

FOUR ANAGRAM CHALLENGES

HEARST SILL ROGERS

In the November 1981 Word Ways, Eric Albert suggested four short phrases for readers to rearrange into apposite expressions. Six readers responded with one or more examples: Len Elliott of Auburn WA, Jeremy Morse of London, England, Anthony Sebastian of San Francisco CA, David Shulman of New York NY, Edward R. Wolpov of Brookline MA and Jeff Grant of Hastings, New Zealand.

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

The longest of the four phrases, this is made somewhat difficult by the rare letters V and W, and especially by the three Ms. LE wrote 'In mussy cave with tan Romeo, MP' -- archeology makes for strange bed-fellows indeed! DS spent his time in a more conventional manner 'Very hot out, I swam in men's camp'. (Ideally, there should be no words repeated in the rearrangement, but 'I' seems unavoidable.)

CORPORALS AND SERGEANTS

I like best JM's evocative 'Stronger class on parade' and EW's 'Sad crop: no-star generals.' DS's 'Scan troops, learn grades' shifts from a noun-based to a verb-based anagram, but does manage to employ two quite relevant long words. LE has a similar verb-based treatment 'Anneal, sort corps grades.'

HE WHO HESITATES IS LOST

This, probably the most recalcitrant phrase of the lot, is only 20 letters long and uses a W and three Hs. Only two people attempted it; unfortunately, DS omitted the letter H in 'Oh, I see sloths waste it.' EW employed a specific example of dilatoriness 'Hi! Hi! Swoosh tsetse ... late.' I offer 'Oh -- sit? I see who's the last' which escapes the re-use of two words in the original only by melding them into the apostrophized 'who's.'

COMPUTER SCIENTISTS

Although short, this phrase attracted the most interest. LE made use of computer acronyms (Management Information System, Central Processing Unit, Cathode Ray Tube) in 'Most entice CRTs. I sup!', 'Mount CRTs, sit, see pic' and 'Entice CPUs; trot MISs'. EW suggested 'Sect sit, count primes' and DS added 'Cuss time, introspect' and the less-than-apposite 'Must cite inspectors.' However, AS provided the most elaborate set of changes on this theme. Assisted by

colleagues Patricia Douglass and Susan Yarbrough, he used a micro-computer attached to a video display to evaluate trial-and-error permutations, resulting in the following 'poem':

o, suspect strict mien
specimen: stoic, struts

sci-corps, its net mute
men, set circuits, stop
optic screen must sit
pics seem to instruct
must respect its icon
success! time to print

must to sciences trip
i.e., must stir concepts

nuttiest sci-corps, 'em
cosmic nuts, pi street
spit out eccentricisms

to cpu's ministers, etc.
success! trip to it, men

The most felicitous lines are 'pics seem to instruct' and 'spit out eccentricisms'.

JG notes that the attitude of many people toward computer scientists has gone from 'scepticism to unrest'.

HUMOR-AND-METAPHOR CONFERENCE

The second conference on linguistic humor will be held at the Phoenix Hilton Hotel from March 30 to April 2, 1983. The keynote speakers will probably include Reinhold Aman (Maledicta), George Lakoff (California linguist), Ric Masten (California poet), Allen Walker Read (New York linguist), Susan Kelz Sperling (New York author), and Larry Wilde (California author). Proposals on any aspect of humorous metaphor will be accepted on a space-available basis. For further information, contact Don Nilsen, English Department, Arizona State University, Tempe AZ 85287.