

KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor. All answers appear in the Answers and solutions at the end of this issue. Guest editors will continue to appear occasionally.

Volatile: Love Lit A Love

In **Language on Vacation**, Dmitri Borgmann discussed circular palindromes and circular reversals. He demonstrated how they work by printing a word in a circle and explaining that you read the letters both clockwise and counterclockwise. If the word is the same, such as SENSUOUSNESSES, it's a circular palindrome; if it's different, such as REVERSE/REVERES, it's a circular reversal. He wrote that circular reversals "are much more difficult to locate, and lead to results of an entirely unforeseen character." He cited PREMATURE/PERU TAMER (his nickname for Francisco Pizarro) as an example. The first half of his statement isn't exactly true. They aren't hard to find. The second half of his statement is true, and that's what makes circular reversals more interesting than circular palindromes.

A **circular reversal** is a reversal that jumps from the first letter to the last letter in the starting word to produce a different word. STIFLE, for instance, reverses to ITSELF by leaping from the S to the E as it follows its backward path. STIFLE/ITSELF is a **complete circular reversal**, in which all the letters are used. Likewise, NORIEGA, the name of the Panamanian ex-dictator, reverses to IRON AGE. A **partical circular reversal** doesn't use all the letters in the word, but it still makes the first-to-last letter jump. ITALIAN, for instance, has LATIN in it. An **overlapping circular reversal** uses all the letters and then some, and the result is longer than the starting word. VOLATILE makes the poetically correct LOVE LIT A LOVE.

Circular reversals sometimes have additional features. The two parts can be antonyms: SORRY gives ROSY, and one definition of SORRY is "dismal, gloomy." Or a word can produce two or more different circular reversals. TASTE gives ATE and SATE, both appropriate to the starting word. Sometimes a word can make a circular reversal, and the reversal itself can make a different reversal, and so on, to form a chain that flip-flops back and forth, as in REVERSE/REVERES/VERSE/EVES. On rare occasions, a word can begin a circular reversal chain that could go on forever. In the poem **Tennis** below, each line is a circular reversal of

the previous line.

Another such reversal chain, NOTICE/TONE/NOTE, is especially remarkable because its words are clearly defined as synonyms in the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary: NOTICE (v.) lists "NOTE" as a synonym. One definition of NOTE (v.) is "to notice or observe with care." Furthermore, NOTE (n.) "is a special TONE in a person's words or voice." Here are several circular reversals of each of the three types, plus the tennis poem. Surprisingly, complete circular reversals seem to be almost as common as partial ones. There are many more waiting to be found.

answer/snare	democracy/car comedy
capsule/space	esplanade/seed an alp
carrot/actor/car	hello/o, hell!
dally/lady	lamine/I, male, tan
embarass/mess	menace/cane me
fascinate/safe tan, I	regatta/tag era/tare/rate
labored/balder/lab red	regatta/age, rat!/gat
light/gilt	strategy/get artsy
nickname/cinema/I came	television/I've let no "is"
nightcap/gin pact	trapdoor/part rood
settlement/melt test	uptown/pun
straightlaced/art's decal	village/live gal
street/steer	walk-on/lawn OK
transition/art? no, it is!	wayworn/yawn, row
vignette/ten give	
zoophyte/ooze	Tennis
fat cat/act, Taft!	in nets
memory/Rome, my Rome	is tennis.
organist/nag rots in a grot	Sis in nets
partial/plait rap	is Sis's tennis.
sonata/no, Satan	Sis? Sis in nets!
tragic/art cigar	Sis's tennis is sis's.
vote/to veto/tot	I sin, nets.
wayside/awed is yaw	Tennis is tennis
	in nets. In nets I sin.

The Magic of Transaddition Names

Max Maven sent a few real-life transaddition and transdeletion names along with a note about the proud bearers of these monikers. Interestingly, all but the first involve magic.

