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.

Elsewhere in this issue, Alan Frank has extended the vowelless-word study to a number of non-dictionary sources. However, several words should have been added to the original article. Jeremiah Farrell looked through the Random House Unabridged to find HWT (Welsh for 'hoot'), SHH, TSK and ZZZ. He noted that HI, a contraction of 'hum', expresses dissent as well as assent. The OED Supplement lists MM (with variants mn, mm-m, and m'm) and MPH (with variant mph). The word DWR (for 'door') was incorrectly spelled DRW in the article. Alan Frank noted that the OED also contains PWLL (an obsolete Sc. form of 'pool') and PWR (an obsolete Sc. form of 'poor'), and Webster's Third contains the verb X'D. Also in the OED, Darryl Francis spotted WG (under ug), and Philip Cohen found OLK (for quhilk, an obsolete form of 'which') in a citation under wappenschauw. TWP, according to Darryl Francis, is a South Wales dialect word meaning 'stupid, daft' in the Collins English Dictionary. BLW, meaning 'blew' or 'blue', appears in J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps' A Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words (Gale reprint, 1968). Similarly, Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary contains PWNC, defined merely as 'a catechism'. Finally, The American Thesaurus of Slang contains both BZZZBZZZ and ZZZZ.

Darryl Francis has added two more quake-words to his May 1979 article on this subject, both from Alvin Toffler's The Third Wave (1980):

- p. 161 But even these examples are small in comparison with the techno-quake now rumbling in our molecular biology laboratories.
- p. 207 The coming wordquake means more than just new machines. It promises to restructure all the human relationships and roles in the office as well.

Elsewhere in this issue, "The Assault on Logology" gives a logological reason why each of the fifty states is interesting. Jeremy Morse has followed up Philip Cohen's article "On the Inter(e)state" in the May Word Ways with examples for the sixteen states missing there:
CALIFORNIA longest state with equal number of consonants and vowels
CONNECTICUT only state with middle letter silent
INDIANA only state to share initial and border with its alphabetic predecessor
MARYLAND longest state in which odd and even letter groups have the same zigzag pattern
MINNESOTA longest one-word state with no unique bigrams
NEW JERSEY two-word state with least density difference between the two words (14 and 13.67)
NEW MEXICO two-word state with greatest spread difference between the two words (27 and 60)
NORTH CAROLINA two-word state with least letter-sum difference between the two words (75 and 73)
NORTH DAKOTA only state rhyming with states both before and after it in alphabetic order
OKLAHOMA shortest state with three consecutive alphabetic letters in the correct order (KLM)
OREGON only beheaded and curtailed MWPD word (foregone)
SOUTH DAKOTA two-word state with greatest density difference between the two words (16.6 and 8.67)
VIRGINIA only state forming second word of another state
WEST VIRGINIA longest state with equal number of letters from each half of alphabet

Can a word square with 16 different letters be constructed out of very common words, such as those in the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary or the Pocket Oxford?

Jeff Grant suggests the two squares at the right are possibly the best that can be achieved; seven words appear in the above-mentioned references, but the last one, RULY, must be sought in Chambers Twentieth Century. These squares should be added to his February 1980 article on word squares using many different letters.

Frank Rubin of Wappingers Falls, New York presents the following fable with 14 consecutive Ss:

A somewhat backward people have just obtained their first steam-powered ship. Lacking a word for steam, they've called it onomatopoetically the Sssst, or, more precisely, the S.S. Sssst. The King has given the ship to his daughter, making it the princess's S.S. Sssst. Of course, the princess is named Sukesh Salima Sirani, making the ship Princess S.S.S.'s S.S. Sssst. However, the government refused to register the ship under that name. They were forced to obtain registration in San Salvador. So now the ship is Princess S.S.S.'s S.S.S. Sssst. 

George NYNG in the appendix (Problem of Smallness) to John's interpretation of 'treatise'.
George H. Roberts of San Diego, California asked about the word FESNYNG in Richard E. Douglas's "Venerable Venery" -- he couldn't find this word in any of his dictionaries. The history of this word is covered in considerable detail in Dmitri Borgmann's Beyond Language (Problem 94: A Feamynq of Ferrets); FESNYNG is listed only in an appendix to Nuttall's Standard Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition, published in London by Frederick Warne & Company from 1932 to 1950. This is apparently a misspelling of FESYNES, which appears in Joseph Strutt's The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, published in London in 1801 with many later editions. He, in turn, misunderstood the word BESYNES in The Book of Saint Albans, a medieval treatise on venery; BESYNES is a Middle English way of spelling 'busyness'.

A late entry in the double-dactyl sweepstakes, from Jay Ames:

higgledy piggledy
Susan B. Anthony
Anti-Victorian
In manners and aims,
Battled the bigwigs
Vociferatingly
To get equal rights
For all damsels and dames.

