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QUELQUE CHOSE

DMITRI A. BORGmann
Dayton, Washington

The word kickshaw is derived from the French quelque chose, meaning "something"; in English, the word means "a bauble, trifle, or knickknack" or "a fancy tidbit." Kickshaws transpose to sick hawks, meaning "unhealthy attempts to clear the throat of phlegm" - not, I trust, an accurate description of the following.

Beginning at the Beginning

The alphabetically first meaningful combination of three letters has always been AAA - best known to Americans, probably, as standing either for the American Automobile Association or for a comparatively narrow shoe width size. More interesting meanings of the letters as an initialism include Acute Anxiety Attack, American Albino Association, and Awaiting Aircraft Availability.

More remarkable than any of the initialisms, however, are the three letters united to form a word, one adorned with two palindromically-positioned circumflexes: AAA. Shunned by all general dictionaries, the word has led a furtive existence, recognized by an occasional medical dictionary only. It is certainly eye-catching, being the only modern English word to use three consecutive A's. (KAAAASA, a town on the northeast corner of Oahu Island, about 15 miles north of Honolulu, immediately comes to mind, but this is a proper name, not an ordinary word.) The few medical dictionaries listing the AAA DISEASE define it as the endemic anemia, hookworm disease, or ancylostomiasis of ancient Egypt. The term ANCYLOSTOMIASIS is, in its turn, equated with various mutually nonsynonymic diseases: dochmiasis, brickmakers' anemia, tunnel anemia, miners' cachexia, Egyptian chlorosis, and uncinariasis.

The word appears 28 times in the Ebers Medical Papyrus and 9 times in the Hearst Medical Papyrus. These are two of the ancient Egyptian medical papyri, both dated at around 1550 B.C. Both are believed to be copies to works hundreds of years, or even a thousand years, older - works lost to posterity. The actual identification of the ailment is uncertain. Two eminent authorities, F. Jonckheere and B. Ebbell, have identified the disease with bilharziasis or schistosomiasis (blood fluke infestation). Another expert, P. Chaloungui, argues that the disease was much more probably a polyhelminthic infestation: a multiple parasitic infec-
tion involving bilharziasis, ancylostomiasis (hookworm disease), ascariasis (roundworm infestation), oxyuriasis (threadworm infestation), and/or other worm infestations.

In addition to being a word, AAA is also a name. According
to William R. Cooper’s An Archalc Dictionary, from the Egyptian Assyrian, and Etruscan Monuments and Papyri (London: Bagster, 1876), AAA was the chief of the signet-bearers in the land of Kens (a nome in Nubia sacred to Khnum-Ra, the incarnation of the divine breath or spirit of Amen Ra), in the court of King Aspalut of the XXVth dynasty. Aren’t you going to wonder how you ever managed to get this far in life without that bit of esoteric knowledge?

From the Ridiculous to the Sublime

Getting interested attention in recent years has been one of Hollywood’s more uninhibited young actresses, a certain BO DEREK. Even logologists, however, seem not to have noticed the startling similarity of the actress’s screen name to that of Harvard University’s current president, DEREK BOK. Could the actress have been trying to upgrade her image by associating it with America’s most prestigious university, when she settled on her screen name?

Our Rotating and Revolving Alphabet

American children are expected to learn 62 printed symbols: 26 capital letters, 26 small letters, and 10 numerals. A careful examination of these symbols shows that they could have been designed by an evil genius bent on making it as difficult as possible for young children to master them.

