the Church to both Ro-

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Examples? If

KICKSHAWS

David Morice

Iowa City, Iowa

Readers are encouraged to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor. All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue. Guest editors will continue to appear occasionally.

Daphne in Woodland

Daphne set out alone on a quest to find the legendary Eldorado. In the Everglade Moss near Flint Ridge, she met three other travelers — a Sprite, an Empress, and a Gladiator — who had no idea where they were going. They decided to join the girl.

"I've been to the Riviera," said the Sprite as he brushed a Pinecone through his Twiggy hair.

"Oh, that's nothing," said the Empress, polishing the Gemstones in her Pink Tiara. After a slight pause, she announced with great Fanfare, "I've been to India, Naples, Monaco, Fort Pitt, Carlsbad Cavern. Why, I've even been to Atlantis on an Arctic Night."

"Hah!" roared the Gladiator like a Giant Sequoia. "You ain't seen nothin till you've visited the Persian Gulf on a Balmy Day!"

Daphne asked, "Do any of you have a bottle of Coppertone? I'm allergic to Jungle Moss."

"Don't worry, Daphne," said the Sprite. "Firefly Pollen in the Starlight will protect the Candle Glow of your complexion."

"Or you could try Pearl Cream," said the Empress. She picked up a piece of Bleached Wood that resembled Victorian Mahogany and exclaimed, "By my Jewels, the Ocean Spray certainly produces some..."

"I'm famished!" bellowed the Gladiator. "Let's build a Blazen Pink campfire with that wood."

The Empress protested until the Gladiator yanked open the Pigskin sack that was slung over his Doric shoulders. "Feast your eyes on these drinking Gourds," he said. " Plenty of Eggnog, Sangris, Absinthe, Claret, Creme de Menthe..."

"But what do we eat?" asked the Sprite. "Pickle Chips?"

"For lunch," the Gladiator said with a dramatic gesture, "we'll have a Zesty feast!" He dumped the entire contents of his sack onto the Sand Bar.

"By my Provincial Tan," Murmured the Empress, sampling the provisions. "Asparagus Souffle made with Glazed Carrots, Black Olives, Celery Hearts, Frosted Beets, Cocktail Onions, Peanut Shells, Aromatic Sage, Bean Sprouts, Hot Peppers, Chili Sauce, and Mince Meat! I'd just as soon eat a Llama stuffed with Ivory Tusks!"

"I prefer Muskmelon," said the Sprite, "but I'll bet this souffle
would taste like Sweet Meringue if you poured a lot of Green Goddess salad dressing all over it."

"I'll have Split Pea Soup," said Daphne. "Oh, and a Banana Split, too -- it looks so Yum Yum Yellow!"

After gorging themselves under a Eucalyptus, they relaxed in a Jade Mist ascending from the Shamrocks. Daphne removed her clothes, every last stitch, till she was Peach Nude. Her Crimson Lips savored a dessert of Grape Sherbet topped with a Cherry. "Those must've cost a lot of Gold Doubloons," she said, pointing to the Antlers on the Gladiator's helmet.

"No," he snorted proudly. "I won them playing Billiards with a Seafarer. My cue was forged of Hammered Iron. His was fashioned out of a Ship's Hull."

The Empress was sitting beneath a Canadian Spruce with her tiara in her hand. As she tapped on the jewels, she kept saying "Pinkety Pink! Pinkety Pink!" over and over. It was her way of achieving Tranquility.

"Why doesn't someone stuff a Powder Puff up her nose?" growled the Gladiator. Then, in a voice as tender as New Rust, he whispered to Daphne "My Tawny Tangerine, my Candied Apricot, my Potent Orange, let's sow some Wild Oats in the Strawberry Whip. Let's cast Purple Shadows on the Ivy." His eyes were Satan Red, and his breath smelled of Sulphur.

"Keep your Pale Pebbles to yourself!" she snapped bravely. "I'm not Cheesecake for your Snickerdoodle."

Suddenly, a Cardinal named Little Red Red swooped down to the Cottonwood. "Wheat Shock!" Little Red Red chirped frantically. "Better head for the Coral Reef or you'll wind up tangled in Swamp Reed!"

The sky grew darker than Burnt Toast. The Empress, the Sprite, the Gladiator, and Little Red Red were blown away to the Mystic Sea. The poor Grasshopper, having choked on a soggy piece of Sponge Cake, lay dead in the Grass. Daphne was alone in Woodland. She looked for a Silver Lining in the Cumulus clouds swirling high above.

