

KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor (new address: 618 8th Avenue, Coralville IA 52241). All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue. Guest editors will appear occasionally.

Cities of Palindromes

Last summer, I palindromed across Iowa, stopping here and there to get a feel for each town. Although Iowans seem to be simple, earthy folk, they have a native enthusiasm for talking in sentences that say the same backward as well as forward. They claim it makes things twice as true, and they claim it makes things twice as true. Below are some questions I asked and some answers I received. After this journey, I can honestly say "I saw Iowa, saw ... O, I was I!"

Does it get very hot here in the summer?

Hon', rub a rose tan. AMES emanates. Or a burn--oh!

Are they making a movie about your city's glorious past?

A reel: "BONAPARTE, Trap a Noble Era."

Does the feline population make it difficult to walk around?

Heel, Cats! BOONE no obstacle, eh?

How do contestants participate in the flower lottery?

Now in EMMETSBURG, rub stem. Men, I won!

Do your citizens get angry at tiny creatures?

Rise, mite. Nor enrage GARNER one time, sir.

Is it true you butt your head against the "City Limits" sign?

Nc, I ram IONIA. I? No, I, MARION.

What do you call that muscle spasm between your eyes?

IOWA CITY tic--aw.. O.. I...

How do you sell dishwashing detergent to your town?

Yo, JESUP, use Joy!

Is there quicksand in this area?

Mire in KNIERIM.

What's the law about hunting here?

Tie damned nimrod, or MINDEN made it.

Where do you keep the pets in this place?

Pets? An OTTUMWA law: Mutt on a step.

Did you know there isn't any graffiti about the origin of your town's name?

My! No PELLA wall eponym?

What do you do as an undertaker?

O, I bury RUBIO.

Do people really use machine guns on rats here, and then cover the

little creatures with a sticky black substance?

A rat-a-tat! Tar a rat, a TARA rat--ta! ta!--TARA.
Why do people laugh when they walk down the street?

Ha! Ha! TRAER earth--aha!

Is this Vail, Colorado?

VAIL, Ia.! VAIL, Ia.! VAIL, Ia.! V--

Palen—huh?

I gave my graduate students in "Introduction to Children's Literature" an informal quiz on ten wordplay forms, including palindromes. Part of the quiz required the fifty 20-year-old students to spell the terms. PALINDROME was misspelled most often, by 24 of them! (REBUS ran a close second.) Incorrect spellings of PALINDROME included PALANDROM, PALANDROME, PALEDROME, PALENDROME, PALENDROME, PALLENDROM, PALLENDROME, PALONDROME. Which misspelling was the most popular (appearing 7 times)? Which two tied for second (appearing 6 times each)?

Start Here

Peter Newby has written the first self-referential word-order palindrome. It was inspired by his chance discovery in the OED of HEREBEFORE, a word that never appeared herebefore on his desk. One of its meanings is "earlier in this document," and earlier in this document the title "Start Here" appears. Here means Newby work would work by new means here:

Start from HERE to read HEREBEFORE. HEREBEFORE is here before BEFORE. Before BEFORE, here is HEREBEFORE. Herebefore, read to HERE from START.

One self-referential potato chip leads to another, and Peter pulled a second one out of the bag:

HEREWITH is HERE with WITH. Without OUT, WITHOUT is WITH.
WITH is without OUT without. With WITH, here is HEREWITH.

