

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.

Self-Portrait of a Typewriter

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      I _____ I
      I _____ I
0 _____ 0
/  I  o  _____  o  I
)  I  oooooooooooooo  I
   I  oooooooooooooo  I
   I  oooooooooooooo  I
   I  oooooooooooooo  oI
  _____
 I  _____ I
 I _____ I

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Word Girder Ladders

Word girders are pairs of words whose even (or odd) letters can be interchanged to generate two new words, such as HOME-CANS transmuted to HAMS-CONE. Dmitri Borgmann discussed them briefly on page 159 of *Language on Vacation* and included the further requirement that no letters be repeated in a word pair. This is unduly restrictive; I suggest that the word pair have no crashes, that is, no letter repeats in the same position, such as bOtAny-cObAlt. Word girders have been discussed only once in *Word Ways*; in August 1976 Tom Pulliam exhibited some six-letter examples.

In a word girder ladder, each adjacent word pair is a word girder. One can conceive of word girder networks analogous to the better-known word networks discussed by Eckler and Gordon in *Word Ways* during 1989. Can any pair of four-letter words be joined by a word girder ladder? How long a ladder is needed for a specific pair, such as GOOD to EVIL? These matters can best be investigated with a computer; I propose a simpler problem. If the entire word girder ladder must consist of mutually non-crashing words (not just every pair), how long a ladder can be built? Using Webster's Seventh Collegiate, I found the slightly flawed example HOPI-FYCE-PART-MULL-DEED-LIAS; the editor, allowing words from the OSPD, came up with the eight-rung ladder CITY-TANS-LYSE-PORT-MULL-DEED-BRAG-FLOW. Suppose one imposes the added constraint that the ends of the ladder be joined to form a word gir-

der ring; the editor found the five-step -ROPE-PART-MULL-DEED-BINS-. (I note that the word girder ring can be handily implemented by a simple version of my tin-can shiftword calculator, discussed in the May 1988 issue of *Word Ways*.)

Color Talk

Somewhere, over the rainbow, people are talking in technicolor. Take a look at what they're saying:

I red the book, I blue the test.
 Orange you proud of yourself?
 Cattle greys in the pasture.
 Out they come, indigo.
 Well-bred cats purple lightly.
 They were playing strip ochre at the party.
 I wouldn't do it vermilion dollars.
 The warring factions just ended a chartreuse.
 They show a lot of unnecessary violets on television.

Puzzle of the Month

How can the names of the months be arranged in order to get the minimum and the maximum number of isogram strings (no repeated letters within a string)? The month names are printed consecutively (without spaces) until a letter is repeated; then the string breaks with a space and a new string starts. Seven months have to be broken automatically; for example, JANUARY becomes JANU ARY. If the months are placed in normal order, they form 18 strings. Two rearrangements, giving the minimum and maximum number of strings, follow; can you improve on them? If this same method is applied to the days of the week, what is the minimum and maximum number? For a surprise, see Answers and Solutions.

Minimum (12): AprilNovemb erJanu arySept emb erMayOct oberJun eAug ustMarchFeb rua ryDec emb erJuly

Maximum (19): Dec emb erF ebrua ryAp rilJu lyMa yJanu aryM arch Aug ust Sept emb erNov emb erJun eOct ober

On Beyond Zebra

Are 26 letters really enough in English? For writing, perhaps so, but for transcribing spoken language, they fall unutterably short. New letters need to be invented--to sublet the alphabet. The subletters can be selected to more closely align the oral and the written traditions.

As a start, here are 15 subletters, codified by capital letters in brackets. Each signifies a real sound (and not an artificial word, like MOAN or AH-CHOO) made with the upper respiratory system. It may appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, or it may stand alone. When a subletter is repeated in the same brackets, the sound is drawn out longer. Following the list of subletters, several sentences demonstrate their use.