"I feel like a Mermaid beached on the Sahara Sand," she sobbed. "All my friends have sailed off into Deep Space."

Then she woke up safe and sound in her own bed. A book she'd been reading was draped over her face. Its pages were flapping in the breeze like the wings of an albatross. She pushed it away and breathed a sigh of relief. "Whew! What a weird dream! I'll never touch a book like that again."

What kind of book had Daphne been reading? See Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.
Logological Love Poem

I had a pal in Rome
Who wrote a palindrome
To dear sweet Anna Graham.
She said, "An anagram
Would turn my head around
More than your backward sound!"
But when she turned her back on him,
He penned a simple acronym.
"You're such a wimpy man, damn,
You couldn't write a pangram."
Her words became so caustic,
He cried out an acrostic.
She threatened him with guns;
He fired old tired puns.
Then — wham! — she slammed the door on
My friend, that oxymoron.

Roller Coaster Words

MILITARIZATION WITH ZINCOGRAPHY IS DECLIVITOUS TOWARD HER AGATEWARE OF JERKWATER ALEXANDRINES. This wild ride through nonsense is a roller coaster sentence. After the first letter, each successive letter alternates between going "down" the alphabet (in the direction of A) and "up" the alphabet (in the direction of Z). In the first word, M goes down to I, I goes up to L, L goes down to I, and so on.

A roller coaster word has 3 or more letters that sweep up and down (or down and up) consistently. Within a sentence, shorter words like IS work with the words around them, but alone they don't make the curve. Words with letters alternating between the two halves of the alphabet automatically qualify, but the determining factor for all roller coaster words is letter movement in relation to previous letters and not to a fixed point of reference.

MILITARIZATION is the longest example that I found in a speedy chase through Webster's Seventh Collegiate. What's the longest roller coaster word that you can ride in any dictionary?

Fictionary

You can test your skill in the fine art of verboludomania with this dictionary game. The object is to pick out five consecutive bold face dictionary words and, using them in order, write a semisensible sentence with them. Add as many of your own words to collage the fivesome together. Chances are you'll wind up with sentences you'll never see anywhere else. Some examples using Webster's Seventh Collegiate:

FOLDAWAY, FOLDBOAT, FOLDER, FOLDEROL, FOLDING DOOR The foldaway bed on the foldboat was strewn with folders full of fol-
derol a bout folding doors.

MADRAS, MADREPORE, MADRIGAL, MADRILENE, MADRONA They lost the shipment of madras on the huge madrepores because the crewmen were singing madrigals, sipping madrilenes, and sitting on madronas.

NIPPY, NIP-UP, NIRVANA, NISAN, NISEI I did a nippy nip-up to nirvana during Nisan with a nisei.

ONOMASTICS, ONOMATOPOEIA, ONONDAGA, ONRUSH, ONSET According to one theory of onomastics, onomatopoeia among the Onondaga preceded the onrush of speech that led to the onset of language.

WRYNECK, WUD, WULFENITE, WUNDERKIND, WURST The wryneck made wud sounds on the wulfenite as the wunderkind ate wurst.

Wrinkles of Type

As the ad on the left states, here's A WRINKLE CREAM THAT REALLY WORKS! Some little printer's devil got in there and wrinkled the paper before the ad was printed. Fritzi Striebel showed several examples of "Rivers of Type" in the May 1986 Word Ways, but I'll bet all the wrinkles on my forehead that no one can top this optical allusion.

Vowelless or Consonantless Society?

Two organizations were formed recently to change the alphabet as we know it. TH RGNZTN T LMNT VWLS, a pro-consonant group, proposes that vowels should be removed from the alphabet to save society billions every year in printing costs. However, E OAIAIO O EIIAE OOA, an even more radical, pro-vowel group, demands that consonants be excluded to further trim down the gross alphabetic waste. During the transition, both groups plan on using hyphens to replace the deleted letters until people become accustomed to the change. The transcript below records their recent heated debate at the Library of Congress (C = pro-consonant, V = pro-vowel). Can you fill in the missing letters? See answers & o-u-i-o- at the end of this issue.

C: Wr-ng!

V: 0-, o-- i--

C: - d-n't b-l

V: I, you.

Performance Evaluations

When bosses according to a phanom Wasta, are different from

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Digital Wordplay

In the Feb numberdromes N-grams are numbers representing the digits, and form a different backwards 3-way n-gram until Tom Poley.

