CHANGES IN THE MWPD

WILLIAM SUNNERS
Brooklyn, New York

There are two separate editions of the current Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary. The first edition of this book, designated the Kangaroo by the publishers, was printed in the usual handy pocket size in April, 1974. In July, 1978, the dictionary was reprinted in larger type and christened the Wallaby edition. In it, several errors and omissions found by George Berryman and me were corrected; the resultant changes are summarized below. To avoid reprinting more than a single page, entries had to be shortened or removed in some cases to accommodate the additions.

1. HEMISTITCH (1974-8) was corrected to HEMISTICH (1978-)
2. COMPULSIVE and COMPULSORY, formerly boldface entries (1974-8), were placed flush left and given definitions in lightface. To make room, COMSAT (1974-8) was removed
3. WNW and WSW (1974-8) were given the label 'abbr.' (1978-)
4. W'S or WS, not present earlier (1974-8), were added to the entry at W (1978-)
5. PEKE and PEKOE were added in boldface (1978-), with definitions. To make room, PEGBOARD (1974-8) was removed
6. OPER was added in boldface (1978-), with definition. To make room, the definition of OPEN SHOP was shortened
7. SAXOPHONE and SAXIFRAGE were added in boldface (1978-). To make room, the definitions for SAWHORSE, SAW and SAUNA were shortened

As George Berryman has noted, several of these mistakes are 'nits'. However, the hyphenization of AWE-SOME in both editions irks him no end. Similarly, I am annoyed by the omission from both editions of a large number of rather common words which appeared in the Pocket Dictionary before 1974:

3: Leo
4: alas, phiz, yean
5: afoul, Aries, dregs, dript, filer, Libra, litre, lotos, prise, soles, Virgo, xenia, zooid
6: bemock, bezoar, bonnie, cecums, crowed, filths, flawed, fowler, Gemini, giblet, graver, logger, monied, Nankin, oxcart, Pisces, quoits, ourush, rhesus, shears, Taurus, tibiae, torahs, troth, vittle, warily, willon, yclept, zymase
7: adrenin, alhorn, apprize, atomics, bandist, batteau, bereave, boating, cetucce, chailie, chelate, chloral, crowing, dormice, eyelids, filia, miasmal, tumor, Scorpio, small
8: alkalize, ambit, boomtown, duckpins, gainsaid, neckband, reformation, stuccoed, etc
9: adiposity, ahern, beseeched, chariness, flycaster, homeword, roughshod, sweptwing, vasometer,

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8: alkalize, ammonite, Aquarius, artefact, besought, bolivars, boomtown, buttocks, caponize, chessmen, cureless, dividers, duckpins, duellist, edgewise, euthenic, exequies, falconer, gainsaid, halliard, kinsfolk, libeller, mulligan, natatory, neatherd, neckband, nightcap, nodulose, octoroon, pannikin, pentomic, rogation, roughhew, serrated, shriving, sidewise, stotinki, stuccoed, sulphate, sulphide, wariness, woodyard, yeanling
9: adiposity, sigrettes, alpenhorn, antenatal, beechnuts, bereaving, beseeched, boathouse, bolivares, Capricorn, centesimi, chagrined, chariness, cookstove, diaeresis, driveller, expellant, eyelashes, flycaster, handlebar, heathless, hemolysis, hemolytic, impending, inwrought, mainsheet, neckpiece, numerable, pennywise, postnasal, roughshod, saltpetre, sceptical, shrinking, stuccoing, sulphuric, sweptwing, taximeter, trichinae, tricuspid, trillions, twopence, vasometer, viosterol, vulcanite

ANOTHER TRANSPOSAL DICTIONARY

Eht Cdoorrssw Aaagmnrt Acdiinorty (The Crossword Anagram Dictionary) (Mayflower Books, 1978; $6.95), compiled by R.J. Edwards, is a hardcover book containing more than 40,000 words of six through fifteen letters (including hyphenated and capitalized words) with their alphabetically reduced forms (escort to CEORST, amber to ABEMR, etc.) arranged alphabetically by word length. As mentioned in the review of Wetterau's similar book (November, 1980), this is of inestimable value to Scrabble players and of considerable use to solvers of Enigma puzzles; Edwards views it primarily as an aid in solving anagram clues in cryptic crossword puzzles.

The completeness of coverage was checked using 50 transposals from the Enigma of January through September 1980; the book fully solved only 12, partially solved 21, and totally missed 17. (Thirteen of these, however, were transposals of words with 4 or 5 letters, outside the scope of the book.) This is a poorer showing than Wetterau (36 fully, 9 partially, 5 not solved); the main reason for the difference is Edwards' deliberate omission of most derived forms (-s, -ed, -ing, -est) to keep the book from becoming too long. On the other hand, the typography of Edwards (unlike Wetterau) enables one to spot quickly all words having one or more anagrams.