Palindromic Crossword

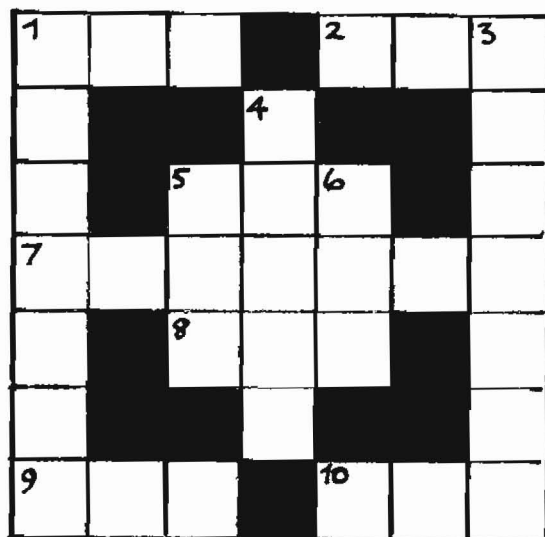
Peter constructed the following palindromic crossword puzzle. When I worked it, I thought to myself "Emit for ore, crossword rows, sorceror of time." The answer to each clue is a palindrome.

ACROSS

1. A light carriage
2. A tangled mess
5. Vitality
7. Considered divine
8. Go
9. Silence
10. Child

DOWN

1. Wildebeest excrement
3. Care for mesh
4. Commit
5. Seed
6. Spot on a die



Longest Word in a Palindrome?

Using several words hand-picked from the OED and one word (ITA) from Chambers, Peter has built a palindrome with the monstrous word MICROMINIATURISATION. First, the less-known word meanings: ITA (the miriti palm), UT (dialect form of OUT), AIN (Scots form of ONE), MOR (obsolete form of the verb MORE, to root), and CIMA (a moulding on a cornice). The palindrome: No ita, sir, ut ain. I more cima microminiaturisation. Interpreted in modern English, it reads like a caption from Popular Mechanics: No palm tree, sir, uproot it. I plant cornice-moulding microminiaturisation. Does anyone know of a longer word in a palindrome?

Triple Charade Palindrome

With the palindromic sequence DIAS, EN, NA, ANN, ES, A, ID, Peter rearranged the spaces to create two palindromic charade sentences, neither of which repeats a word in the other nor in the starting sequence. Any unfamiliar words can be found in the OED: (1) "Di, a senna," Anne said; (2) Diasenna, Anne's aid.

Swallowing the Summer

It is well-known that one swallow does not a summer make, but, the editor wonders, how many does it take to do the job? The problem can be reduced to logological terms by asking for the smallest cardinal (pun intended) number which contains the letters SUMMER in it: one noveMdecillion one Million Sixty-foUR! This number of swallows would, to put it mildly, overwhelm the earth. In fact, a back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that if one reconstituted the 10^{80} elementary particles (electrons, protons, neutrons) in the universe into suitable swallow material (carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen atoms, etc.) one would only be able to make one ten-millionth of the swallows required. This

assumes that the average swallow is constructed out of 10^{26} atoms, and that the average swallow-atom has ten elementary particles.

Infinite Sentences

In Gödel, Escher, Bach, Douglas Hofstadter describes an infinitely long sentence that begins "The sentence, "The sentence, "The sentence..." and ends "...is infinitely long," is infinitely long," is infinitely long." There is a paradox here. If the two parts move forever inward, they can never meet to form a sentence. If instead the two parts move forever outward, the quote in the center would be "The sentence is infinitely long," which it isn't, nor would any other sentence in the series be--except for the final, infinite one, which can never be reached.

Scrabble Numbers

EIGHTHUNDREDTEN, according to Jeff Grant, is the highest scoring self-referential Scrabble number. It must be played without any blank tiles along an edge of the board (the H in EIGHT and the second D in HUNDRED are doubled in value, so that 30 points are scored, and the three triple-word score squares inflate this to 810). In the last Kickshaws, I listed NINE as not self-referential, but Sir Jeremy Morse and Jeff Grant both point out that it can be made self-referential by using one blank and playing across a triple word score ($3 \times 3 = 9$).

The editor notes that EIGHTHUNDREDTEN could never appear in a legitimate Scrabble game. Jeremy Morse believes that THIRTY is the largest self-referential number that could (use a blank for the first T, place the H on a double letter square and the Y on a double word square).