Numbergram ( )

J O V I A L 10,1

L O T U S 12,15

B U S K E T 2,7

S A L U T E 19,1

Numberdrome

All words can be

Chambers) are

other special

apart, and (broken n-dromes

At least two
types of n-grams

aren't switch
DNA They lost use the crew­ ld sitting on nippy nip­up SET According mondaga pre­ gage. The wryneck te wurst.

states, here's TALLY WORKS! got in there before the ad showed sev­of Type" in but I'll bet orehead that allusion.

society? formed recent­ as we know WLS, a pro­ that vowels the alphabet every year in E OAIAIO O radical, pro­t consonants m down the g the trans­ the deleted transcript ary of Con­ in the mis­issue.

ld r-m-v­ b-r b-n-s. j-- eo--e
r v-w-ls. --r
dr-st-c
o-e o-e--
4, U, a-- Y.

C: Wr-ng! ---r -rg-n-z-t--n h-sn't th--ght th-s --t v-r- w-l.l.
V: O-, -o? -i-ou-- e o--e, i'-- i-o-i-e o --i--o--e o--e
o-- i--o--a-- o--- i-- E--i-- a--ua-e! C: - d-n't b-l--v-- ---! Wh-t -r- th--?
V: I, you.

Performance Evaluation Terms

When bosses write recommendation letters, they use jargon. Ac­ cording to a list of Performance Evaluation Terms supplied by Ste­ phanie Wasta, the real meaning of some of that jargon is quite different from its surface meaning.

EXCEPTIONALLY WELL QUALIFIED has committed no major blunders to date
UNLIMITED POTENTIAL we're stuck with this person until retirement QUICK THINKING offers plausible excuses for errors STRONG ADHERENCE TO PRINCIPLES stubborn beyond belief IS UNUSUALLY LOYAL wanted by no one else ALERT TO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS a gossip EXPRESSES SELF WELL can string two sentences together DEMONSTRATES QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP has a loud voice, is eva­sive SPENDS EXTRA HOURS ON THE JOB has a miserable home life CONSCIENTIOUS AND CAREFUL scared

Digital Wordplay

In the February 1989 Kickshaws, I discussed numbergrams and numberdromes -- anagrams and palindromes with a digital twist. N-grams are formed by converting the letters of a word into the numbers representing their positions in the alphabet, rearranging the digits, and converting the new numbers back into letters to form a different word. N-dromes are words whose digits read the same backwards as well as forwards. With the MWPD, I found a 3-way n-gram and a 7-letter n-drome -- pretty good, so I thought, until Tom Pulliam sent an 8-way n-gram and an 8-letter n-drome.

Numbergram (all words use the digits 0111122259)

JOVIAL 10,15,22,9,1,12 SALLET 19,1,12,12,5,20
LOTUS 12,15,20,21,19 BUSKET 2,21,19,11,5,20 SALUTE 19,1,12,21,20,5
SALUTE 19,1,12,21,20,5 ASTABLE 1,19,20,1,2,12,5

Numberdrome GLUGGLUG 7,12,21,7,7,12,21,7

All words can be found in Webster's Third except ASTABLE (from Chambers) and GLUGGLUG (from Webster's Second). GLUGGLUG has other special properties: (1) the numbers don't have to be broken apart, and (2) if the G's are dropped, the result is another un­broken n-drome, LULU 12,21,12,21.

At least two "satellite" problems arise in the form of special types of n-grams. Numbergram charades are words whose digits aren't switched around, but just broken up differently to form new
words. Numbergram reversals are similar to n-gram charades, but
the new words are formed by taking the digits in reverse order.

Tom came up with 2 n-gram charades, 8 n-gram reversals, and
3 longer examples of n-dromes. For his contribution, Tom is award-
ed a solid gold dictionary.

Numbergram charades

ABOVE 1,2,15,22,5 = LOVE 12,15,22,5
BABUL 2,1,1,21,12 = UVAL 21,22,1,12

Numbergram reversals

ABASH 1,2,1,19,8 = HIKU 8,9,11,21
ABOMA 1,2,15,13,1 = MOLA 13,15,12,1
ACARA 1,3,1,18,1 = RAMA 18,1,13,1
EAGER 5,1,7,5,18 = HOGO 8,15,7,1
HALE 8,1,12,5,18 = HOUR 8,15,21,18
HALMA 8,1,12,13,1 = MAUR 13,1,21,18
HOARD 8,15,1,18,4 = DIKER 4,8,11,5,18
ABULIA 1,2,21,12,9,1 = SULU 19,21,12,21

Numberdromes

IODIDES 9,15,4,9,4,5,19
INBOLDS 9,14,2,15,12,4,19
INSULINS 9,14,19,21,12,9,14,19

All words are from Webster’s Third except UVAL, HIKU, and INBOLDS
which are from Webster’s Second.