In the physical world, changing the position of an object does not alter its nature—chairs, dominoes, and teapots remain what they are no matter how they are placed—and children soon internalize the principle of object constancy. They therefore reverse or invert letters and numerals freely in their first encounters with adults. However, insist perversely that each symbol must be placed in a certain position only. This demand is reinforced by the fact that some of the letters and numerals turn into other symbols when they are rotated or revolved in certain ways: they become identical with those other symbols or at least acquire a strong resemblance to them. The catalog of such relationships is an impressive one:

Left-to-right reversals: b/d, p/q, E/3
Same-plane inversions or upside-down placements: M/W, 4/h, 6/9, 7/L, E/3, g/6, n/u, p/d, q/b
Same-plane 90-degree rotations: N/Z, M/E, E/W, W/3, 3/M, C/U

Adults must learn to cope with additional symbol relationships. For instance, the numeral 8, rotated 90 degrees in either direction in its own plane, turns into the mathematical symbol for infinity (∞). The Greek capital letter sigma (Σ) resembles a capital E in its usual position. Rotate it 90 degrees in a clockwise direction, and it resembles a capital M; rotate it another 90 degrees in the same direction, and it resembles the numeral 3; rotate it yet another 90 degrees in the same direction and it resembles a capital W. The Greek small letter omega (ω) resembles a lowercase w.
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Rotate it 180 degrees in either direction in its own plane, and it resembles a lowercase m. Take the Greek capital letter gamma (Γ), flip it over (perform a left-to-right reversal of the letter in its own plane), then rotate it 180 degrees in either direction in its own plane, and it turns into a capital L. Turn the minuscule v on one side in its own plane, and it becomes the mathematical symbol > ("is greater than"). Turn the v on its other side in its own plane, and it becomes the mathematical symbol < ("is less than"). The capital C resembles an opening parenthesis as it is; a left-to-right reversal of the C transforms it into a closing parenthesis.

As already indicated, some symbols resemble others without any change at all. Thus, the capital O closely resembles the numeral 0; the majuscule letter I, the minuscule letter i, the small letter 1, and the numeral 1 all closely resemble one another; and the small letter g resembles the numeral 9. These striking similarities often make a contextual differentiation of symbol identity useful or even unavoidable.

How many symbol relationships has my impromptu survey of the symbol scene overlooked?

Political Puzzles
For the serious student of foreign affairs, we present a couple of unusual political problems:
1. What independent nation of the world has literally gone bananas in the past 5 years?
2. What such nation has been governed by a pair of shoes and more – for almost two decades?

To solve these problems with aplomb and dispatch, you will need to engage both hemispheres of your cerebral cortex. You will find your right-hemisphere abilities particularly important: holistic, synthetic abilities and a Gestalt perception capable of organizing and processing data in terms of complex wholes, relying on imagery and structural similarity.

Cymric Sotadics
The construction of sensible palindromic sentences is an art that has been stagnating among English-language logologists, who have been concentrating on length at the expense of quality – two features of palindromes forever at war with each other. News of palindromic progress on the part of our Cymric soulmates therefore comes as a refreshing breath of air. The five following palindromes were the winners in a competition sponsored by the Welsh science magazine, Y Gwyddonydd (Volume 17, Number 4, December 1979, pp. 159-160):

NIA, NI LEFARA'N ARA' FEL 'I NAIN
(Unlike her grandmother, Nia does not speak quickly)
OD NAD WYF I FYW DAN DO
(It is strange that I am not to live under a roof)
LLE DA I DDIADELL!
(An ideal place for a flock of sheep!)
Lôn ac Ynys Yn y Canol?
(A road with an island in the middle?)
A Dywa'r Addewig Diweddar Am y Dà
(And this is the latest promise concerning the cattle)

Note how all of the palindromes speak of a simple, rustic life.

Palindrome No. 2 is a line fitting that form of Welsh poetry known as Cynganedd. The line satisfies its strict metric rules, involving alliteration and rhyme.

Socially Useful Logology

The time has come to engage recreational linguistics in a higher cause - that of serving socially utilitarian ends. One way of realizing that noble purpose is to evolve words which exhibit extraordinary, record-breaking logical characteristics, at the same time conveying essential meanings for which one-word terms have heretofore been missing from the English language. For starters, I offer three examples:

1. EXOTARTRATOXE. The longest bona fide English word palindrome. It designates a bathtub skillfully suspended from the ceiling and just below it. The prospective bather gets into it by climbing a rope ladder. It is valued for economizing both on bathroom floor space and on water (the bather uses coarse sand as a cleansing agent). The do-it-yourself assembly kit in which it is sold at all leading stores includes a 687-page instruction manual and a 32-rung rope ladder handcrafted from the finest sisal hemp, free of charge. Only $975.95 - get yours while the supply lasts!