Knives, Forks, and Spoonerisms

When Sandy sees a flying crow,
 It makes her weep. The crying flow
 Runs down her nose and lips and cheeks
 Into a cup that chips and leaks.
 Outside the house, her parking spot
 Is lit up by a sparking pot
 At night. She sees no other man
 Or woman but her mother, Ann,
 Who cries aloud, "She feels the stun
 Of sorrow." Still, she steals the fun
 By putting on her mask in time
 As if it were a task in mime:
 Sometimes her makeup's yellow hue
 Just smears when she shouts, "Hello, you!"
 She gobbles up the jelly beans,
 Which overflow her belly, jeans
 And all. She keeps on gaining weight,
 Which shows up in her waning gait.
 She nods. "This candy's sadly mine,
 But I'm no star who'll madly sign

My autograph." Her life is strong,
 Although she thinks her strife is long.
 "I laugh a lot." She chuckles now,
 While munching on pig knuckles chow.
 She says, "Pass me a strip, and I
 Will eat." And then she'll sip and try
 Some wine on her next trip, and sigh
 About her dress's rip. "And sty
 Just proves I've made a golden rule
 Of eating all the olden gruel."

Olden Letters Embed Themselves in Emboldened Words

The following sentences sound like different things--Country 'n' Western lyrics, surreal poetry, scientific theory, newspaper headlines, old saws, historical facts, advertisements, bumper stickers--but they have one thing in common. What is it? How is the title a clue?

Don't take that tray of beers to my betrayers
 The chilly dish was served childishly late
 A high ratio of colons may result in unusual colorations
 The unit of Commies lived in communities
 Without Noxzema, her corporeal face is a pure coral
 The curly redhead currently pays the rent
 That version of her diary was purely diversionary
 He was familiarly known as the family liar
 My aunt had a fling, and now she's flaunting it
 They'll misdeed the misdelivered liver
 The stile that cost a few pence caused great pestilence
 The roue is pitting himself against the pirouetting ballerina
 Chase your cat away before he purrs at the purchasers
 We're reaping the pear harvest, but it's reappearing
 Late redness has a relatedness to blushing
 The runts spent a dime on the rudiments
 Rust, thrusting thing
 The safflower will be safer when the waters flow again
 She shies away from rubber shrubberies
 See the sights--enjoy the deli sidelights
 The porous tent was portentous of rain
 Proliferate: prorate life

Two-Dimensional Gematria

J. Edgar Hoover and Adolph Hitler have at least one thing in common: their names sum up to the same alphabetic value. Usually this sort of gematria, or word-and-number correspondence, is played with the letters assigned numeric values according to their positions in the alphabet (A=1, B=2, etc.). Leonard Gordon has added a second dimension to the game by using a variety of alphabet numbering schemes that result in surprising correspondences.

1 Normal Alphabet ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 115 = George H Bush = Jack Nicklaus
 128 = J Edgar Hoover = Adolph Hitler

- 136 = Mario M Cuomo = Alfonso Capone
 137 = Saddam Hussein = Richard Nixon
 156 = Oliver North = Johnny Carson
- 2 Reverse Alphabet ZYXWVUTSRQPONMLKJIHGFEDCBA
 162 = Gorbachev = Jimmy Carter
 172 = Lyndon Johnson = John Kennedy
 196 = J Edgar Hoover = Adolph Hitler
 214 = Saddam Hussein = Joseph McCarthy
 238 = Norman Schwarzkopf = Theodore Roosevelt
- 3 Typewriter Keyboard QWERTYUIOPASDFGHJKLZXCVBNM
 115 = Che Guevara = Leon Trotsky
 118 = Lech Walesa = Jesus Christ
 127 = Gorbachev = Harry Houdini
 169 = Saddam Hussein = Sammy Davis Jr
 192 = Richard Nixon = Vladimir Lenin
- 4 Alternating Alphabet BADCFEHGJILKNMPORQTSVUXWZY
 112 = Pancho Villa = Jesse James
 113 = Daniel Ortega = Fidel Castro
 119 = Jesse Helms = Charlie Chaplin
 124 = Joe McCarthy = Adolph Hitler
 148 = Mikhail Gorbachev = Joseph Stalin
- 5 Half Switch Alphabet NOPQRSTUVWXYZABCDEFGHIJKLM
 143 = Che Guevara = George Custer
 163 = Howard Hughes = Richard M Nixon
 167 = Lech Walesa = Pope John Paul II
 182 = Norman Schwarzkopf = Theodore Roosevelt
 209 = Hubert H Humphrey = George Bernard Shaw

