

THE NAME'S THE GAME

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An earlier set of solitaire puzzles based on word charades appeared as "Musical Wordboxes" in the August 1990 *Word Ways*. The present article is a sequel with a new theme. The aim of each puzzle below is to arrange the boxes into a square or rectangle in such a way that every horizontal and vertical join forms a common English word. In Figure 1, for example, one vertical join already forms the word LAUGH, and a horizontal join forms ORE.

To form the puzzle pieces, photocopy Figures 1 and 2, glue them to stiff backing, then cut them into 36 individual boxes. Each box will contain four common words and personal names. These words and names combine in etymologically unexpected ways. GUS may combine with the endings TED, TIER or HER to form GUSTED, GUSTIER, or GUSHER. The puzzles are collectively called "The Name's The Game" because the boxes include more than 40 personal names and nicknames, including ALI, BELA, CHING, DI, FRAN, MAGIC and RENE, as well as the family quartet MA, PA, SIS and SON.

Six suggested puzzles, in order of increasing difficulty:

1. Form a 3-by-3 square (1887 solutions, including 98 using only boxes from Figure 1)
2. Form the largest square possible in a quarter-hour
3. Form a 4-by-4 square (150 solutions)
4. Form a 4-by-4 square, using boxes from Figure 1 (1 solution)
5. Form a 5-by-5 square (9 solutions)
6. Form a 6-by-6 square (1 solution)
7. Form a 6-by-6 square, except that one square of your choice may be turned over and used as a wild card.

One can formulate additional puzzles whose object is to construct rectangles of sizes 3-by-4, 3-by-5, 4-by-5, etc.

Puzzles 4 and 6 share a confounding factor. Every box in these sets combines at each edge with either one of at least two other boxes in that set. Since any edge of any box may also form part of the border of the puzzle, every edge of every box has at least three placements. Conversely, added enjoyment derives from the frequency with which the boxes accidentally form sniglets, Rich Hall's term for near-word combinations.

The concept of this article is an elaboration of Dave Morice's "Alphaboxes" in the November 1987 *Kickshaws*. His rules for a two-player version (see "Musical Wordboxes") apply here as well.

For the puzzles and the game, combinations must be common

English words; no proper names, archaic or dialectal forms, abbreviations or acronyms are allowed. All answers to the puzzles above can be found in Webster's 11 New Riverside Dictionary; the answers to Puzzles 4 and 6 appear at the end of this issue.

