

COLLOQUY

Webster's Dictionary defines colloquy as mutual discourse. Readers are encouraged to submit additions, corrections and comments about earlier articles appearing in Word Ways. Comments received at least six weeks prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

In "Triplets: An Added Dimension" in the Nov 1991 Word Ways, Peter Newby asserts "We pencil-and-paper practitioners, as opposed to the computer buffs, will dominate creative output." Leonard Gordon retorts "Just how creative was he? Here is his example followed by mine:

HOW	MANY	BEANS	MAKE	FIVE	HOW	MANY	BEANS	MAKE	FIVE
show	man	bean	mae	fie	chow	any	bean	mae	fie
sow	an	ban	ae	fe	cow	pany	ban	me	fire
so	a	an	e	e	cowl	pan	an	ume	ire
o	au	a	se	oe	owl	pa	ani	lume	re
on	u	ai	use	o	ow	pal	anil	plume	ore
ton	us	ail	us	or	own	pals	anile	plum	fore
tone	pus	nail	pus	our	on	palus	nile	plums	for
ONE	PLUS	NIL	PLUS	FOUR	ONE	PLUS	NIL	PLUS	FOUR

First, Newby makes a case for using O and U as single-letter words. Single-letter words need not be used at all; they make the problem too easy. Second, he says no word may be used more than once in a chain. That's no restriction at all; let's say no word may be used more more than once in the set. (Chaining PLUS in two different ways gets a little tricky, but it can be done, without a computer, as shown above.) Third, he was most creative in having two word pairs in the series which have no letters in common - this forces easy eight-step chains, yet allows him to claim the series is in the minimum number of steps possible." He adds "The idea of finding parallel chains of equal length between words of two sentences is interesting, but the real challenge is in devising sentences so that most of the chains in the set are of equal difficulty." He gives one such pair: WHICH WAY TOWARD TOWN / SWING NORTH MY FRIEND (three have eight steps minimum, one six steps). Parting shot: THIS GAME IS DULL / YOU ARE RIGHT, PAL.

Jeff Grant believes there is a reference to XESTES in the Encyclopedia Judaica (which he doesn't have access to). He adds the following confusing entry for XESTA in Bailey's 1759 (4th edition) An Universal Etymological English Dictionary: "an Attick measure of capacity: for things liquid it contained one pint, five solid inches, and 636 decimal parts of an inch of our wine measure; for things dry it contained one pint, 48 decimal parts of a solid inch of our corn-measure."

The Nov 1978 Colloquy cites a nonce-word with 20 hyphens. Christopher McManus discovered a 21-hyphen example in the Nov 20 1991 Washington Post (Sec D, page 4): "They need a little more RPM on their spin," said Eskew's consulting partner, Bob Squier. "'These-are-some-of-the-jokes-that-are-going-around-that-people-want-me-to-use-and-I-refuse-to-repeat-them' doesn't turn quite fast enough to be a good political spin." He adds "I think it is a once-or-twice-in-a-lifetime-and-that's-no-hyperbole-take-my-own-word-for-it-not-to-be-repeated-in-a-year-of-blue-moons type of occurrence."

Leonard Gordon writes "Peter Newby and the Sage of Morristown missed the most likely reason for (and way of) smuggling corn - the good ole American stuff in a jug." Sir Jeremy Morse was inspired to look for all 24 AIST rearrangements in Chambers Dictionary: wAIST wAITS parASITe ASTlr gRATls pATSIes enthusLAST fIATS lSATIn vISTA coalTAS sprlTSAil SAITh SATIn prusSIATe heSITate STAln beSTlAl volTAlSm ecsTASies miliTIAS parTlSAn ouTSAIl intelligentSIA (see a similar treatment of AIST in the May 1984 Word Ways).