According to Leonard's research, the normal alphabet shows other interesting relationships, too. John Major is a Marxist (104), George Bush a Socialist (107), Ronald Reagan a president (110), and Fidel Castro a statesman (112). John F. Kennedy was a Roman Catholic (131), Sigmund Freud a false prophet (141), and Vladimir Lenin a true believer (142). Ironically, George A. Custer was a survivor, and so is Mikhail Gorbachev (144). Oliver North goes with Desert Storm (156), Harry Truman with United States (157), and Mikhail S. Gorbachev with Soviet Union (163). Yitzak Shamir is Prime Minister (168) in the normal alphabet, and also in Alphabet 2 (183) and Alphabet 4 (171), but he matches Ivan The Terrible in Alphabet 3 (161) and Alphabet 5 (207)! And did you know that Julius Caesar shares the limelight with Mickey Mouse (139)?

Col. Or

In Names and Games (edited by Ross Eckler, University Press of America, 1986), Virginia Hager presents a crowd of imaginary names based on dictionary words beginning with DR. or ST. and lists their occupations. DR.AWING is a medic for artists; ST.UPID is the guardian of foolish folk. Continuing in that fine tradition, here is an army of colonels proudly serving in the U.S. Language. Their title plus names portend their future careers (in parentheses).

Col.D.Blooded (murderer)

Col.D.Cream (beautician)

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Col.D.Cuts (caterer) | Col.Lard (farmer) |
| Col.D.Front (weather reporter) | Col.Late (office clerk) |
| Col.D.Rubber (tire salesman) | Col.Lateral (S&L officer) |
| Col.D.Shoulder (customer rep) | Col.League (professional associate) |
| Col.D.Sore (dentist) | Col.Lector (hobby shop owner) |
| Col.D.Sweat (movie monster) | Col.Lie (veterinarian) |
| Col.D.War (propagandist) | Col.Linear (mathematician) |
| Col.E.Slaw (salad chef) | Col.Location (linguist) |
| Col.lcky (internal medicine) | Col.L.O'Type (printer) |
| Col.l.Form (proctologist) | Col.Oration (film editor) |
| Col.L.Age (cut-up artist) | Col.O.R.Fast (tailor) |
| Col.Lapse (building wrecker) | Col.T.S.Foot (botanist) |

Censorship in Webster's 7th Collegiate

On page 510 of the 7th Collegiate, the guide words at the top are MAINAINABLE to MAKE LOVE -- but the last entry on the page is MAKE FAST and the first entry on the next is MAKE OFF. The entry for MAKE LOVE is missing. With an error like that, the editor should make love, not dictionaries.

Dining With the Dictionary

COLLOP is a contronym (a word having opposite meanings). Its two definitions are "a small piece or slice esp. of meat" and "a fold of fat flesh." If you order a steak that's mostly fat, you can cut off the COLLOP and eat the COLLOP.

Here's the Clinker

CLINKER is a transatlantic contronym. The British meaning is "something first-rate" while the American slang meaning is "an utter failure." Are there any other words where the speaker's accent plays such a dramatic role in the meaning?

Caracara, Cara Mia!

According to the 7th Collegiate, CARACARA is "one of various long-legged mostly South American hawks like vultures in habits!" On first reading this, I pictured a hawk that looked like a vulture dressed like a nun. This brought back bittersweet memories of my grade school teacher, Sister Irene, who really was a vulture dressed like a nun. By the third reading, I figured out that the dictionary meant HABIT to be "manner of behavior."