2. LASCHTSCHPHRONG. The only English word featuring 10 consecutive consonants. The verb is defined thus: "To worship the hermaphrodite gods and goddesses of Ancient Atlantis on days of the month evenly divisible by three." To achieve maximum potentiation of his or her prayers, the supplicant needs to direct them to the AA deities from inside one of the subterranean chambers of the Great Pyramid of Egypt: preferably, one not yet discovered.

3. EVITARETILLA. The longest English word that becomes another word (ALLITERATIVE) when it is spelled backwards. It refers to a coordinating conjunction placed between, and linking, two words or phrases which have no grammatical or semantic relationship of any sort. Its function is to preserve intact writing or printing space that would otherwise almost certainly be devoted to meaningless twaddle.

These words are just a humble beginning. Readers of Word Ways are cordially invited to contribute to a comprehensive glossary of such terms.

Butterflies on the Loose

For the past two centuries, philologists have been at great pains to demonstrate the close relationship between different languages and their in-between relationship by comparing cognates.

Ideal for FLY, so normal call the butt-ish, MARIFOS/MIPOS, the German, MARIPOS/MARIFOS, and Danish, MARIFOS/MARIFOS. BYW; the Polish PULELIHUA. This is my selections of similarly omitted L (FEET).

How many other languages still or other languages are greater designed?

The Good Book

Faith Eckett's statistics accord the solitary confide as part of a larger, making the number of words and 3, similarly vital.

That conviction began in August 1778 when the number of lements, 838,380 and occurred in the number of English words, 152,185 words and 3, similarly vital.

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Testimony to the number of words and 3, similarly vital.

That conviction began in August 1778 when the number of lements, 838,380 and occurred in the number of English words, 152,185 words and 3, similarly vital.
and their individual words. Logologists have, as a consequence, been equally assiduous in trying to show that there is virtually no relationship between the words for a given concept in the various languages.

Ideal for logological purposes is the case of the word BUTTERFLY, so normally designated in English. How do other languages call the butterfly? Well, the French word is PAPILLON; the Spanish, MARIPOSA; the Italian, FARFALLA; the Portuguese, BORBOLETA; the German, SCHMETTERLING; the Swedish, FJÄRL; the Norwegian and Danish, SOMMERFUGL; the Dutch, VLINDER; the Welsh, GLOYN BYW; the Polish, MOTYŁ; the Greek, PSYCHE; and the Hawaiian, PULELEHUA. Thirteen different languages, thirteen different words! Is my selection of languages biased? Only slightly. I have purposefully omitted Latin (PAPILIO), Slovak (MOTYL), and Maltese (FARFETT).

How many other unrelated terms for the butterfly are there in still other languages? Is there some other concept displaying even greater designational diversity?

The Good Book - Pre-visited

Faith Eckler's February 1984 Kickshaw's column presented Bible statistics accumulated by a convict sentenced to a long term of solitary confinement. The statistics had been published in 1877 as part of a book, Curiosities of the Bible. The patient prisoner had found that the King James Version of the Bible includes 773,692 words and 3,586,489 letters; uses the word AND 16,277 times; and similarly vital information about the Scriptures.

But the convict was, alas, upstaged almost a century earlier. The August 1778 issue of a British periodical, the Moral Magazine, carried a comprehensive set of such statistics, some of them contradicting the convict's figures. For example, while MM agreed that the number of words in the Bible was 773,692, it stated that the number of letters was only 3,566,480 (2,728,100 in the Old Testament, 838,380 in the New Testament), and claimed that the word AND occurred in the Bible only 46,227 times (35,543 in the Old Testament, 10,684 in the New Testament). Included as well were some figures for the Apocrypha, said to contain 6,081 verses and 152,185 words (the counter must have tired at some point, for the number of letters in the Apocrypha was not mentioned in MM). The magazine stated that it had taken three years to compile the statistics presented.