Rickety rackety
Lionel Barrymore
King of the mummers
Departed Life's scene
Hurling rude vocables
Melodramatically
Down the white halls
Where nurses had been.

Boris Randolph comments on John McClellan's "The Case of the Clean Limerick" in the May 1980 Word Ways with the inscription he put in a Peter Pauper limerick book he gave to a friend:

If you're looking for something obscene
The obscenity here is quite lean,
And whatever your age is,
As you turn the pages,
You will very soon see what I mean.

Jeremy Morse coined a pyramid word of fifteen letters from 'linenless' in Webster's Second and the OED: LINENLESSNESSES, 'states of being without linen'.

Philip Cohen programmed a computer to extend the clockwise spiral of the alphabet (the May 1969 progenitor of Rug Words) to a 132x133 array, discovering a high degree of repetitiveness. In fact, if the array is divided into four quadrants by two diagonal lines intersecting at the starting A, each quadrant consists of an infinite tiling of a 13x26 block of letters, much like an adjacent pair of black and white squares on a checkerboard. Thus, it suffices to examine one block (plus the diagonal edges of those blocks truncated by a diagonal) to discover all words of four or more letters -- there is no possibility that ever-longer words will appear by moving far enough from the center.
It appears that the editor was hasty in saying that MNL appears only in soleMNLy -- this also appears in the Webster Second words hyMNLess and hyMNLike, according to Jeff Grant. The uniqueness of GNT and LMN are shattered by going farther back in history, to the OED variant spellings aLMNer (almoner) and compleGNte (complaint). In studying the uniqueness of trigrams, one must be very careful to specify the references they are unique within. Jeff suggests that HOUYHNHNMS must contain several unique trigrams.

With tongue in cheek, Jeremiah Farrell proposes that the word TUTU, the title of a military governor of a Chinese province, is about 200.28 miles long. Since a tu is equal to 250 li, a li is equal to 1800 ch'ii'h, and a ch'ii'h was once fixed by treaty at 14.1 inches. Clearly, this beats both sMiLEs and beLEAGUErs.

Harry Randall wonders how Maxey Brooke would classify Byron's epitaph on Lord Castlereagh -- a rare but not unique use of Rime Tacet:

Posterity will never survey
A nobler grave than this.
Here lies the bones of Castlereagh.
Stop, traveller.

This looks like the unnamed ABAC quatrain in Maxey Brooke's article.

As an addition to "The Cysteine Chapel", the editor suggests hyperthermia (abnormally high fever, often therapeutically induced) and hypothermia (a subnormal temperature of the body, often induced artificially). There may be other pairs of words with these prefixes, for hypo- means 'less than normal, under, beneath, down' whereas hyper- means 'above, beyond'.

Still more -cide words? George Scheetz sends in the following quote from Erich Segal's Fairy Tale (Harper & Row, 1973), p. 45: arboricide (tree-killing). In similar vein, Kevin Cormicle of Marshalltown, Iowa has discovered gaboonicide on pp. 71-2 of an article on eagle banding in the August 11, 1980 issue of Sports Illustrated. The eagle banders call themselves gaboons, a term coined years ago by Wisconsin ornithologists Fred and Fran Hamerstrom to describe graduate students who perform menial research chores. Gaboonicide is defined as the ultimate punishment for carelessness on the (eagle-banding) job.

Jay Ames sends in the somewhat startling The Brick Shirthouse, a haberdashery in Toronto. The editor has noted a fine addition to his May 1979 article in Tress Chic, a beauty parlor in Bloomingdale, New Jersey. (Not far away in Wayne, there was (until recently) a plant center named Anything Groes.)
ears only in
ISTHMYNLess
GNT and
OED variant
In study­

lord TUTU,
lout
200.28
ICoch1ih, and
his beats

Tyron's epi­

me Tacet:

Darryl Francis adds TILEWRIGHT (in Webster's Second, under tile) to George Scheetz's "Onomasticon IV", and Jeremy Morse notes the names CHEES(E) WRIGHT and SIEV(E) WRIGHT in the London telephone directory. Harry Randall observes that WHEELWRIGHT is a surname as well as a Websterian word. George Scheetz discovered a number of additional -wright names in several standard books on English surnames: ALWRIGHT (Alewright, Allwright) - maker of ale, BREADWRIGHT - maker of bread, CHESSWRIGHT - cheese-maker, DETHEWRIGHT - maker of fuel or tinder, GOODWRIGHT - maker of goods, LIMEWRIGHT - maker of lime, SIEVWRIGHT (Sivewright, Seivwright, Severwright) - maker of sieves, TILEWRIGHT - maker of tile, and WRIGHTSON - son of the wright.

Jeremy Morse was somewhat surprised that Darryl Francis omitted the common word WRONGED in reverse-alphabetical order in "Circular Alphabets".