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 it.

Referring to "The Great Oxymoron Contest" in the November issue, Philip Cohen calls the editor's attention to Patrick Hughes' More On Oxymoron (Penguin, 1983; $6.95). Hughes accepts incongruity as well as strong contradiction in some of his examples: music: cathedrals in sound (Brumeau), architecture is frozen music (Goethe), and such objects as left-handed screwdrivers, sky hooks, striped paint and cooking glue. He lists oxymoronic titles such as A Resounding Tinkle, One-Way Pendulum, Tremendous Trifles, She Stoops to Conquer, and The Lonely Crowd, to which one could add Darkness at Noon. Visual oxymora include ceramic flowers, a stone book, Buster Keaton throwing an anchor overboard and seeing it float, and invisible ink. Many should be added to Bo Mitchell's list:

deliberate mistake	whim of iron
compulsory volunteer	clear as mud
genuinely bogus (Hassall)	write on water
he hasn't a single redeeming vice	sky-blue pink
versatile incapacity (Housman)	toasted snow
bend something straight	to be born old
elevate those guns a little lower	happy accident
l'd give my right arm to be ambidextrous	wise fool
encyclopedic ignorance	rope of sand

Philip Cohen adds several of his own discoveries:

cut long, as in "Oh where, oh where has my little dog gone?"
actual potential
meaningless information [definition of garbage, Popular Computing]
Party of the lnstitutionalized Revolution [the PRl of Mexico]
sitzkrieg [the German analogue of 'cold war']

Louis Phillips also weighs in with several oxymora: he showed up missing, velour elegance [in the January 1984 Natural History magazine, p. 30], not guilty by reason of insanity, l shall open a new antique store, safe burglars [why should they be safer than their victims?].

Both William Sunners and Dave Shulman are familiar with the book Curiosities of the Bible. The latter notes that Erastus Buck Treat, who died in 1928 at the age of 90, was indeed the author. Besides this book, he wrote a New York City guidebook.

Philip Cohen writes of "Amalgamate, Chemist!" that his favorite anagram is SAM, THE MAGIC TAMALE. In contrast, John Henrick has a warm spot for MIME ACT: HAMLET SAGA and TEATIME: HAM, CLAM, GAS. He writes "this may indicate a frustrated desire to be a proctologist, since I seem to recognize the importance of a well-placed colon - or it may suggest an appreciation for ham amid various scrambled bytes". Dave Shulman adds the anagram E.G., SALAAM, I MET MATCH. Philip Cohen bets that somewhere in paleontological prose there appears some sentence like 'It was in the later ICE AGES THAT MAMMAL species in Siberia experienced a considerable decline' making this a plausible phrase.

The May 1979 article "Hair-it-is" surveyed punning beauty parlor names from many cities, including Seattle as of 1977. John Henrick surveys the present Seattle crop, suggesting that there is a fast turnover in this genre. This city presently contains Chop House, Cut Loose (and Cuttin' Loose), Nail Me (for manicures), Hair for You, Sharp Cuts, Shear Inspiration, Shear Style, Short Cut and Tress-Chic, none of which appeared anywhere in the US in the earlier survey! Loris Curtis sends in a beauty parlor name that flirts with bad taste: Public Hair, Ltd., in Lansing, Michigan.

Alan Frank comments further on Eugene Ulrich's antisocial sorority girls in "Typewriter Words" in the November issue:

The problem with antisocial sorority girls is men and pals. Such girls may wish for neurotic men to go with them for laughs. But male pals lend ornament, worn for handy visual flair. So the pals it is; they form an authentic proxy when visible, and prudish girls may also dispel their own rigid neuroticism with such chaps.

He adds "When I started typing those sentences, I merely noticed that I was able to type slightly faster. But after awhile the pattern for some reason started to become annoying".

The Editor's Note to "Transaddable Letter Groups" neglected to mention Jeff Grant's May 1980 "Alphabetic Transadditions" which exhibited 26 six-letter words all from a single source, the OED. Jeff Grant also points out that the OED and its Supplements also generate a complete set of transadditions on AT: taa, bat, cat, dat, ate, fat, tag, hat, ait, jat, kat, lat, mat, tan, oat, pat, qat, rat, sat, tat, tau, vat, taw, tax, tay, taz.

Alan Frank noticed a near-pangrammatic window of 76 letters in a conservation appeal:

This is Big Goat Lake, less than 10 miles from the proposed U.S. Bora[x Quartz Hill molybdenum mine. I hope we can count on your help to save this lake in the Misty Fj]ords.

Surprisingly, it omits the letter G instead of one of the rare ones. In similar vein, Tom Pulliam found a 58-letter near-pangrammatic window missing only K in a Harvard Business Review article:

The practical result, however, is the same whether authority is delegated in name and fact or in fact on[ly. Judging by the frequency with which executives emphasize the impo]rtance of people in their organizations, ..