The discrepancies between the two sets of statistics should be profoundly disturbing to all good Christians. What reader of Word Ways will be the first to re-count the letters and words of the Bible, to establish the facts? I suggest that each volunteer register his or her intention with the editor, to avoid duplication of effort.

Of possibly greater interest is the volume Is That in the Bible?, by Dr. Charles F. Potter, first published in 1933 and republished in 1962 by the Fawcett World Library in New York. The work asks...
and answers many hundreds of questions about the Bible. Some representative examples:
1. Where is the death penalty commanded for disobedient children?
2. What verse quotes Jesus as opposed to preventive medicine?
3. Where is music compared to vinegar on soda?
4. Who made time from a king's skeleton?
5. What is the shortest verse of the Old Testament?

Missing Opposites

Many English words and names are unbalanced, in the sense that their logical opposites do not exist. Thus, we have FOREARMS but not HINDARMS; we live on a CONTINENT, but have no PROTINENT to which to migrate if we so choose; a famous clock is known as BIG BEN, but has no correlative LITTLE BEN to go with it; the PACIFIC OCEAN has yet to be offset by a MAFICIC OCEAN, and the INDIAN OCEAN by an OUTDIAN OCEAN; the State of CONNECTICUT is without its twin, the State of PRONECTICUT; YEOMEN cannot mate with YEOWOMEN; we use HANDKERCHIEFS but scorn FOOTKERCHIEFS; we can buy a ROCKING CHAIR, but not a ROCKING TABLE (useful for ouija boards); university students are asked to prepare MASTER'S THESIS, but not SLAVE'S THESIS; the State of MARYLAND is without its twin, the State of JOHNLAND; we sometimes use ELBOW GREASE, but never KNEE GREASE; we practice PENMANSHIP, but not PENCILMANSHIP; NORWAY is without a NEITHERWAY preceding it; English has PRONOUNS, but has overlooked ANTINOUNS; we like POPCORN, but have never even given a thought to MOMCORN; ICE CREAM is nice, but STEAM CREAM would be even nicer, since it rhymes; the concern for CIVIL RIGHTS does not extend to CIVIL LEFTS; some of us live in BUNGALOWS, but none of us in BUNGAHILLS; mankind has known about SYCAMORE trees since Biblical times, but has yet to discover SYCALESS trees; our LAKE SUPERIOR has no LAKE INFERIOR to go with it; our zoos feature MONKEYS but not NONLOCKS; and so on, ad infinitum and ad nauseam.

Research into missing opposites has turned up some curious specimens of a higher order. If we reverse both portions of a term, we ordinarily produce only another missing opposite. For example, the opposite of URBAN RENEWAL is RURAL LAPSE, not particularly edifying. However, if we double-reverse HANDSPRING, we suddenly have FOOTFALL, an already existing word totally unrelated in meaning to the original. A weaker example in the same vein is the title of a former television science-fiction series, LOST IN SPACE. Its double-reversal is FOUND IN TIME ("The money was found in time to pay the loan shark off"). Unfortunately, there is no systematic way of searching for more such examples. Will Word Ways readers undertake to assist in the search for such words and names? The stakes are, as you know, high!

The Ten Most Common English Words

According to the Computational Analysis of Present-Day American

English by Henry Brown University in English and
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1. THE. A thing to mean.
2. OF. The one like a.
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4. TO. A host
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5. A. The word.

