MISSISSAUGA, CANADA'S ODDEST CITY

HOWARD RICHLER
Cote St. Luc, Quebec, Canada

The numerical positions of all the vowels in the alphabet are odd numbers. Designating their placement by number, we get A=1, E=5, I=9, O=15, U=21 and Y=25. Thus, only words that have no vowels, like NTH (14-20-8) can be written with letters whose numeric alphabetic position is strictly even.

Finding long words which consist of only odd-numbered letters is difficult because most of the commonly-occurring consonants (D=4, L=12, N=14, R=18, T=20) are even. In fact, the editor points out that in random English text odd consonants appear only one-quarter as often as even consonants; words with six or more odd consonants (and no even ones) are hard to find.

I did a quick scan of Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary and came up with the following words which represent the longest ones I could find consisting of only odd letters:

A acquiesces (10) O osmosis (7)
C causeways (9) Q quaggas (7)
E Eskimos (7) S sequacious (10)
G gamecocks (9) U usages (6)
I isogamous (9) W wigwams (7)
K koumisses (9) Y yuccas (6)
M massasaugas (13)

This dictionary does not have COCKAMAMIE, but it can be found in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.

The only odd country is MACAU. Its capital (MACAU) and MOSCOW represent the only odd capital cities. The only other major odd international cities are MECCA and OSAKA.

Turning to the United States, the only odd state is IOWA -- a fact David Morice has alluded to. A quick scan of the 1982 Rand McNally Road Atlas provided the following odd cities and counties:

ALABAMA Autauga, Coosa, Cov
ALASKA Kake, Skagway
ARIZONA Mesa, Miami, Yuma
ARKANSAS Wickes
CALIFORNIA Keyes, Muscoy, Saugus, Siskiyou, Wasco
COLORADO Kiowa, Mesa
FLORIDA Cocoa, Kissimmee, Mayo, Miami, Mims
GEORGIA Meigs, Muscogee, Waco
HAWAII Aiea, Ewa, Kaaawa, Kauai, Keaau, Makawao, Maui, Waimea
IDAHO Camas, Cassia, Gem, Mackay, Moscow
ILLINOIS Casey, Cass, Cook, Massac, Oswego, Skokie, Wamoc
INDIANA Cass, Cayuga, Kosciusko, Mecca, Miami
IOWA Ames, Kewok, Keosauqua, Osage, Sac, Waukee
KANSAS Gas, Kiowa, Miami, Osage, Oswego, Wamego
KENTUCKY Ages, Maceo
LOUISIANA Iowa, Mamou
MAINE Saco
MARYLAND Accokeek, Wicomico
MASSACHUSETTS Saugus
MICHIGAN Amasa, Cass, Ogemaw, Okemos, Owosso
MINNESOTA Cass, Cook, Osakis, Osseo, Waseca
MISSISSIPPI Como, Iuka, Kosciusko, Magee, Osyka
MISSOURI Cass, Osage
MONTANA Saco, Simms
NEBRASKA Cass, Gage, Macy
NEW HAMPSHIRE Coos
NEW JERSEY Secaucus
NEW MEXICO Quay
NEW YORK Cayuga, Oswego, Quogue, Sycaway
OHIO Geauga, Mack, Maumee, Meigs, Miami, Scio
OKLAHOMA Kay, Keyes, Kiowa, Mayes, Mima, Muskogee, Okay,
Oregan, Owasso, Waukomis, Wewoka
OREGON Coos
PENNSYLVANIA Emmaus, Moosic, Moscow, Oak, Yoe
SOUTH CAROLINA Yemassee
SOUTH DAKOTA McCook
TENNESSEE Cocke, Meigs, Moscow, Siam
TEXAS Ames, Cass, Coke, Como, Gause, Kime, Kosse, McCamey,
Miami, Waco, Waskon, Wise, Yoakum
UTAH Kamas
VERMONT Moscow
VIRGINIA Accomac, Accomack, Keokee, Wise
WASHINGTON Camas, Omak, Sekiu, Sequim, Skyway, Sumas, Yakima
WEST VIRGINIA Gassaway
WISCONSIN Iowa, Kewascum, Muskeggo, Osseo, Sauk, Wausau,
Wausakee, Weysuwega
WYOMING Osage

The editor was able to find examples for the three missing states
in the 1985 Rand McNally Commercial Atlas & Marketing Guide:

CONNECTICUT Occum (New London)
NEVADA Acoma (Lincoln), Massie (Churchill), Oasis (Elko)
RHODE ISLAND Moscow (Washington)

The largest odd United States city is MIAMI, and the longest
one has nine letters (KEOSAQUA, KISSIMMEE, KOSCIUSKO, WEAUWECA). As a proud
Canadian, I am happy to announce that MISSISSAUGA, a city of 300,000 in Ontario, has 11 letters: I challenge
readers to top this!

I leave the reader with an odd quiz: what odd screen character
(first and last name) has remained popular for over fifty years?