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.

In the August 1981 Word Ways, Alan Frank exhibited a low-scoring Scrabble game under the stipulation that no player can refuse to make an allowable play or trade; the game ended with a score of 21 to 0 after twelve tiles had been played. Philip Cohen reports that the Jun-Jul 1982 issue of Jeux et Strategie ran a contest on a related subject: what is the smallest number of tiles that lead to a Scrabble stalemate (no further plays possible)? In French,
the answer appears to be 8, as shown in
the diagram at the right (A in RAZ is on
the center square). Note that RAZZIER
cannot be formed because both blanks,
denoted by asterisks, have already been
played. What is the minimum-tile game in English?

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        Q*
      R A Z*
    Q A T
    Z
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Philip Cohen has found IAI for Jeff Grant's "A Palindromic Alphabetic Insertion" -- it's an entry in The Martial Arts Encyclopedia (Inscape Corp., 1977), by Larry Winderbaum et al. IUI can be found in Mayhew and Skeat's Concise Middle English Dictionary, IPI is reported to be in the US Bureau of Insular Affairs 1902 Pronouncing Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary of the Philippine Islands, and OZO- is in Webster's Third as a combining form.

Edward Wolpow points out that Darryl Francis's ten-letter tautonym list in the November 1982 Word Ways can be augmented with biological genus-species binomials:

Webster's Second or Third: ALCES ALCES (see 'elk'), ALOSA ALOSA (see 'allice'), CATLA CATLA (see 'catla'), FOSSA FOSSA (see 'fossane'), VOLVA VOLVA (see 'shuttle shell')
B. W. Halstead, Poisonous and Venomous Marine Animals of the World (1965): BAGRE BAGRE, EROSA EROSA
Larousse Encyclopedia of Animal Life (1967): AGAMA AGAMA, LUTRA LUTRA, UNCIA UNCIA
L. I. Davis, A Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Central America (1972): DIVES DIVES, PIPRA PIPRA
Encyclopedia Britannica: PAPIO PAPIO (see 'baboons')
Salvaderi and Florio, Rare and Beautiful Animals (1978): INDRI INDRI

N. Marshall and O. Marshall, MacMillan Color Series, Ocean Life
(1971): MITRA MITKA
R. T. Abbott, A Guide to Field Identification: Seashells of North
America (1968): GEMMA GEMMA

To this collection Philip Cohen adds the populated place DOING DOING,
found in the Sudan Official Standard Names Gazetteer.

Jane lives! Reading Leroy Meyers' November 1981 Word Ways article
on malapropisms on the Goodman Ace radio program, Helen Gunn was
moved to send in several more that she has heard:

My dear, you have such a surf-like figure
My house should be warmer this winter; I had ensilage put in
I have my artillery all planned for my trip
We are such a congenital group
This list covers everything -- it's very apprehensive
We are all prawns in the game of life
She has diabetes and takes ensilage
This library serves as a suppository for government documents

Perhaps the best of this genre occurred when a co-worker, observing
her collating pages, asked " Would you like me to do that for you? I
enjoy copulating." After a stunned moment, Helen Gunn replied calm-
ly, " Don't we all?"

Philip Cohen has discovered a number of placenames to add to Jeff
Grant's August 1980 " Dctnr Wrds Wtht Vwls": the Official Standard
Names Gazetteer for Yugoslavia lists GRK (var. of Višnjićeva), GRM,
HLM (mountain), KRK, KRN, KRŠ, KRST (mountain), SLP, SRB,
SRT (mountain), STRP, TRN, Luka VRC (inlet), VRH, CRN Kamen,
Crni RT (point), Badin VRKH (var. of Babin Vrh, a mountain). Unless
otherwise identified, all are populated places. Note that TRN and SRT
add two words to Darryl Francis's "Neustria" in the February 1982
Word Ways.