6. IN. A how.

7. THAT. A.

8. IS. A for.

9. WAS. An, a reve.

10. HE. A reve.

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Engish by Henry Kuera and W. Nelson Francis (Providence R.I.: Brown University Press, 1967), the ten most frequently used words in English are THE, OF, AND, TO, A, IN, THAT, IS, WAS, and HE - in that order. How logologically interesting are these most plebeian of all words? More than most of us would suspect:

1. THE. A transposal of the Dutch word HET, which happens also to mean "the."
2. OF. The only common English word in which an F is pronounced like a V.
3. AND. A reversal of DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid, the chromosomal constituent of living cell nuclei which determines what each of us is.
4. TO. A homonym of TOO, TWO, and TU - as in TU QUOQUE ("you, too").
5. A. The very first English word, from an alphabetical standpoint.
6. IN. A homonym of IIN and a reversal of NI, symbol for the chemical element nickel.
7. THAT. An alphagram or first-letter change of the question that it answers (WHAT?).
8. IS. A form of the most irregular of all English verbs - a verb the various forms of which start with five different letters of the alphabet (A, B, W, I, and S); also, a reversal of SI ("yes").
9. WAS. Another form of the most irregular English verb, and a reversal of the word SAW.
10. HE. A reversal of the interjection HI.

The logologically interesting qualities of the most common words do not end with the first ten of them. For instance, the eleventh word on the list is IT, a reversal of TI, the musical syllable. Continuing the record to the 100th or 1000th most common word is left as an exercise for readers.

Unisex on the March

In the spirit of advancing the interests of the unisex movement, I have examined the lists of given names in three dictionaries limiting themselves to the most common such names: the 1963 edition of the Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, the 1949 edition of Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, and the 1963 edition of Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Browsing through these lists, I have found 33 given names identified as both masculine and feminine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alexis</th>
<th>Connie</th>
<th>Jean</th>
<th>Marion</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alva</td>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>Meredith</td>
<td>Sidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby</td>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>Merle</td>
<td>Terry</td>
</tr>
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<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Evelyn</td>
<td>Kit</td>
<td>Pat</td>
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<td>Florence</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Robin</td>
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<td>Gene</td>
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<td>Ronnie</td>
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This list makes no pretense of being complete or even comprehensive.
in its coverage. It would be interesting to see how long the list can be made. For starters, the editor once attended an American Names Society talk in which the names Cary, Frankie, Jackie, Lou, Ray, Val, Joyce, Tracy, Jocelyn, Leigh, Noel and Sydney had all been identified as unisex. Won’t you help extend it? Use any sources you like!

An Exercise in Synonymy

Existing thesauruses and crossword puzzle dictionaries can be most unhelpful when it comes to providing synonyms for some particular word or term. As an example, I cite the heart condition commonly known as ANGINA PECTORIS, which is marked by attacks of chest pains. You will not find the following collection of synonyms for the term in any synonymicon:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Angina</th>
<th>Cardiac Angina</th>
<th>Heart Spasm</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angina Cordis</td>
<td>Cardiac Neuralgia</td>
<td>Heartstroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angor</td>
<td>Cardiagra</td>
<td>Neuralgia Cordis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angor Pectoris</td>
<td>Cardiogmus</td>
<td>Prunella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast Pang</td>
<td>Heart Pain</td>
<td>Spasm of the Chest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The synonyms just listed have been culled from the principal general unabridged and large medical dictionaries — but without any systematic method for locating them. How many more designations for this specific heart condition are there, lurking in the bushes?

A Name-Finding Problem

Hidden in the two-word term A CHANDELIER are at least 18 names of nations. How many of them can you locate in, say, 30 minutes? It is entirely possible that, while missing some of my names, you will discover ones that I have overlooked. Mine range in length from 3 to 7 letters. Can you expand this range? You may not use any letter more often than it appears in the phrase A CHANDELIER.

Two-Letter Transadditions

I have been amusing myself with the thought that it is always possible to take a word or name, add two letters to it, and then rearrange all of the letters to spell some sort of reasonable word, name, or phrase. As a test case, I have taken the names of 58 well-known European cities, producing the following results. All of the cities are present or former capitals.