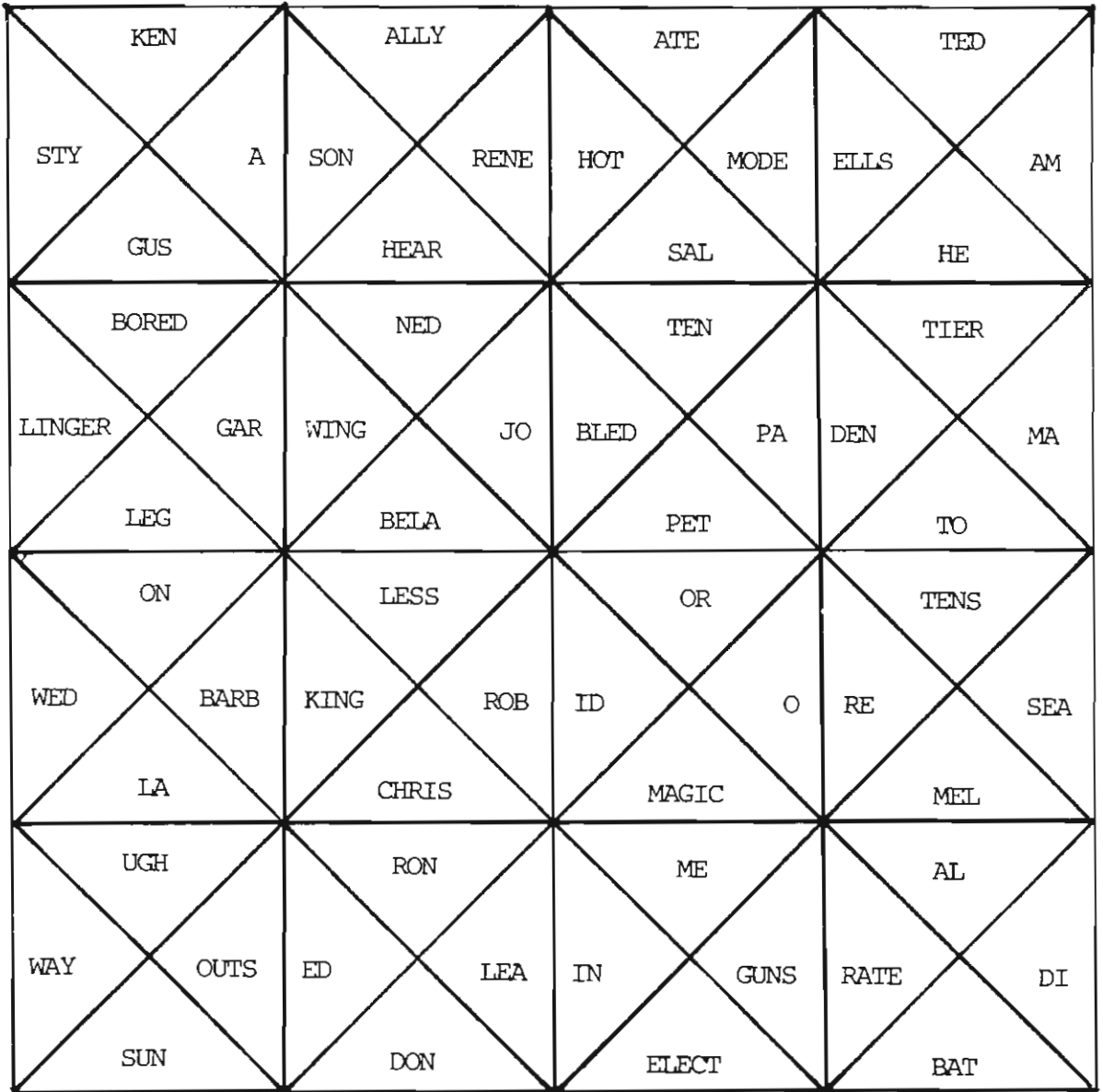


FIGURE 1

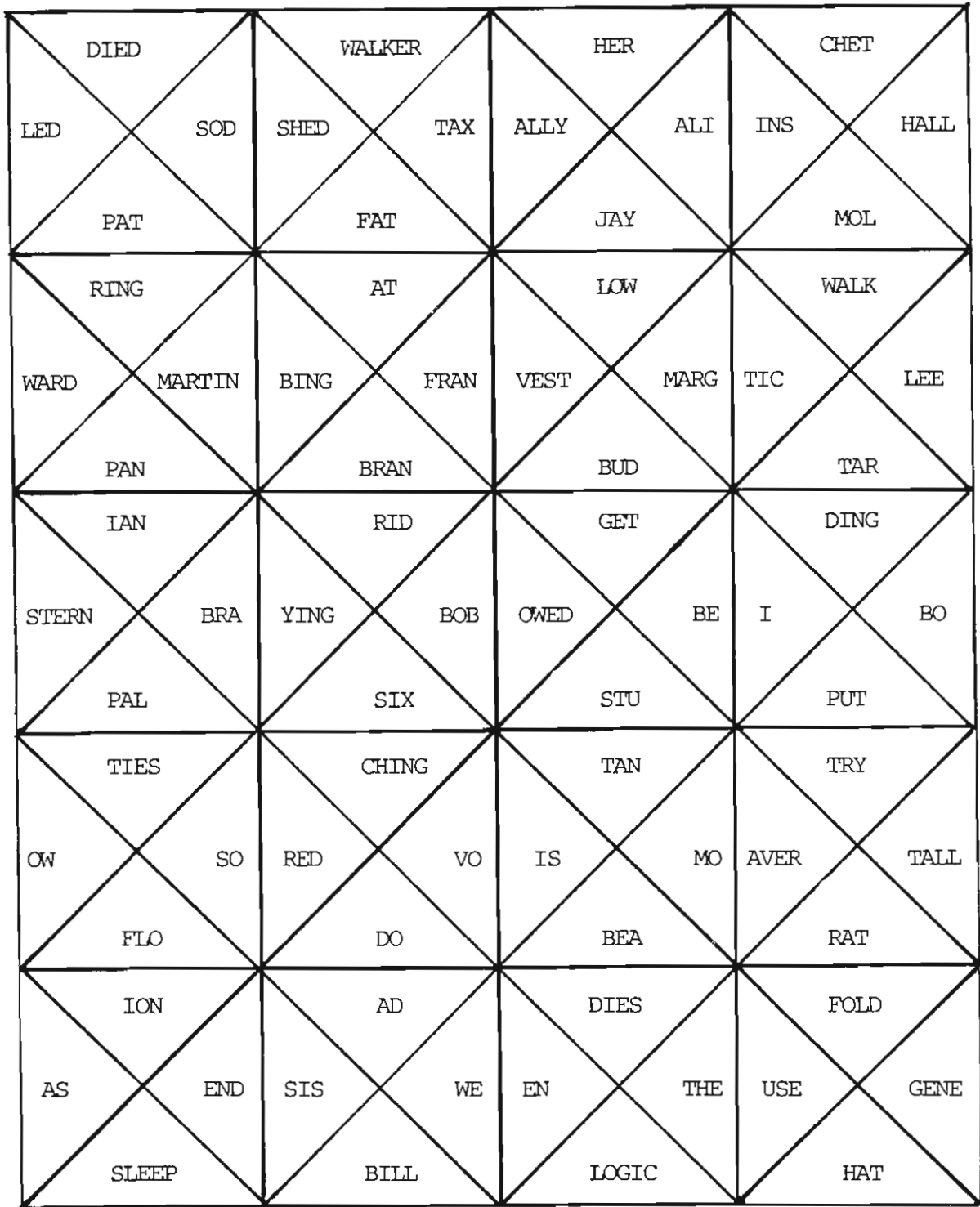


FIGURE 2