transposal list has been assembled with full knowledge of that fact.

Quite interesting is the realization that the citation of words in an English text does not need to be limited to English words. Suppose, for a wild moment, that you are looking at a printed page in Maltese, on which the word MQAGHWEX ("rolled over and over") occurs quite a few times. You, speaking in English, are entitled to wonder how many MQAGHWEX'S there are on the page. What this illustrates is the fact that any word in any language spelled with letters of the Roman or Latin alphabet may be used as a quotation noun in an English text, and pluralized if the occasion so warrants.

This truly fascinating discovery has been put to good use in adding to the list of AEGINRST transposals.

"'A-hunting we will go," as Henry Fielding used to say. It is possible to place A- in front of gerunds or verbal nouns ending in -ING, a practice common in poetic, colloquial, and dialectal speech. Sometimes, the hyphen is omitted, with the resulting term being written either as one solid word or as two separate words.

Some dictionaries regard A- as a prefix, others as an initial and generally inseparable particle which is a relic of various Teutonic and classical particles, fulfilling the function of a mere intensive in modern English, without assignable force. Among the dictionaries treating A- as a particle rather than as a prefix in The Century Dictionary (in its later years, The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia).

It is common knowledge that the particle may be placed in front of any English verb, given the desire and the occasion to do so. This principle has served as a guide in preparing the AEGINRST transposal list.

The conjugation of verbs in modern English is a simplified version of the conjugation used in Old English and in Middle English. Formerly, the suffix -ST or -EST was attached to verbs to indicate the second person singular present active indicative form, the suffix -ETH to indicate the third person singular present active indicative form. Since the AEGINRST letter group does not include an H, only the -ST or -EST suffix is of interest in the current context.

The suffixed verb forms were standard in the older English language. They are now archaic except in solemn or poetic discourse. Either way, they are acceptable as transposals, and have been formed uninhibitedly to.

There is some rule, and when to use rules governing to Webster except immediately" does not give deviating pronunciation word (SIDE or SIDEST) has therefore from the ostensible GRAINEST see form GRAINST rule not explicitly.

English adjectives suffixes -ER and -EST before the adjective, by using the suffix -EST. However, between the two rhetorical effects in any given case. The dictionary offers terminations in dictionaries as dictionary entries.

It would be in dictionaries of similarly comparisons have transposals.

Some read AEGINRST transposals as transposal 11 flat" in the official mouth of 21 AEGINRST posal "flat" put been constructed as the nom de plu membered as achievements.

As if paying AEGINRST transposals alone. A tabulation the 15-year period that no other read AEGINRST transposals have of time, with n...
uninhibitedly to produce additional AEGINRST transposals.

There is some legitimate question as to when to use the suffix -ST and when to use the suffix -EST. There appear to be no hard and fast rules governing the proper choice in any particular instance. According to Webster’s Second Edition, one usually attaches the -ST suffix except immediately following a sibilant or vowel sound. Since "usually" does not mean "always", the user of the forms has the option of deviating from the recommended practice unless the resulting pronunciation would be distinctly unnatural. In only one instance (GRAINEST) has there been a departure in the AEGINRST transposal list from the ostensibly recommended usage. In this particular case, GRAINEST seems much more natural than the apparently preferred form GRAINST. There may, however, be exceptions to the general rule not explicitly mentioned in Webster’s Second Edition.

English adjectives are compared in two ways: either by using the suffixes -ER and -EST, or by placing the words MORE and MOST before the adjectives. There is a tendency to compare short adjectives by using the suffixes, long adjectives by using the words MORE and MOST. However, according to Webster’s Second Edition, the choice between the two methods is largely a matter of euphony, rhythm, and rhetorical effectiveness. This leaves it up to the individual to decide, in any given case, whether he wishes to use one method or the other. The dictionary goes on to point out that the colloquial style even prefers terminational comparisons. Webster’s Third Edition is noncommittal in describing the two methods of comparison, but actually lists as dictionary entries words such as BEAUTIFULLER and AWFULLEST.

It would be foolhardy to set aside the judgment of these two leading dictionaries of the English language. Consequently, terminational comparisons have been used freely in extending the list of AEGINRST transposals.

Some readers may be interested in the historical evolution of the AEGINRST transposal set. The first sizable collection of AEGINRST transposals appeared in the November, 1925 issue of The Enigma, the official monthly organ of the National Puzzlers’ League. It consisted of 21 AEGINRST transposals and represented the solution to a transposal "flat" published in the September, 1925 issue. The puzzle had been constructed by Howard B. McPherrin of Denver, Colorado, using the nom de plume "Hercules." Very fittingly, Mr. McPherrin is remembered as one of the giants in the history of the NPL, noted for his achievements in the areas of transpositions, anagrams and palindromes.

As if paying homage to McPherrin’s pioneer effort on the AEGINRST transposal, other NPL members seem to have left it severely alone. A tabulation of all transposals published in The Enigma during the 15-year period from December, 1932 to December, 1937 indicates that no other member attempted a puzzle during that period using the AEGINRST transposal as a base. That’s quite remarkable, because transposals had their heyday in the NPL during this particular period of time, with scores of bases being used two or more times.
In 1937, the first transposal dictionary was published: The Nuttall Dictionary of Anagrams, by A. R. Ball (London and New York: Frederick Warne & Company, Ltd., 1937). That book included 10 AEGINRST transposals, all of them presumed to be English-language examples. Oddly enough, one of the 10 words (GRATINES) seems to be a word only in French, unless the compiler selected for inclusion a trademark name or brand name known only in Great Britain. Possibly, he picked the word out of the solution to some crossword puzzle, without paying attention to its definition.

In September, 1965 -- 40 years to the month after McPherrin's transposal "flat" had appeared in The Enigma -- my first book, Language on Vacation, was published (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965). In the book, I presented a total of 65 AEGINRST transposals, consisting of 51 dictionary words and inferred words, and 14 coined words. The 51 authentic terms included the entire McPherrin collection, as well as all of the English words in the Nuttall collection. The 51 authentic terms are, in their turn, included in the list of 130 transpositions in this article.

In 1973, Dennis Ritchie, a member of the technical staff at Bell Telephone Laboratories in New Jersey, used a high-speed digital computer to produce the longest list of English-language transposals assembled up to that time, consisting of words from two dictionaries: the Second Edition of The Merriam-Webster Unabridged, and the Seventh Edition of The Merriam-Webster New Collegiate Dictionary. The Bell list, which remains unpublished, is a monumental flop. It includes only five AEGINRST transposals, omitting the simplest, most common one of all -- the word ANGRIFEST. So much for the usefulness of an electronic computer!

In the meantime, study of the AEGINRST transposal set has continued, both here and abroad, resulting in the collection presented here. I am indebted to two other logologists who have contributed to the collection. Two of the foreign-language transposals were called to my attention by Mr. Dwight Ripley of Greenport, Long Island, New York. Approximately 25 of the English-language examples were found by Mr. Darryl H. Francis of Hampton, Middlesex, England, many of them in reference books not conveniently accessible to me.

The search, an unrelenting one, goes on.