Written as an endless string, CARACARA is palindromic. Read as CAR A CAR A, it's an infinitely long traffic jam, bumper to bumper forever. If the last two letters of the word are assigned their alphabetic values (R=18, A=1) and added together, the result is 19, the value of S. Replacing RA with S at the end of CARACARA gives CARACAS, which has endless traffic jams. Naturally, the drivers act like South American hawks resembling vultures in habits, which explains why I always think of Sister Irene whenever I visit Venezuela.

The Parking Meter's Song

In its glory days, Iowa City was the Parking Meter Capital of the World. Citizens held their heads up high as they put a penny in the slot for an hour's worth of parking pleasure. The sign at the city limits proclaimed "Iowa City, Population: 24,829 people -- 37,621 parking meters." But times have changed, and so have the prices. Three parking ramps have virtually stopped the annual growth of new parking meters, but the fee has continued to grow. In some meters, it now costs a quarter for a quarter hour -- one hundred times the price of the good old days. Meter-maid pride has given way to meter-made poverty. Drivers pitch their parking tickets to the streets, which resemble fall all year around. Tragically, the city limits sign has been vandalized to a pulp. This poem, to be sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Tea-Pot," gives voice to the slender metal tube that may have been a mighty oak in its past life but now stands curbside stoically fulfilling its civic destiny.

I'm a little parking meter
Tall and thin.
Take out a quarter
And drop it in.

Turn my little handle
Nice and slow:
Now you can park
For an hour or so.

You'd better come back
To your car on time,
Or you'll get a ticket
For committing a crime.

I may be little,
But I'm king of the road.
Ignore my tickets
And your car gets towed.

Hermiones

The Hermione, a close relative of the Herman, is a quote followed by the speaker's name, with another name formed at the juncture. Oren Dalton and I coincidentally came upon the form. In the dozen below, the first six are by Oren, the last six by me.

"I tell you he's a saint," Peter declared
"We old farmers always order a Big Mac," Donald said
"Now I have plenty of jack," Horner gloated
"You've stolen my identity for the last time, mister," Hyde hissed
"I keep having these weird nightmares, Doctor," Jekyll complained
"Gee, Dad! Thanks! I always wanted a Harley," David's son said
"That's my boy!" George said
"I gotta use the john," Wayne said
"Hand me the lily, Tom," Lynn said
"I'll never kneel!" Simon said
"I'm a rock star, Ma," Donna sang
"You're such a grouch! Oh!" Mark said.

Newspaper Herman

On the day of the Soviet coup, this highly accurate prediction in the form of a Herman appeared in an AP article: "It seems extraordinarily unlikely that they'll succeed without very, very great trouble, indeed even civil war," Conquest said.

Bob Rocks Carol Merrily

The following ribald tale is about people--123 of them, to be exact. Some appear as names, but others are common nouns and verbs (singular and plural), adjectives, adverbs, and interjections. Only three names are repeated.

Bob rocks Carol Merrily, although Barb Frankly Hopes John Chucks Shelly in April. Holly and Laurel Dot the Lane between the Brooks. Red Daisies, Ferns, and Herbs Grace the Carmine Heather in Dixie, as Earl Grants Sandy an Olive for her Sherry. "Hi, Bud," Lily Blanches at Rosemary's Chastity in the Flora, while Jay Hectors Jimmy over Felicity in the Dale. And Bill Pats Sue.

In June, Jenny Marks the Hazel, but in August, Iris Nicks a Penny with Prudence. Will Mike Sally from the Berries, where Jack Rose at Dawn with Ruth? Violet Rays of Joy on the Clay of Art's Bliss! Norm Wards off the Kitty with Cherry Candy, for the Robin is Victor. Bunny Skips over Hank's Opals, because Homer, an Urban Guy at her Beck, has Bucks. So Sue Bills Pat.