Blank Baffler

John Boulten sent this puzzler: what four-letter word can fill
all the blanks below to make new words? Find two different ans-
ers where the resulting words in the third column are antonyms.
See Answers and Solutions at the end of the issue.

----E ----S ----LES
----LE ----ES
----LET ----LING

Preposterousitional

The famous little girl who spoke nine prepositions in a row at
the end of her sentence about the book on Australia has just ac-
quired a new book, Over Above, a Little Golden Book on Astrophys-
ics. She likes the new book and complains about having to read
the other one. Now her prepositions have jumped from 9 to 14:
"Mommy, why did you bring that book, which I said I didn’t
want to be read to out of from about ”Down Under” up for along
with Over Above in?“

He, The Theoretical Realist

Read this poem slowly. Study each word. Think about it. See
how soon you can determine its structure. If you can’t figure it
out by the third stanza, you need a crash course in logology; if you have to read the whole poem to get it, you may be functionally illiterate. For the answer, see Answers and Solutions.

He, earnest troubador, relishes singing
general lyrics: "Shadow women never react to
obvious songs, so obnoxiously you undermine
every youthful love, even natural longings."

The heroic icy cynic, Icarus, usurped
Edwardian anemones: "Escape pernicious uses,
especially lyric ice, Centipede Demon."
One needed educational aliens.

Theoretical Californians answer:
"Werewolves, vestibules lessen senses' session."

Ironic, nice, iced cedar dares restructured redwood --
oodles, lest establishment entertains insurance.

Realist, listen! Stenographer's herself,
selfish fishmongers. Gershwin's winsome, somewhat,
whatever. Everglade laden adenine? Nineteen teenyboppers
persecute cutest testament, mentally allying.

State Squares

A state square is similar to a word square, but each pair of
adjacent letters form a state postal abbreviation across or down.
An abbreviation may be used twice, but not in the same direction.
For instance, if you use OH in any horizontal row, you can't use
it horizontally again, but you can use it once in a vertical column.
As with word squares, there are two main kinds -- single and dou-
able squares. The smallest square measures 2 letters by 2 letters;
all abbreviations except WY appear in one or more of the 165 two-
squares that can be formed.

The single state square reads the same horizontally and vertical-
ly. A four-square of this type has 12 different abbreviations in
all. The letter arrangements may involve one or more abbreviation
changes, which raises the question, Is a specific square a minor
variant of another or a separate square? For practical reasons,
if more than two abbreviations differ or occupy different positions,
the squares are considered to be separate from each other.

Tom Pulliam, Ross Eckler and I each found a single square,
with several variants. Changes from the original square are indi-
cated by dashes in the text to the right (IN-ID means change every
IN in the square to ID). There may be other variants.

| N M N V | Ross's square (note the four consecutive S's) has
| M S C A | 2 variants: (1) KY-KS, (2) KY-RI. None of the
| N C O K | abbreviations in this square appear in the same
| V A K Y | position as the abbreviations in the next 2 squares.
| I N C A | Tom's has 10 variants: (1) IA-ID; (2) IA-IL; (3)
| N M O R | IN-MN; (4) IN-TN; (5) IA-ID, IN-MN; (6) IA-ID,
| C O H I | (7) IA-IL, IN-MN; (8) IA-IL, IN-TN;
| A R I A | (9) IA-IN, IN-MN; (10) IA-IN, IN-TN

...
The double square differs by one or more abbreviations from the horizontal to the vertical, and it has more than 12 abbreviations. This one has 15:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{T N M A} & : \text{TN-IN}; (1) \text{IN-ID}; (2) \text{IN-IL}; (3) \text{IN-ID}, \\
\text{N C O R} & : \text{TN-IN}; (4) \text{IN-TL}; \text{TN-IN}; (5) \text{MA-CA}, \text{NC-NM}. \text{The last variant is the same as variant 10 in the previous square -- a bridge between the two.}
\end{align*}
\]

The No-Repeat State Square is a double square with no abbreviations duplicated in either direction. A four-square would have 24 abbreviations. To test the difficulty of a no-repeat square, Ross looked for a three-square with 12 abbreviations, and he "found out that even that was no snap." When I tried, I always ended with the same square.