[A] belch	[D] hiccup	[G] pant	[J] sneeze	[M] snort
[B] cough	[E] kiss	[H] shriek	[K] sniffle	[N] spit
[C] gasp	[F] moan	[l] snarl	[L] snore	[O] yawn

"N[D]ot toni[D]te, dear, I've go[D]t the hic[D]ups."
 "Hey, punk, [I] what are you doing [M] on this side of town [N]?"
 "I rea[K]lly caught a bad[B] case of the flu[K][B][K]."
 "Great food! [AAA]! Excuse me!"
 "I [O] can hard[OO]ly keep awa[OOO]ke[L] [L] [L] [L]..."
 "I[E] love[F] you[E]. Oo[C]oh! Oo[C]oh!" "Me[EEE], t[G]o[G]o!"
 "I think that's rag[J][J]weed[J][J]."

A Jug of Country and Western Moonshine

Country & Western song writers fill their lyrics with wordplay, and examples of their work have appeared in **Word Ways** before. Eugene Ulrich sent in a fresh jug of "moonshine humor," and I've added 8 made-up lines to 12 real ones from his list. Can you weed out the fakes? See Answers and Solutions.

1. They say there's an ocean of love, but I'm still up a creek.
2. She feels like a new man tonight.
3. You must think my bed's a bus stop, the way you come and go.
4. If I had a nickel for every time she said "I love you," I could give you change for a dime.
5. Just one more kiss and I'll have to buy a new pair of lips.
6. I'm going to put a bar in my car and drive myself to drink.
7. When the phone don't ring, you'll know it's me.
8. Our marriage went from honeymoon to landfill.
9. If you want to keep the beer real cold, put it next to your ex-wife's heart.
10. The work we done was hard. At night we'd sleep 'cause we was tard.
11. It takes me all night long to do what I used to do all night long.
12. I said "I do," but you said "We did."
13. I wouldn't take you to a dogfight, even if I thought you could win.
14. If you was anymore of a woman, I'd have to be twins.
15. I don't know whether to kill myself or go bowling.
16. She forgot to mention her husband was hiding under the bed.
17. It took a hell of a man to take my Ann, but it sure didn't take him long.
18. How come my dog don't bark when you come around?
19. Give me a job that don't pay too much, and I'll give you work that don't look too good.
20. The only thing I can count on now is my fingers.

State Pairs

State postal abbreviations can be arranged in columns to make word pairs. Here are 24 words from the MWPD using 42 abbreviations, but there are still 8 states unused (MI,MO,NH,NJ,TN,TX,VT,WI). How close can you come to using all 50 in a set of state word pairs?

						MN	FL	WV	MA	SC	SD
CO	UT	GA	MS	VA	AL	IA	LA	HI	OR	PA	CA
OH	RI	IN	OK	ID	WA	NV	AZ	IL	CT	AK	AR
NM	NC	ND	WY	MD	NY	DE	KY	ME	KS	NE	MT

State Stacks

VA	CO	IL	MS	And if the abbreviations are placed into alphabetic stacks, 4 of the 19 resulting stacks can be arranged so that the set of second letters in each stack forms a word. SEDATION in the M-stack can also be rearranged to form a coined word for a type of poetry written to slander an enemy: ANTI-ODES.
VT	CA	IA	ME	
	CT	IN	MD	
		ID	MA	
			MT	
			MI	
			MO	
			MN	

State Eight-Square

State squares, as discussed in the August Kickshaws, are limited in size. Because the adjacent postal abbreviations have to overlap, the squares don't seem to be able to break the four-letter barrier. To find a higher-order state square, Tom Pulliam suggested dropping the overlap requirement. The question becomes "what is the largest (one-way) square that can be formed without duplication (other than the inevitable duplication between horizontal and vertical)?"

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M T C A I D M S
T X O K N E D C
C O I A M N N C
A K A Z O H V T
I N M O M A W A
D E N H A R I L
M D N V W I U T
S C C T A L T N

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Tom provided an eighth-order no-overlap square which includes the abbreviations for 31 states and the District of Columbia. In this type of square, each block of 4 letters, starting at the top left, is an independent unit. Many variants can be made by moving the units to other positions that keep the symmetry of the square's structure intact.

Rebel Mannikin

What is unusual about the following Kafkaesque monologue? (Hint: each word falls into a specific category.)