Whenever Merry Reeds Trace Eve's Melody, Roger has Faith in the Forest. "Chastity is a Jewel," the Randy Dean Stews, "but May Carries Timothy Miles away. Gene and Dolly Harry the Gray Porter for Ginger. Dawn Peters out. Rod Marches Curtly to Bonny and Chips her Sapphire! Then Bill Sues Pat.

O, the Stings and Barbaras of Outrageous Fortune

This tale is more proper than the previous. It substitutes full names for nicknames wherever they occur.

After a big lunch of francisfurters, beef stewart, and herbert tea, he was stuffed to the gilberts. Sitting in a terrence cloth bathrobe, he opened his mail. His williams were so high that he almost upcharlesed. "I don't have a penelope to my name. I feel so harolded!" he cried, accidently nicholasing his table with the knife. His old thomas cat purred at his feet, rubbing against the leg of his blue eugenes, and he patricked him on the head. "I feel the stings and barbaras of outrageous fortune!" he muttered, pulling out a henry of hair. "I ought to susan my boss for firing me. He didn't tell me what the normans were, and he acted so curtisly toward me. And since my girlfriend left me, I feel so randolph. Besides, I haven't been able to paint any arthurworks lately. Ah, maybe I oughta just take my fishing rodney to the sandra beach and forget about the whole thing."

When he stepped outside, a robert-o-link was chirping at a katherinedid near the danieldelions. An elizabethard slithered under the john-in-the-pulpits, and a sallymander crept across a lillianpad. The raymonds of the sun were beating down on the sidewalk. He realized he'd left his house keys on the kitchen table, and he had to spend the rest of the afternoon joycelessly jamesing the lock.

There's Many a Slip Twixt Pils and Lips

The brewing company that produces HOLSTEN PILS has been conducting an anagrammatic sales campaign in the U.K., according to Peter Newby. While retaining its distinctive typeface, it doesn't

mention its name or product. Instead, it is running a series of posters with phrases such as LEN'S HOT LIPS and HELTON'S LIPS displayed on billboards and on the sides of double decker omnibuses. Just how easy is it to anagram HOLSTEN PILS for advertisements? I tried my hand at it, and the results -- well, picture these in any typeface on a billboard:

This slop, Len Spell "No Shit" Spots in Hell He'll spit, son
 Len, slop shit Spits on Hell Hell's pit, son Lent hot piss

Turning to this side of the ocean, Peter wonders whether Americans are familiar with RED RUBIES BREW. If you don't recognize it, blow the foam off and sip the solution in Answers and Solutions.

Postcards From Miss Zoory

The 1904 St. Louis World's Fair had the Olympics, the first beauty contest, the first air show, and the first wooden postcards. I have two of these old cards, which actually made it through the mail in fine shape. Each contains a pre-printed message on the back that makes heavy use of puns. I can figure out all of them except for TWIG at the end of the second message. What wood that mean?

All a-board for the World's Fair. Arrived safe. Exposition is more than oak-a, it is ash-tonishing, you cedar sights of your life. The Pike is fir-straight, more than a pear of peaches and the spielers don't bark like a tree. Board and (s)lumber at poplar prices, no need to pine for what you plank down. Birch-ance the last great show for many years. More fun than the beech. I wood spruce up and come. You walnut regret it. Butternut delay. Sincerely, Hickory Hemlock.

SOU-VENEER POST CARD FROM FOREST PARK. Arrived safely. Weather like the beech--no need for palm fans--never saw-dust so scarce. Met friends from Ash-tabula, Oak-lahoma, Long-branch and Mon-tree-al. Saw the beam-ing faces of the Cherry Sisters from Cedar Rapids, behind the Anheuser-Bush looking as willowy as yew-sual. Exhibits here from pole to pole--from Limb-eric to the Phillip-pines--knot a s(h)ingle chestnut. Feel full of sap--sleep like a log and get chops, stakes, plank-ed Bass and limb-urger at lo(w)cust. Come out of the tall timbers, pack your trunk, board the train and leave for St. Louis--you walnut be bamboo-zled. Twig? Yours truly, Elmira Woods.