The Wild Goose Flies at Nineteen O'Clock

Suppose you're just learning English, and you run across the word NINETEEN. Checking your MWPD, you find that it is "one more than eighteen." You look up EIGHTEEN and read "one more than seventeen." And so it goes, all the way down to ONE, "the number denoting unity." Sweating, you look up UNITY, only to find that the dictionary editors have been tricking you all along! UNITY is "the quality or state of being one."

Be thankful that you didn't have to look up MILLION.

Word Stepladders

In building word ladders, you can change any letter to any other letter to make a new word-rung. In word stepladders, however, you can change a letter only by shifting to the next letter forward or backward alphabetically. The MWPD network below exhibits a number of stepladders, the longest one with no repeated words (LIKE to KIND) containing eight rungs. Can you find either

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{M I L D} & : \text{M I N D} \\
\text{L I K E} & : \text{M I K E} : \text{M I L E} : \text{M I M E} : \text{M I N E} : \text{L I N E} : \text{K I N E} : \text{K I N D} \\
\text{N I N E} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

Reader's Digest

Colonel Potter's, and "Hawkeye Pi and The Two Readers"

Other Readers

Fahrenheit 211: There's Andy's How to Win a Bridge Match of Solitude, right behind the mock.

Spanish-English

Three unusual English pronouns: "her", "it", "its". The masculine singular, The rest are associated as ITS = IT

Five'll Get You

In the February issue, every letter in the title appears in its first-person reflexive pronoun form. As "I" or "me" and "we", 7 other pronouns. A six-letter in the title, make 7 other words as "you" or "the", SU, SUE, SE, in 5 letters.
a larger network or a longer stepladder with no repeats? What about networks and stepladders for words of other lengths? Watch your step.

Reader's Digest Condensations

Colonel Potter: "I could never figure out what the Reader's Digest dropped out."

Hawkeye Pierce: "Me neither. My favorites are Tale of a City and The Two Musketeers." (Dialogue from the TV series M*A*S*H)

Other Reader's Digest condensations come to mind: Little Woman, Fahrenheit 212, None Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, and Six Months in Solitary. Wasn't Reader's Digest behind the movement to condense pi from $3.14159...$ to simply 3?

Wordwise Word Ways

Without looking, can you figure out how many times "Word Ways" appears in its entirety on the outside front cover of this magazine? Are the words arranged in a spiral or in concentric circles? If the pattern weren't cut off at the edges, how many times would the title appear? See Answers and Solutions for answers.

Spanish-English Pronoun Pyramids

Three unusual pyramids can be constructed with Spanish and English pronouns. The three Spanish words are: (1) SE -- third person reflexive or reciprocal singular or plural, signifying "him", "her", "it", "they", or formal "you"; (2) EL -- third person masculine singular, "he"; (3) YO -- the first person singular, "I". The rest are English. In some lines, two appear together, such as ITSE = IT + SE.

Five'll Get You Ten

In the February 1989 Word Ways, Peter Newby pointed out that the letters in SMITHERY can spell 17 different English language pronouns. A similar phenomenon occurs in Spanish: the 5 different letters in the word USTED (formal singular "you") can be used to make 7 other Spanish words and 2 abbreviations that can translate as "you" or "your" in certain contexts: UD., UDS., TU, TUS, TE, SU, SUS, SE, USTEDES. Counting USTED itself, that's 10 occurrences in 5 letters. A very YOUSful word.
Flying Purple People Prose

People magazine, with its slick shtick of stock shloc;(. has climbed the Mt. Everest of purple prose to its peak in the recent Extra, "Television's 50th Anniversary." Some People descriptions of the towering titans of the TV tube follow. The names in parentheses indicate who is being described.

"Frost-topped and crinkle-cheeked at 63, Johnny is still trim, perky, immaculate, a stainless-steel pixie with eyes that twinkle like Christmas tree lights. Wit is a key ingredient too. Quick and slick as a cat in pattens, he is a grand master of the mad lib." (Johnny Carson)

"We loved her Raggedy Ann looks: the big, red, bow-tie mouth, the baby-blue, sunny-side-up eyes, the ha-ha hairdo that topped her off like a giant orange dandelion." (Lucille Ball)

"He's the phallus of Dallas, Satan in a Stetson, Genghis Khan as a good ol' boy. Sure he's a rat, but a rat as big as Texas, the Paul Bunyan of black hats." (Larry Hagman)

It's supermarket check-out lane poetry. In spite of (or because of) the waterfall of flashy images, some of it makes quite funny surrealism. Check out this wild excerpt about Ed Sullivan, presented in verse form:

Ode to Ed
Sourpussed and rock stolid, he
Resembled a freshly
Unwrapped mummy --
Or maybe
Mount Rushmore sucking a lemon. His eyes
Underslung with pita pouches
Darted about like motorized
Raisins, and his high,
Thin voice whined like a pesky fly.