Jeremy Morse believes that an artificially-constructed pangrammatic window of 26 letters would have a less-artificial quality than the typical stand-alone pangram of that length.

One fine anagram-pair of twelve letters overlooked in "Animal Crackers" in the February Word Ways can be clued by 'fights between New York and California' (see Answers and Solutions).

Articles on the computer generation and solution of crossword and double-crostic puzzles have appeared in Word Ways in November 1980 and August 1981, with a Colloquy follow-up in February 1983. Recently, Dana Richards sent the editor an article by P. D. Smith appearing in The Computer Journal (1983) entitled "XENO: Computer-Assisted Compilation of Crossword Puzzles". This extends earlier work by Smith and Steen (see August 1981) on the computer selection of words stored in memory to fill a previously-specified blank grid. The new program not only does this, but also specifies clues for these words. Unfortunately, the program does not actually generate clues; it merely selects a set of clues previously stored in the computer, balanced according to various criteria of difficulty and crypticness. Not surprisingly, most of the computer time is spent in selecting words to fill the grid, not in the clues for them. In the 12x12 grid they tried the program out on, there were 42 black squares and 60 unchecked letters; 4 trials took $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes each, 2 took 10 minutes each, 1 took 25 minutes, and 1 was halted after 120 minutes with 3 slots still unfilled. The author concludes from this that "It is probable that it [XENO] can produce [a completed grid] significantly faster than a professional compil.-er". However, he admits that a long-term goal is the production of puzzles in the style of various human compilers, a task that first requires analysis of vocabulary and clue styles and the codification of this knowledge in computer form (not easy!).

Alan Frank adds a sentence to Cynthia Knight's "Integers Revisited" in Martin Gardner's November 1983 Kickshaws: I dont writ wel; very baldy in fakt.

For the same reason that Eastman Kodak renamed the US Equipment Division the US Apparatus Division, the Boston University School of Medicine is not known as the Boston University Medical School.

Commenting on Martin Gardner's acronyms, Philip Cohen points out a Sci-Fi title, This Business of Bomfog, by Madeline Duke. The National Lampoon had a letter in their phony-letter column about some organization like the IBTA; it was followed by a letter signed by sympathetic but well-endowed women like Sophia Loren, announcing the Itty Bitty Titty Pity Committee.

Kyle Corbin recently discovered an improvement on one of the words in Ralph Beaman's November 1973 article, "Beheadments": P-artisanship is beaten by P-residentship.

Richard Lederer has been busily uncovering business telephomnemonics, described in the May 1981 Word Ways:

    800 AIRLINE (TWA)
    1-800-USA ARMY (US Army recruiting)
    689-TIPS (Palm Beach, Florida Crime Stoppers)
    1-800-PGA-6100 (Professional Golf Association)
    800-CAR RENT (National Auto Rental)
    1-800-HOT ROCK (TV ad for phonograph records)
    213-GO TORCH (Olympic Torch Committee)
    1-800-2RAMADA (Ramada Inns)
    1-800-USA MINT (Olympic coins)
    800-THE DEAN (Dean Witter stockbrokers)
    800-44-PRINT (selling embossers)
    1-800-AC-DELCO
    CLUB MED (a chain of resort hotels)
    800-THE NILE (a Sheraton hotel)

Reinhold Aman responds to Leonard Ashley's plea for examples of words that advances in technology have rendered unsuitable:

    china: usually made elsewhere, such as Japan or Germany
    crystal: a plastic cover on the face of a wrist watch
    dial: many radio dials are now digital readout
    lead: in pencils, this is really graphite
    pen: no use of a feather in a ballpoint or fountain pen
    silver: spoons, forks, knives are made of plastic, steel, etc.

Cynthia Knight adds dime store, where one can no longer buy anything for a dime.

Darryl Francis fills in three of the nineteen missing two-letter initialisms in the February Kickshaws: HY Helsingin Yliopisto (University of Helsinki), UZ Universitat Zurich, and YV Young's Version (of what?). All three are found in Ralph de Sola's Abbreviations Dictionary (Constable, London, 1969), in the International Edition.

Philip Cohen notes that it was Mary Hazard, not him, who coined the word suber. Other errata: oPSisform (p.5,l.1); anXieTieS (p.8, 1.29); eNsign (p.8,1.46); Vis*-a-Vis* [V's a V] (p.9,1.4); shredDed whea*T (p.8,1.23); the horizontal bars were not lower-case t-bars, but rather double across ticks (p.10,end). In "Jejuniana", jejunoseral should be jejunoserosal, and the first l in hepaticochlolangiojejunostomy should be deleted.

Kudos: Congratulations to the pangrammatic Jeff Grant! Wish Palmer Peterson [master formist who died in 1979] could have been around to see this (Philip Cohen). I was sorry to see the departure of Dr. Wombat .. (Jeff Grant).