Eric Albert writes: " The absolutely best part of the whole issue (No-
vember 1982) was the lovely opening to the Abbreviary section of ...
Kickshaws - 'The road sign one block from my house reads ST. PAUL
ST. It is doubtful any English speaker would have difficulty correctly
reading " Saint Peter Street".' The sentence was so sure of itself that
I, a reputed English speaker, spent several seconds trying to figure out
what knowledge (perhaps Biblical?) I was assumed to have that would
make me pronounce 'Paul' as 'Peter' ... I had assumed the point of
the whole thing was something relating to the pronouncing of English
words in strange ways. It was quite a momentary disorientation."
Alan Frank adds "I pass by St. Paul St. on my way to work, so this
morning I decided to make a slight detour and ask a pedestrian the
name of the street. Her response verified my expectation and confirmed
that the pronunciation given in Word Ways was incorrect." He suggested
the additional example Ch. Ch., for Christ Church College at Oxford.

Back in the November 1970 Word Ways, Darryl Francis attempted to find examples of words containing five or more identical letters for each letter of the alphabet. Three letters -- J, Q and V -- were missing; X had a coined word, and Y a nonce-word from Finnegans Wake. Philip Cohen recently discovered the 5-V populated place Villeneuve-Saint-Vistre-et-Villevotte in the Official Standard Names Gazetteer for France, and the 6-Y populated place Yaymyayarvenkyulya in the same gazetteer for the USSR. If Finnegans Wake entries are allowed, he fills the Q hole with the 8-Q quoiquoiquoiquoiquoiquoiquoiquoi. For the analogous 4-identical-letter problem (Word Ways, February 1969), Philip Cohen suggests Varvaropavlovka, a populated place in the USSR, and hyperpolysyllabically, in the Random House Unabridged.

In "The Highest n-Move Scrabble Scores" the 5-move setup using FLOWK is not allowable under the official rules of Scrabble Crossword Game: words must come from a single dictionary, and be labeled as a part of speech therein (FLOWK has no such label). This paragraph was inadvertently omitted by the editor in the original article.

Harry Randall comments on Maxey Brooke's "Shall-Will" in November 1982: "When Robert Lowth compiled his rules of English grammar, he had to explain why so many great writers violated them. Easy -- for a bishop! The rules were correct and the writers wrong. From this it is a conveniently short step to the more general principle that if nobody follows a rule then everybody must be wrong." He cites a number of shall-will inconsistencies from the letters of Virginia Woolf: Will you be in to tea on Monday?/Of course you shall come on Monday, Shall you come and see us?/Then you will come and talk to me I hope. Obviously, she was following her own dictum "Style is a very simple matter; it is all rhythm. Once you get that, you can't use the wrong words."

In the August 1981 Kickshaws, Faith Eckler presented a word game in which one tries to find a town name followed by its state abbreviation, forming a Websterian word. Scot Morris featured this as "Verbal Vexers" in his Games column in the January 1983 Omni magazine; reader A. R. Irving of Yorba Linda CA discovered a new one, Grant OR.

How long can COUNTERIMMUNOELECTROPHORESIS become? 32 letters, says Jeff Grant: by analogy with IMMUNOELECTROPHORETICAL-LY in the OED (H-N Supplement).

Philip Cohen adds to Paul Hellweg's "Pick a Government" in August 1981: ZOOCRACY, 'tribal law, the contents and execution of which are ascribed to the supernatural powers of animals' (given in the Supplement of the Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia). Even more bizarre is ANEMOCRACY, 'government by the wind' in the Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia, tagged as humorous and as from Sydney Smith.

George Levenbach answers R. W. Hobler's query in the November 1982 issue: "During World War II the Germans invaded Holland; the name of the seaside resort SCHEVENINGEN was used to detect fifth columnists. The 'ch' is pronounced as a sharp G, and the 'i' like the E in bee. This is confirmed by Dr. F. A. Stoet in Nederlandse Spreek-woorden en Gezgden, 9th Edition (see Entry 1356). He also mentions SCHILD EN VRIEND (shield and friend) which was used by the Flemish defenders of Brugge in 1302 to detect the French who invaded the city by surprise." Philip Cohen cites UN BON VIN BLANC as a shibboleth for the four French nasal vowels.

In the November issue, Ed Wolpow asked: WRITE is to READ as SPEAK is to what? Although he rejected HEAR or LISTEN, Jeremy Morse argues that HEAR is used to denote auditory understanding as opposed to perception, as in the quotation "Ears they have, but hear not".