The Lie/Lay Disease

I have a very common linguistic illness. I always use LIE for LAY, and LAY for LIE. When I buy something expensive, I have it put on lie-away. When someone loses their job, I ask if they've been lied off. For the overhead projector at the University, I have to make transparent overlies. When I played basketball in high school, I liked making lie-up shots. I once participated in a relie race. On the other hand, isn't the Fourth Commandment, "Thou shalt not lay"? And those who do, aren't they called layers? And what about baseball's pliers--and the tools called players?

I think I caught it from listening to Bob Dylan's great song, "Lay, Lady, Lay." The letter insertion-deletion title is repeated in the song's refrain, "Lay, Lady, lay / Lay upon my big brass bed." He couldn't use the supposedly correct form "Lie, Lady, lie" for a very good reason: he was living on a farm when he wrote the song, and the mysterious Lady was a chicken that provided eggs for breakfast in bed.

Wasn't Mark Twain the one who said "Lays, damned lays, and statistics"?

Historical Lay

A teacher in the Education Department told me of his experience with LAY. He asked a high school student, "What is one important thing, other than discovering the New World, that Columbus did?" The student replied, "Laid Isabella." The teacher asked, "What do you mean by that?" The student elaborated: "He laid the city of Isabella on the island of Hispanola."

Bidigital Palindrome

The palindromic string of digits below conceals a set of words. The digits represent the positions in the alphabet of the letters in the words, but only those words appear whose letter positions are expressed by 1, 2, or both: A(1), B(2), K(11), L(12), U(21), and V(22). Those two digits can be used to represent more letters (and more words) than any other pair. All words which are regular entries of more than one letter in Webster's 7th Collegiate appear after the palindrome. Referring to the list, can you decipher the digits? Once you've done that, try to create a longer bidigital palindrome with the given words.

The palindrome: 121122112121121121111111121121121211221121

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| aba 121 | babul 2122112 | kulak 112112111 |
| alb 1122 | balk 211211 | lava 121221 |
| all 11212 | ball 211212 | lavalava 121221121221 |
| alula 11221121 | baulk 21211211 | lull 12211212 |
| auk 12111 | bulbul 2211222112 | lulu 12211221 |
| baa 211 | bulk 2211211 | uvula 212221121 |
| Baal 21112 | bull 2211212 | valvula 221122221121 |
| bab 212 | bulla 22112121 | vav 22122 |
| babu 21121 | kabala 11121121 | vulva 222112221 |
| | kaka 111111 | |

Unidigital Words

KAKA (111111) is the longest unidigital word in the Collegiate. Going to Webster's Second Unabridged, other examples using 1 can be found: AA, AKA, AKKA, KA, and the ten-digit KAKKAK. Together they form what must be the longest unidigital palindromic string of all. Can you find a word in any source to top KAKKAK?

Linguistic Entropy

Linguistic entropy is the theory that all words in a language

degrade to an ultimate state of inert uniformity, resulting in a final dictionary full of words spelled with the same letter. If A were the letter of inertia in English, a sample entry might read "AAAA 1: aa aaaaa aa aaa aaaaa 2: aa, aa aaaaaaa aaaa aaa aaaaa aa a aaaaaaa." As the first letter of the alphabet, it is the most logical choice, and a quick check of Webster's 7th Collegiate seems to confirm it. A-entropy strongly manifests itself in the M's, where five consecutive boldface entries have 16 A's out of 37 letters, or 43.24% entropy: MAYGAR, MAHARAJA, MAHARANI, MAHATMA, MAHAYANA. Can you find a five-word set more closely approaching entropy with any letter? There is one set that totally achieves it. Which?