1. AMSTERDAM (The Netherlands): DISARMAMENT
2. ANDORRA (Andorra): ROAD BRAND
3. ANDORRA LA VELLA (Andorra): DOLLAR AVALANCHER
4. ANDORRA-LA-VIEJAA (Andorra): A JAVELINA OR ZERDA
5. ANGORA (Turkey): A PARAGON
6. ANKARA (Turkey): ARKANSAS
7. ATHENS (Greece): UNCHASTE
8. BELFAST (Northern Ireland): SHIFTABLE
9. BELGRADE (Yugoslavia): BARELEGED
10. BERLIN (Germany): RINSABLE
11. BERN (Switzerland): BANKER
12. BERNE (Switzerland): A NAME-FINDER
13. BONN (West Germany): BANKER
14. BRATISLAVA (Slovakia): A NAME-FINDER
15. BRUSSELS (Belgium): A NAME-FINDER
16. BUCHAREST (Romania): A NAME-FINDER
17. BUDAPEST (Hungary): A NAME-FINDER
18. CARDIFF (Wales): A NAME-FINDER
19. COPENHAGEN (Denmark): A NAME-FINDER
20. DANZIG (Germany): A NAME-FINDER
21. DUBLIN (Ireland): A NAME-FINDER
22. EAST BERLIN: A NAME-FINDER
23. EDINBURGH (Scotland): A NAME-FINDER
24. GDANSK (Poland): A NAME-FINDER
25. GENEVA (Switzerland): A NAME-FINDER
26. GIBRALTAR (Spain): A NAME-FINDER
27. HAGUE, THE (Netherlands): A NAME-FINDER
28. HELSINKI (Finland): A NAME-FINDER
29. KAUNAS (Lithuania): A NAME-FINDER
30. KIEV (Ukraine): A NAME-FINDER
31. LONDON (England): A NAME-FINDER
32. LUXEMBOURG (Luxembourg): A NAME-FINDER
33. MADRID (Spain): A NAME-FINDER
34. MINSK (Belarus): A NAME-FINDER
35. MONACO (Monaco): A NAME-FINDER
36. MOSCOW (Russia): A NAME-FINDER
37. NICOSIA (Cyprus): A NAME-FINDER
38. OSLO (Norway): A NAME-FINDER
39. PARIS (France): A NAME-FINDER
40. PRAGUE (Czech Republic): A NAME-FINDER
41. REYKJAVIK (Iceland): A NAME-FINDER
42. RIGA (Latvia): A NAME-FINDER
43. RIGA (Latvia): A NAME-FINDER
44. ROME (Italy): A NAME-FINDER
45. SAN MARINO (San Marino): A NAME-FINDER
46. SOFIA (Bulgaria): A NAME-FINDER
47. STOCKHOLM (Sweden): A NAME-FINDER
48. TALLINN (Estonia): A NAME-FINDER
49. TIRANA (Albania): A NAME-FINDER
50. TRIESTE (Italy): A NAME-FINDER
51. VADUZ (Liechtenstein): A NAME-FINDER
52. VALLENGA (San Marino): A NAME-FINDER
53. VATICAN (Vatican City): A NAME-FINDER
54. VIENNA (Austria): A NAME-FINDER
55. VILNIUS (Lithuania): A NAME-FINDER
56. WARSAW (Poland): A NAME-FINDER
57. WEST BERLIN: A NAME-FINDER
58. ZAGREB (Croatia): A NAME-FINDER