Leonard Gordon comments "Halfway words are a subset of collinear words." Dave Morice was especially intrigued by halfway words, "the same as the 'reflected words' that I discussed [in] the Nov 1987 Kickshaws." He continues "Our approaches are different - as shown in our different naming. For McManus, the end words generate a middle word between them; for me, the middle word generates two equidistant outer words. We must be on opposite sides of the same mirror! .. After that Kickshaws item, I assumed no one was interested enough to pursue the idea any further. I was delighted to see McManus's work, and it illustrates one of Murphy's Laws of Logology: The Redundancy Proposition: Many good logological concepts are discovered, forgotten, and rediscovered by someone else."

Doug Hoylman writes "Howard Richler's article in the February Word Ways includes an impressive list of the odd towns, but he does not consider the possibility of even towns. Surprisingly, at least one exists: T.B. [in] Maryland." (This must be a very small town, or one that formerly existed, for it is not in the Rand McNally Commercial Atlas.) Jeff Grant tops Mississauga with the 13-letter Waikikamookau, one of the spellings of an imaginary archetypal Kiwi back-of-beyond village (like the U.S. Podunk). According to David McGill in A Dictionary of Kiwi Slang (1988), school children may yet ask "Waikikamookau?" and get the answer "Because it kicked me".

Leonard Gordon comments on "The Linguistic Genetic Message" in February: "Whether Sebastian is spoofing or not, he should get his chemistry straight. Proteins are not just chains of amino acids; they consist of repeated polypeptide chains. Alpha-hemoglobin is one of four polypeptides that make up hemoglobin (2 alphas + 2 betas). Tobacco mosaic virus consists of 2150 identical chains of 158 amino acids." "When genes code for polypeptides they block polymerization of the beginning amino acids so chains build in

one direction only. This can only be done with certain amino acids so a large fraction of polypeptide chains begin with methionine." He recommends Watson's Molecular Biology of the Gene, and adds "Incidentally, I took Sebastian's suggestion and decoded TMV. It says 'The Surgeon-General has determined that smoking is bad for your health' repeated 2150 times."

Readers interested in buying copies of the score and/or libretto of "Boojum!" (described in the Nov 1991 Word Ways) should note that the address has changed to Sounds Australian, Level 2, The Argyle Centre, Playfair St (or PO Box N690), Grosvenor Place), The Rocks, Sydney, NSW 2000 Australia.

Jeff Grant enjoyed Lubran's "Collectible Words" but wonders whether Vanusophily is the collecting of vans rather than fans. He suggests that collectors might better be -philist than -philiac; both BIBLIOPHILIST and TIMBROPHILIST are found in Webster's Second. (-Phile is unsuitable, for it designates a lover rather than collector of the item in question.)

Dave Morice, Leonard Gordon notes, unintentionally used an apt phrase on page 238 of the Nov Word Ways: "Mikhail S. Gorbachev goes with Soviet Union." He wonders why no one else saw this.

Leonard Gordon comments further on Eric Albert's nine-square: "When discussing pruning, Albert does not make clear whether he continues to check on the existence of bigrams (in positions other than the end of the word) or he checks ending trigrams. A quick test of my eight-letter list shows that there are fewer ending than beginning trigrams but more ending than beginning bigrams. Unless a computer program is able to look up trigrams (as a human solver would naturally do), there is no point in working from the bottom up. Also, program speed is strongly dependent on indexing efficiency. Testing for existence of trigrams can be combined with indexing but all of this takes a lot of computer memory which must be balanced against the memory needed for word storage. I am sure that Albert did not miss these points but I want to emphasize them for the benefit of your readers."

Murray Pearce made a small correction to Jeff Grant's "Double Word Squares": Sherlock Holmes did construct one double-eight square prior to September 1934 (found in The Enigma of Feb 1928).

Ted Clarke of Newquay, Cornwall, proposes as a pangram MEG SCHWARZKOPF QUIT JYNX BLVD.

The August 1991 Kickshaws introduced the concept of self-referential Scrabble numbers. John Bulten has constructed the Scrabble game at right to show how the play of H, U, blank (for N), D, R, E, D creates the three words ONE, HUNDRED, FOUR for a total score of 104 points. (Note that the I of MEZ-QUIT is at the center of the Scrabble board.)

H
U
N
MEZQUIT D
FOUR
ONE
D