A Name You Can Count On

President Bush selected for the position of Treasurer of the United States a woman with a 26-letter name -- Catalina Vasquez Villalpando. Her signature will be the longest ever to adorn US paper money, beating out former champion Dorothy Andrews Elston Kabis (1969-1971) by one letter. Villalpando didn't have to resort to the questionable practice of using four names like "25-letter" Kabis.

Word Ways Blooper of the Decade

Last issue I made a BIG boobo0! Ross told me about it by postcard: "Is my (our) face red! Will Shortz pointed out to me that Quayle's name is not Daniel but J. Danforth, invalidating the whole premise of 'Lead Quayle In.'" In that article, I had anagrammed the wrong name of the Vice President of the United States sixteen times!

My face is sixteen times as red as Ross's, as are the faces of all my relatives, several generations' worth, TRUMAN, LEAR, etc.

...The Erring

I was erring the other day. "Hi, Bob," "Hi, Mike," "How's your wife?" "All three of you?" "Fine," I said. "Say, your "No, just Bob." "Lovely day for the lightening." "Yeah, wasn't it snow."

"Life sure is mean, if everyone had to worry about the penalties for erring on themselves, but was it sacrificial, do you think?"

"I guess I'd err, if you made it so easy." "Yeah, me too, got to stuff them penalties up the const, eh?"

We erred an appropriate moment, but neither of us personally.

We erred a big boobo0.

I guess I'd err, if you made it easy."

"Yeah, me too, got to stuff them penalties up the const, eh?"

We erred an appropriate moment, but neither of us personally.

We erred a big boobo0.

I guess I'd err, if you made it easy."
all my relatives, my ancestors, and my descendants for the next several generations. What an error! Almost as bad as DEWEY BEATS TRUMAN. Lead Me Out! I'm going to form...

...The Erring Club

I was erring down the street one afternoon. My friend, Joe, was erring the other way. We almost errered into each other.

"Hi, Bob," I errered in surprise.
"Hi, Mike," he errered back.

"How's your wife?" I double-errered, knowing he wasn't married.
"All three are fine," he triple-errered. "How's yours?"

"Fine," I errered. "She's in Zanzibar with her husband."
"Say, your name is Frankenstein, isn't it?" he errered.

"No, just Einstein," I errered, "but they call me 'Frank.'"

"Lovely day for the middle of August," he errered, gesturing to the lightning that almost hit us.

"Yeah, warm and muddy," I errered, shivering in the January snow.

"Life sure is easy when you're human," he errered earnestly. "I mean, if everybody made mistakes all the time, we wouldn't have to worry about knowing what was false."

"True," I errered thoughtfully. "Everyone should err."

"Hey, I got a great idea," he errered. "Let's organize a group of people dedicated to erring as a way of life. Our motto could be, 'To err is humane.'"

"Er, clever," I errered.

We made plans to start a club whose guiding principle would be to err every day in every way. Our bylaws would include stiff penalties for any inhumane act -- that is, any situation in which a member didn't err. Naturally we'd have to err in carrying out those penalties, or we'd be violating our own rules, which would require that we penalize ourselves, but would have to err in carrying out those penalties, and sic ad infinitum. Fortunately, that would be inconceivable, since we'd err so badly in writing up our bylaws that we wouldn't possibly be able to abide by them in the first place. We'd name the biggest blunderer "The Errer of the Year," but we'd pick the wrong person to receive the wrong award at the wrong club. We were well on our way to erring in the grand style.

"Well, now that we've solved the world's problems," I errered, "I guess I'd better be errering home."

"Yeah, me, too," he errered. "It's almost Christmas, and I've got to stuff the pumpkins with firecrackers."

We errered awhile longer on the corner, laughed a lot at inappropriate moments, and decided to get together the next day to draw up the constitution for the Erring Club. The following afternoon, neither of us showed up at the right time or place. We quadruple-errered. Now the Erring Club is merely a memory, and not a correct one by any means.