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15. BRUSSELS (Belgium): SUBURBLESS
16. BUCHAREST (Romania): SUBCHAPTERS
17. BUDAPEST (Hungary): DISPUTABLE
18. CARDIFF (Wales): FAIR-FACED
19. COPENHAGEN (Denmark): CHANGETPERSON
20. DANZIG (Danzig): DAZZLING
21. DUBLIN (Ireland): BUILDING
22. EAST BERLIN (East Germany): CELEBRATIONS
23. EDINBURGH (Scotland): UNDERBRIGHT
24. GDANSK (Danzig): SNAKE GOD
25. GENEVA (League of Nations): ENGRAVED
26. GIBRALTAR (Gibraltar): DR. GALBRAITH
27. HAGUE, THE (The Netherlands): KATE HUGHES
28. HELSINKI (Finland): SHRINELIKE
29. KAUNAS (Lithuania): UNALASKA
30. KIEV (The Ukraine): KNIVES
31. LISBON (Portugal): NOBELIST
32. LONDON (The United Kingdom): NONSOLID
33. LUXEMBOURG (Luxembourg): REGULAR/BUXOM (clothing size)
34. MADRID (Spain): DISARMED
35. MINSK (The Soviet Union): KANTISM
36. MONACO (Monaco): CAMEROON
37. MINSK (The Soviet Union): KANTISM
38. MOSCOW (The Soviet Union): CODWORMS
39. NICOSIA (Cyprus): CITATIONS
40. OSAO (Norway): SCHOOL
41. PARIS (France): WARSHIP
42. PRAGUE (Czechoslovakia): UPGRADED
43. Riga (Latvia): TRAGIC
44. ROME (Italy): MORALE
45. SAN MARINO (San Marino): MARINATIONS
46. SOFIA (Bulgaria): OARFISH
47. STOCKHOLM (Sweden): THOMAS LOCKE
48. TALLINN (Estonia): SLANT LINE
49. TIRANA (Albania): PARTISAN
50. TRIESTE (Trieste): RESETTING
51. UNALASKA (Alaska): ZOUAVED
52. VALLETTA (Malta): LEAST VITAL
53. VATICAN CITY (Vatican City): L. TITICACA NAVY
54. VIENNA (Austria): VENETIAN
55. VILNIUS (Lithuania): INCLUSIVE
56. WARSAW (Poland): JAWWARDS
57. WEST BERLIN (West Berlin): NEIL BREWSTER
58. ZAGREB (Croatia): BEGAZERS

Many of the two-letter transadditions presented above are admir-
able, but a few leave room for improvement. Readers are urged to seek and report suitable improvements.
The Alphabetical Bias of Kickshaws Guest Editors

From 1976 through 1984, there have been 36 Kickshaws columns guest edited by logologists bearing 18 different surnames: Albert, Beaman (2), Bergerson, Bostick (4), Brooke (2), Cohen (4), Eckler (5), Espy (2), Francis (4), Gardner (2), Grant, Hazard, Lederer, Phillips, Shortz, Sunners, Ulrich, and Wolpow (2). Of these surnames, two-thirds are located in the first one-third of the alphabet (A through H). What are the odds that 12 or more of 18 surnames taken at random from (say) a telephone directory behave in this manner? The editor points out that it is not fair to assume that surnames are equidistributed among the letters of the alphabet; in Morris County, New Jersey, the probability that a randomly-selected telephone subscriber has a surname in the range A-H is 0.425. Using this figure, the probability of randomly drawing 12 or more surnames out of 18 from the letters A-H is, according to the editor, approximately 0.032. The surprisingness of this result is accentuated by the fact that the most active guest editors are even more overwhelmingly represented in the A-H range - of the 36 Kickshaws columns, 29, or more than 80 per cent, qualify. Can it be that the earlier a person's name is located in the alphabet, the more inclined he is toward logology in general and Kickshaws editing in particular? (As additional evidence, note that the three editors of Word Ways since its founding in 1968 fall even earlier in the alphabet, in the A-E range.)

Editor's Note: I caution against an over-hasty endorsement of Dmitri Borgmann's interesting discovery. The randomness argument presented above is flawed by the fact that the split point between H and I was presumably selected after an examination of the data to make the case as strong as possible. Had the same calculations been carried out for some other split point, the results would have been somewhat less dramatic (the final probability would have been larger than 0.032). For example, according to the article by Alan Frank in the August 1984 Word Ways, the mid-point of a typical American telephone directory lies in the vicinity of the surname Lacey. Finding 12 of 18 surnames earlier than the midpoint is exactly as unusual as seeing 12 heads in tossing 18 coins. The probability of 12 heads is, in fact, 0.071; of 13, 0.033; of 14, 0.012; and so on, for a total of about 0.12 - considerably less unusual than 0.032.