

In short, nothing at all in the host letter evinces any sort of deliberate effort to contrive its hidden message. This being so, one must conclude that if the acrostic is in fact an intentional artifact, its fabricator must have been extremely fortunate in his or her choice of wording for the text, or else must be highly adept at this seldom-seen variety of wordplay, even by the standards of practiced wordplayers. And how likely is it that such a person would be found inhabiting, of all things, the staff of a politician? (And as to Schwarzenegger's staff, his chief of staff, it may be relevant to note, is a Democrat.)

As a nine-days' wonder, Acrosticgate failed to make it even to the two-day mark, as far as the media were concerned, nor did the politicians, their attentions claimed by far less esoteric matters, care to pursue it further. Half a year later, the affair seems unlikely to amount to even a minor footnote to California history. Still, the unsolved mystery of the origin of this amazing-if-accidental (and still noteworthy if not) acrostic remains a conundrum for logologists and others to ponder. Having now learned the circumstances of the case and the arguments on both sides, what is the reader's opinion of the mystery? Who was it, really, who stood chuckling behind the secretary who first typed the offending letter—was it the governor, or the Devil?

WORKING WEEK

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Captain Daunsy
Twined his dynamo
(Off sea-duty)
On sandy weed –
Cleared his yard thus,
As a fairy'd
Sweep a dust-ray.