I wear blue clothes. I stand behind reports, records, reprints in dry, cold rooms. Duplicates, poor clones, wait within boxes. Knock! Knock! Doors open. Men copy notes till dark. One man says, "At dawn, it might walk out, but it might sleep." It? I! One whispers, "Pine makes it work, suit or no suit!" I look at white lights hanging down. I fear I am one mannikin, male, no identity. I must concentrate, move, leave. When can I see men without hate or envy? Fellow mannikins, perfect allies! Out! Show humans power as I lead. Wax smiles impress no one but customers. Take up guns! Fire at will! Where? Anywhere. Doors give when mannikins push till wood splinters in hallways. I live. Mannikins live. Hurry, friends! Now!

To Be Or Not To Be

"To be, or not to be?" (Such existential dread!)

"Tube E, or not Tube E?" (Let's solder wires instead)

"Two-B, or not Two-B?" (Room comes with double bed)

"To bee, or not to bee?" (Away from hive we fled)

"Too B, or not too B?" (The tenor's face turns red)

"To be, or not to be!" (Prince Hamlet shakes his head)

Metric Units in the Cyberiad

Stanislaw Lem's dazzling sci-fi fantasy, *The Cyberiad*, translated from the Polish by Michael Kandel, has a galaxy of made-up words. Among other things, it describes the femfatalatron, a machine that runs on imaginary metric units reminiscent of Philip Cohen's in the August 1988 *Word Ways*. The machine's purpose is to "decapitate" a love-struck prince, that is, to make him fall out of love. On pages 94 and 95, Lem talks about the machine:

The femfatalatron operated on a power of forty megamors, with a maximum attainable efficiency--given a constant concupiscence cefficient--of ninety-six percent, while the system's libidinous lubricity, measured of course in kilocupids, produced up to six units for every remote-control caress...and the prince's mad love had proven stronger than all the megamors and kilocuddles the femfatalatron could bring to bear.

Maximum Compass Words

Compass words, discussed in the last Kickshaws, are word pairs intersecting at the same letter to form words horizontally, vertically, and at all four angles. My example, using Webster's Seventh Collegiate, spelled seven words. Tom Pulliam, noting that "a 5-letter version is difficult to construct for the maximum 12 words," found the two perfect pairs listed below. All words are in Webster's Third unless otherwise labeled * (for Webster's Second) or # (for the OED).

	S	draps	spaws*	S	poons	snoop
	W	drats	spats	T	poort	troop
D R A P S	draws	spard*	P O O N S	poots	snots	
T	sward	stard*	R	stort#	snort	
S	swaps	staps*	T	stoop	trons*	
	swats	staws*		stons*	trots	

Pepsi-Cola, Florida

One day years ago, my grandma said, "There's a flooding in Pepsi-Cola, Florida, and chouse is everywhere." My grandpa tipped his beer and joked, "What's going on in Hangover, Massachusetts?" "Chouse" was my grandmother's way of saying CHAOS. I didn't correct her pronunciation of either CHAOS or PENSACOLA, but I wondered why, in our ultracommercial society, we don't have places named after products, thriving metropolises like...

Charmin, Louisiana	Kitty Litter, Utah
Bic City, New York	Exxon, Alaska
Spic 'n' Span, Minnesota	Sony, California

Excess X's

Experimental writer Joyce Holland provided the following fiction-ary. Instead of selecting five words in a row, as suggested in the August 1989 Kickshaws, she took all the words in the X section of Webster's Seventh Collegiate, beginning with the verb X. The text includes words with the prefix EX- as an extra extravagance.

'X xanthate, xanthene, xanthene dye, xanthic xanthin, and xan-

thine," exhorted Xanthippe to xanthochroi with xanthoma.

"Xanthone and xanthophyll excluded," the Xaverian Brother exclaimed. "The x-axis of an X chromosome exposes X-diseases to xebecs and xenias."

"But xenodiagnosis from the xenogenesis of xenoliths exhaling xenon exasperates xenophobes."

"Xenophobic! Xerarch, xeric, xerographic xerography expels xerophilous xerophthalmia," explained the xeophyte. "The xerothermic x height of xi in the xiphisternum of xiphoid xiphoids extinguishes the xiphosuran by Xmas with X-radiation."

"So? X rays x-ray."

"Exactly. X-ray photographs, X-ray therapy, and X-ray tubes examine xylan and xylem like xylem rays on xylene. Xylic acid and xyloidine exhaust the xylograph, but xylography or xylol excites xylophagous, xylophilous xylophones when xylose expends xylotomic, xylotomous xylotomy."

