

# 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.*

Peter Newby further responds to Leonard Gordon's May 1992 critique of "Triplets: An Added Dimension" as follows:

To restrict the format so that only an expert may attempt construction is like saying that only anagrams in excess of a dozen letters are significant. All forms of non-ephemeral wordplay - be they squares, palindromes, chains or whatever - are within the grasp of any person of normal linguistic ability. True, it is only masterpieces of the likes of Leigh Mercer and Dmitri Borgmann which enter the public domain but their works are inspirational to us lesser mortals and the greatest achievements of the masters have been in concepts which any might try. As originally presented, Triplets-in-Parallel is available to all and my demonstration of the value of the smallest of words enables anyone to attempt the witty transformation of one statement to another ... Ideally, one would achieve all transformations with words in common currency and any classics of construction would contain just that. But, to deny the average reader the opportunity to shine by the imposition of purely artificial restrictions is to my mind stupid. This game is for anyone!

To summarize: Leonard Gordon regards the use of one-letter (and, to a lesser extent, two-letter) words as a trivialization of the insertion-deletion game, and Peter Newby regards Leonard Gordon's proposed rule-tightening as a barrier that may exclude some wordplay neophytes. As the sole journal in the field of recreational linguistics, **Word Ways** needs not only to strive for the highest-possible degree of excellence (as exemplified by Gordon's six-by-six mesh, below), but also be accessible to the beginning logologist. Peace, gentlemen: **Word Ways** needs both points of view to thrive.

Leonard Gordon and Peter Newby do agree on one matter, however, Kay Haugaard's August 1992 poem on -person words. The former comments "Kay Haugaard's Horseship poem is great. Can we all use the word from now on?" and the latter philosophizes "Kay Haugaard's delightful -person poem ... touched upon a nightmare that has haunted me ever since lexicographers rushed into print the ludicrous emasculation of a magnificent language; the first hint that we may yet face the ultimate in offensiveness - chairpersibling".

Ted Clarke would like to correct the introductory paraphrase in the August **Word Ways** concerning bottoms-up word-square construction: "I have ... been unable to convince myself that there is any advantage in ... working backwards." He adds that the reason for this is shown in a table on the last page of **Wordsworth #2**. This table shows that typically there are considerably fewer possible words beginning with the letters in a randomly-chosen ten-letter word than there are words ending with the letters in the word (for example, **DESERTRESS** has 24076 beginning words in his database, and 51089 ending words). This, in turn, leads to faster processing times, as cited in the August issue.

In "Competitive Word Squares" described in the February 1991 **Word Ways**, each player has a blank five-by-five grid which he conceals from his opponent. Players alternately call out letters, and each letter is placed in one's grid with the object of forming as many vertical and horizontal words as possible, the ideal being a double five-square. Peter Newby, the inventor of this game, has found that a good strategy is to repeat the letter one's opponent has just chosen, and try to form a single five-by-five word-square by entering it symmetrically on the grid. This strategy led, in a game with Dianne Caesar on June 22, to a score of 56 points (the second best ever for him), based on the standard references, *Pears Advanced Word-Puzzlers Dictionary* and the *Concise Oxford*. However, if the OED had been used instead, the game would have been awarded a maximum 60 points, with a perfect five-square

S L A N T	( <b>avere</b> is a Middle English form of the word 'ever')!
L O V E R	The square was built up beginning with the letters
A V E R E	A, N, L, E and R (each doubled by Peter), which
N E R V E	he used to form the LAN in SLANT and the ER in
T R E E S	LOVER, in order to have the maximum potential for

these two rows and columns. The three Vs were his killer contributions at a later stage, one of them being forced by Dianne's letter O so that he had at least two scores of three points for the central row and column with AVE.

In the November 1991 **Word Ways**, Leonard Gordon presented the concept of a word mesh: a rectangular array of frags which, taken two in succession either horizontally or vertically, formed words. Two of his examples consisted of six-by-six meshes of four-letter frags - with all but the lower right corner filled in. Enlarging his eight-letter word list from 6191 to 6955 (and the number of different frags borne by these words from 1394 to 1482), he succeeded in finding a complete six-by-six mesh:

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fore-play-land-iron-side-note
turn-down-fall-back-band-case
over-hand-fish-bone-work-book
door-bell-tail-head-ship-mate
knob-wood-wind-ring-worm-less
like-wise-ling-bird-seed-ness

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Note that all 36 fragments are different.

And Michael Helsem writes "In the August issue, Jeff Grant asked for words with consecutive double vowels or consecutive doubled consonants. George Starbuck's 'Verses To Exhaust My Stock Of Four-Letter Words' includes both zoöoögenous, disagreeee (one who is disagreed with), and bullllamas. One who is addicted to Hall's cough drops could be a Hallsster. A cold, desolate cabin might be igloo-oorie. Isn't a tachometer really a revvscanner? And we musn't forget coffee-oomph. I called my homecoming a hajjzxxjoanw."

Peter Newby has discovered a new AEGINRST transposal for the never-ending research Dmitri Borgmann brought to **Word Ways**: GERAINTS, the plural of a Welsh Christian name as in Sir Geraint Evans, the opera singer.

Jeff Grant notes that Howard Richler's palindrome DID HANNAH SAY AS HANNAH DID? was written incorrectly, as was the explanation for AVVA in "Another Palindromic Insertion": homeland of the Avvim, a people who dwelt in 'villages near Gaza'.

Sir Jeremy Morse points out that it is not difficult to find three-link chains with large overlaps in "Try a Trifix" in the August Kickshaws: WHIMPERS-IMPERSONATION-NATIONAL, ENCOUNTER-COUNTER-BALANCE-BALANCED, CIRCUMGYRATION-GYRATIONAL-RATIONALLY.

Jeff Grant corrects the spelling of BACCHIC and ZORRO in "Junctures: An Abecedum". He observes that there must be "hundreds of good examples" of these, and offers the following single-word examples for Q, V, X and Z:

QUOTABILITY quote ability

XEROPHYTE zero fight

VATICIDE vat aside

ZAPTIAH zap tyre