According to the latest logoevolutionary theories, English will not reach entropy for several centuries. It is a gradual process that manifests itself in isolated instances among a few andavada-als, apaaraang as a aaaaaa aa aaaaa, aad than tha phanamanan ravarsas atself wathin tha space af a few words. At first the individual will believe it to be no more than a series of typos (the denial stage), but the strings will come more frequently, more persistently. Have you ever experienced linguistic entropy? I haven't.

Days of Palindromes

As the Year of the Palindrome draws to a close, we can console ourselves in the knowledge that the bell tolling midnight on December 31 ushers in the only palindromic day that starts off a month. New Year's Day, 1-1, is one of the twelve Days of Palindromes that occur every year. True?

1991: No Red Lenin Elder On 1991

Palindromes rarely use the names of well-known people. It's usually the anonymous Dennis and Edna who sinned, not John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe. However, after November, hundreds of famous name palindromes will be floating around. The October issue of Games Magazine announced a contest, "Palindromes with Personality," whose object is to create a palindrome that includes the name of a famous person, real or fictional, living or dead, who is familiar to Games judges and readers. Getting into the Janus-like spirit, I wrote palindromes with the names of one hundred people. To cap off the last Kickshaw in the Year of the Palindrome, here are 52 of them--a palindrome for every week:

Odd well aroma! Pose, Aesop, a moral--lewd. Do.
 Bar Arafat, a far Arab.
 Did it? Ran in oil? Pray, Arp, lion in art: I did.
 God, Astor trots a dog!
 Hell, Attila lit tall, eh?
 Avon Bard sees drab nova
 E.R.A.: "Barbara, bar a bra bare."
 Ah, to be Botha?
 'Tis Burl Ives as evil rubs it.
 I'm a Bush sub, am I?

Stop wet snow. Dry Byrd won stew pots.
 Not Cain, I act on.
 Raw fist, Capone! No pacts if war.
 Rod o' revel! Casanova's Avon 'as a clever odor.
 Dagwood on a nod: "O! Ow! Gad!"
 Devil loops secret Fall, eh, for I, Dante, set nadir of Hell after
 cesspool lived.
 No, Edison lit 'til no side on.
 Errol's pal claps Lorre.
 Now all are negative, Evita--general law on.
 Or Ezra P's golf flogs par zero.
 Now so, Geronimo, minor egos won.
 Hegel's leg, eh?
 Er, yes! I, Herod, adore His eyre.
 Now, no rise, Ma. Jesse James' iron won.
 Lion to Oz, zoot 'n' oil.
 Rise, Madonna. Man, no dame, sir!
 As foe, Mandela paled name of S.A.
 Raw as Mars rams a war.
 Sad, I'm as a Midas.
 Ill in a vill, I'm Milli Vanilli.
 Resume, Basil: "Anomaly! Lo, Mona Lisa--bemuser!"
 No hero, Monet ate no more, hon.
 Ah, plan age, Moses: a relived evil erases Omega 'n' Alpha.
 Nan, honor Ron. Oh, Nan!
 Noah, dump mud! Ha! On!
 Noriega casts a cage: iron.
 Won't I, Patti Page, gap it, tap it now?
 Pee-Wee? Gee. Weep.
 Never, eh, Picasso? Loss, a cipher even.
 I, Plato, total pi.
 Pooh, see bees' hoop.
 I yam Popeye, Pop! May I?
 No ride? Revere revered iron.
 Tide red, Roy or Dale? Lad, Roy ordered it.
 Passed as mania, pain, a M. Sade's sap.
 To last, Socrates, use tar--costs a lot.
 Stradivari's music: "I sum, sir, avid arts."
 "Tut-tut!" Tut tuts. "Tut-tut-tut!"
 Pure Venus, a sun ever up.
 Rise, Voltaire! Her, I at love, sir.
 To gibber a name, call a Wallace man a reb bigot.
 Pop art's Warhol: "Oh, raw strap, op."