Finland has topped Eugene Ulrich's coinage REEBREGALLAGERBEER. Dmitri Borgmann and Jeff Grant both called the editor's attention to the 1983 Guinness Book of World Records, where the word for a soap-dealer has been expanded by four letters to SAIPPUAKIVIKAUPPIAS!

William Sunners notes that Robert Funt's imaginary palindromic brand name, LONELY TYLENOL (mentioned in "Brand Name Palin-dromes" in November 1981) has eerily come true as a result of the Chicago cyanide poisonings.

Research continues on construction of crossword puzzles by computer (for earlier discussion, see "Crossword Construction by Computer" in August 1981, and "Crosswords and the Computer" in November 1980). Dana Richards has discovered a University of Sydney Technical Report published in May 1982 by A. Sevagian and H. R. Hwa, "A Cross-word Puzzle Generator", very similar in spirit to the Feger and the Smith-Steen papers. They postulate a grid, prime it with a starting-word, and then look for words in a stored dictionary to match partially-filled-in words in the grid (for example, BREAD or BLUNT match the grid pattern B----). The grids they successfully tested the program on are quite small, contain numerous unchecked letters, and have a higher percentage of blank spaces than ones published in newspapers:

Size	Per Cent of Squares That Are			Longest Word Used
	Blank	Unchecked	Checked	
6 x 6	22	14	64	5
7 x 7	29	18	53	6
10 x 10	24	13	63	7
10 x 10	26	28	46	6

The program ran quickly (under 15 seconds on a VAX 11/780) but this is probably due to the fact that the dictionary consisted of only 1000 words of 2 to 7 letters.

George Levenbach points out that several of the bigrams in "676 Bi-grams" (riJKsdaalder, WiJS method, bliJVer, biJWoner, DiJXhoorn) are not combinations of J and another letter, but rather of the Dutch vocal IJ and a successor. The question is: when a Dutch word has been Americanized, has the Dutch character IJ been supplanted by the two English letters I and J? Philip Cohen replaces the Maltese word feJQien with the Albanian populated place BuJQez; according to the Official Standard Names Gazetteer, this is an unapproved name for Buqez. The QJ bigram can be upgraded to FaQJakuqe, found in the same reference; MX is found in Tax-XeMX (a point), in the Official Standard Names Gazetteer for Malta. For those who do not like reformed spellings, heaVD can be replaced with the USSR city PloVDiv, listed in the main section of Webster's Third.

Eric Albert contributes some more real-life deliti to Ed Wolpow's Kickshaws: pREFERred by DISCREET WOMEN everywHERE (a sign on a sanitary napkin dispenser at Brown University), and NO pASSing thROUGH (on Boston subway trains).

Jeff Grant responds to Ed Wolpow's request for a six-by-six square with the word repeated on the diagonal. Four of the words are obsolete variants (of 'gullets', 'lily', 'taint' and 'sledges') but all can be found in the OED. A seven-by-seven square may be possible.

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G O L I T S
O O I D A L
L I L L I E
I D L I N G
T A I N T E
S L E G E S
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He also exhibits a 4-by-4 spiral square based on REMEDIABLENESSES, with all eight words found in the OED.

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A B L E
I R E N
D E M E
S E S S
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George H. Roberts' Colloquy query about the enunciation of abbreviations (Kraft Inc. pronounced /craft ink/) elicited this response from Harry Randall: "Time Inc. has been called /time ink/ for more than 35 years. Gifis's Law Dictionary lists et seq., et us., and ex rel., all with pronunciations. A number of similar Latin phrases are often pronounced as abbreviations, including ibid., ad lib., et al., and viz. So are Rev., Prof., Pres., and Prop. I don't know how long this has been going on, but I suspect as long as irreverence has prevailed among the young." Philip Cohen adds that the mystery-fact book entitled Murder Ink implies an earlier enunciation of that abbreviation.

Louis Phillips adds to Ed Wolpow's February 1982 "Falalalala.." with "The Navajo, Jo, JoJo joins no clubs" and "That TokYo yoyo you gave me does not work".

Maxey Brooke's apocryphal addition to "Tudor Nomenclature": the bathroom for the chief executive officer of a newspaper is titled THE EDITORIAL WEE.