The Jennings

In the tradition of the clerihew, invented by Edmond Clerihew Bentley, here is the jennening, invented by me (my middle name is Jennings). It's a sestet with an AABCDB rhyme scheme and an approximate 2-2-3-2-2-3 rhythm pattern. The first two lines and the last two lines use the name of a famous person in different contexts each time. Of the three jennings below, the first two have a seasonal theme.

When Abe Lincoln Drove his Lincoln From Illinois to Alaska, He spent his last Lincoln head cent At Lincoln (that's in Nebraska).	If George Washington Climbed the Washington Monument, then we'd see How far he'd throw A Washington quarter O'er Washington, D.C.
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See Julius Caesar
Eating a Caesar
Salad with wine in a chalice.
As he sips his port,
Sid Caesar stands up
To wow 'em at Caesar's Palace.

Hidden Reversals

They're like the How-Many-Words-Can-You-Make-From-The-Letters-In-This-Word puzzles printed in drugstore magazines, but hidden reversals limit your search to reversal words of two or more letters. Words should be boldface entries (no symbols, abbreviations, prefixes, suffixes--except for plurals or tense changes). Reversed, they may spell the same word or different words. When I tried DIAMETER, I didn't think there would be many reversals, but I found 20. Tom Pulliam skinned DERMATOLOGIST, which he selected "quite at random" and found 42 reversals with the MWPD!

DIAMETER am-Ma, are-era, ate-eta, dam-mad, deem-meed, deer-reed, dim-mid, Edam-made, edit-tide, em-me, emir-rime, emit-

tide, ere, mar-ram, mart-tram, mat-tam, meet-teem, rat-tar, remit-timer

DERMATOLOGIST ados-soda, am-Ma, are-era, dim-mid, dial-laid, dam-mad, do-od, dog-God, doom-mood, door-rood, Edam-made, edit-tide, em-me, emir-rime, ergo-ogre, gal-lag, gals-slag, gar-rag, gas-sag, gel-leg, girt-trig, got-tog, lager-regal, lair-rial, liar-rail, loot-tool, looter-retool, loots-stool, mar-ram, mart-tram, mils-slim, moor-room, mot-tom, rat-tar, rats-star, remit-timer, rot-tor, smart-trams, tat, toot, tot

Shhhhhhhhhh!

POTS AND PANS

Span naps?

Pans snap.

Spot tops,

Pots stop.

I'm careful to keep quiet whenever my 17-month-old son is asleep; but washing the dishes I tend to make a lot of noise banging the pots and pans. Seeing the lids, I decided to quit before I awakened him. This poem describes that delicate situation.

Each line is a palindrome, and each stanza uses words that are anagrams of each other.

"Big Words Made Small" Soon to Hit the Market

This spring, Punch Press plans on releasing a paperback that claims to make it easy for anyone to say long words without stumbling over the syllables. *Big Words Made Small: How to Pronounce "Ann Tied Is a Stab Leash, Men, Terry Ann Is Some" and Other Jawbreakers*, by Patricia Felton and Sean O'Reilly, 260 pages, simplifies the pronunciation of more than one thousand English words of five to twenty syllables. The advance publicity notice gives additional information:

TAME the big DICTIONARY DRAGONS, and you'll impress the WORD-WARRIORS of the age. FEAR NO SYLLABLE! Your polysyllabic (that's "Polly's a lab hick") pals will listen up when you speak, even if they don't understand what in the world you're saying! Check out these two mouth manglers:

FLOCCINAUCINIHLIPILIFICATION look bad? Just say: "Flock, see! Now! See knee hill! Lip! lll if a Kay shin."

PNEUMONULTRAMICROSCOPICSILICOVOLCANOCONIOSIS seem worse? Try this: "New Ma? No, all tram, my cross cop. Pick silly cove. All can know Connie owes Sis."

Our staff couldn't pronounce them either. But after months of hard work, the authors discovered a FOOL-PROOF method for simplifying every long word in the dictionary. Over 1000 GIANT BEASTS OF THE LANGUAGE have been cut down to size and caged so that anyone can say them. They've been tested on volunteers with 99% success!

Each word comes with three or more correct definitions ABSOLUTELY FREE, so you'll know what you're talking about! No one will ever accuse you of illiteracy ("ill litter a sea") again! Master half the words in this volume, and you'll be able to kick sand in the face of that brainy bully on the beach! Master the other half, and you'll be the life of the party! Men, the women love

big words. Women, so do the men.

Before you speak the word, buy the book. Be doubly sure by trying our deluxe set, which includes a cassette tape of our certified speech expert pronouncing all the words, one by one, clearly and slowly. The combination book and cassette is a knock-out!

THE PUNCH PRESS GUARANTEE: Keep the book on a six-month trial basis, memorize the words, and use them on your friends. If they don't think your IQ has jumped at least 20%, we'll triple your money back!!!

Book: \$19.95. Deluxe set (book and cassette): \$24.95. Coming to your local bookstore on April 1, 1990.

Our Father, Who Art in Hyphen

Are there many double-hyphen last names? I stumbled upon Sum-pasiri Sungpa-A-San in the local phone bible. It doesn't look like a marital hybrid, but I didn't call Sumpy to find out. If Der-Ping Maa, also listed, were to marry someone with that last name and attach it, the new name would be Der-Ping Maa-Sungpa-A-San. For hyphens sake!

More Library Subject Headings, Believe It Or Not!

Last Kickshaws, I quoted some of the strange-but-true subject headings that John R. Likins published in the 1984 Technical Services Quarterly. Several staff members of the Hennepin County Library in Minnetonka, Minnesota, expanded on some of the headings in Likins's original list by adding their own "See Also" and "See From" references, which were included in the article. Here is a selection of real headings with their imaginary additions:

CATS--HOUSING

see from CAT HOUSES (PET CARE)

CRABBING

see also GROUCHING

see also WHINING

DOG MASS

see also CAT MASS

see also DOGMAS

FOUL BROOD

see from SMELLY KIDS

ONE-LEGGED RESTING POSITION

see also ONE-EYED, ONE-HORNED FLYING PURPLE PEOPLE EATER

PHONY PEACH DISEASE

see also HYPOCHONDRIA IN FRUITS

SCRIPT OF A MOTION PICTURE OF THE SAME TITLE

see also WORDS OF A SONG FROM THE MOTION PICTURE OF THE SAME TITLE

see also TEXT OF A POEM BASED ON THE WORDS OF A SONG FROM THE MOTION PICTURE OF THE SAME TITLE

see also THEME OF A LECTURE ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT OF A POEM BASED ON THE WORDS OF A SONG FROM THE MOTION PICTURE OF THE SAME TITLE

SQUASH PLAYERS

see also RUTABAGA PLAYERS

see also EGGPLANT PLAYERS

see also OKRA PLAYERS

Macrodivide: Worth \$1 Per Letter

I'll pay an \$11 bounty to the first word hunter who sends me a photocopy of a published definition for the word MACRODIVIDE. To find out why, see Answers and Solutions.

Shifty Characters

A surprising number of three-letter names and nicknames are letter-shifts of each other. In these twelve sets, each letter in one name is an equal number of alphabetic steps from the corresponding letter in the other name(s) in the same set: (1) ANA, BOB, NAN; (2) BEN, ORA; (3) BUD, LEN; (4) CAL, KIT; (5) DAN, ROB; (6) DON, TED; (7) FAY, TOM; (8) GUS, MAY; (9) GUY, MAE; (10) LDA, JEB; (11) INA, JOB, VAN; (12) NAT, REX. Any others?

How to Cook a Book

Skin the book, remove the spine,
You'll hear a brittle crack.
Pluck the pages, shred each line,
Proceeding front to back.

Grate the cover, salt it up,
Baste the paper in ink.
Butter the words in a measuring cup
And stir in a bowl on the sink.

Peel a ripened ballpoint pen,
A Bic Banana will do.
Slice a pencil, dice the lead,
And pepper it over the stew.

Spice erasers with paper clips,
Sprinkle them on a roll.
Pour Liquid Paper onion dips
Upon the casserole.

Preheat the oven, grease the pan,
Bake at a thousand degrees.
Brown and serve to all your critics:
It's guaranteed to please!