ROB BORK past Supreme Court nominee (the first that came to mind)
 DELL O'DELL magician popular during the 1940s
 HAL HALE current librarian of the Magic Castle in Hollywood
 PAULA PAUL illusionist based in Florida

Parallel Universe Wordplay

Howard Bergerson writes "The NINETIES should not go by without some small tribute to EINSTEIN, a poet in a parallel universe who wrote

In the gay nineties, in gay Paree
 When I was a gay young blade

My virtue I lost to a gay divorcee
And my heart to a chambermaid.

One day this Einstein wrote his greatest haiku.

Energy equals
Mass multiplied by the square
Of the speed of light.

He sent it to a poetry magazine, and they rejected it, saying 'That's nice journalism' (the worst insult they could give). So he sent it to a physics journal, and they rejected it, saying 'That's nice poetry' (they worst insult they could give). So he built a bomb and sent it to them (they were in the same building, or at least the same city), saying to himself 'I will show them the power of haiku!' Such is life in parallel universes."

Pseudo-Opposites

O.V. Michaelson sent a selection of pseudo-opposites inspired by the February and August 1970 Kickshaws. To refresh your memory, some of those pairs (by Dave Silverman, Murray Pearce and Leslie Card) are included.

catwalk/dogtrot	give in/takeout
lowlands/high seas	give (or put) off/take on
maternity dress/paternity suit	give (or put) up/take down
nighthawk/mourning dove	input/outtake
hereafter/therefore	layout/stand-in
piecework/war games	left off/right on!
undergo/overcome	overlap/understand
hotheads/cold feet	walk-on/runoff
	walkout/run-in
	walk-up/rundown

Letter-Addition Opposites

While we're on again, off again regarding opposites, here are opposites with extra letters added in the same place to both words. Some antonyms, such as IN and OUT, can make other letter-addition opposites by placing different letters in front of each. In such cases, I list just a few pairs. One pair, oddly enough, remains opposite: when you DON a hat, you put it on, and when you DOFF a hat, you take it off.

Andes/ores	hell/shell	mark/park
banded/bored	shot/scold	don/doff
dandy/dory	sill/swell	onset/offset
randy/Rory	gin/gout	tony/toffy
comet/got	pin/pout	shortly/tally
pearly/plate	shin/shout	tock/frock
fate/thine	mad/pad	tog/frog
heath/sheath	make/take	town/frown

Taking the Pledge

In the May Kickshaws, I asked if anyone knew of other misspoken

prayers. Fred Crane writes "No I don't, but my small daughter used to pledge allegiance to the United Steaks of America."

Solitary Riddle

Which of the following sentences has an error in it, and which is closer to being correct?

IN 1986, WE SAT DOWN TO PLAY A GAME OF SOLITAIRE

IN 1987, I SAW A SOLITARE FLY PAST MY WINDOW

Minimal Anagram-Synonym Chains

Susan Thorpe has tried her hand at making anagram-synonym chains, a form introduced by Peter Newby in the May 1992 Kickshaws. Peter demonstrated the form with a 13-word chain, FIRST/RIFTS-GAPS/GASP-GULP/PLUG-STOP/OPTS-ELECTS/SELECT-RARE/REAR-LAST which stands as the shortest FIRST/LAST chain. Susan tried going from LAST to FIRST instead, and found a considerably shorter chain. She tried to come up with shorter chains for other pairs of opposite words, and she found minimal anagram-synonym chains for two pairs. In doing these chains, she suggests "a sixth type of word conversion chain, to add to Peter's five existing logological progressions...a Synonym-Anagram-Homophone chain" and she included a short example. The chains she found are:

LAST-KEEP/PEKE-DOG/GOD-FIRST

LOVE-HEAT/HATE

GOOD-DAB/BAD

WORD-LORE/ROLE=ROLL-SWAY/WAYS

Reverse or Perverse?

"Clifford Falk's 'Oral Palindromes' in the May 1994 Kickshaws," writes Susan Thorpe, "reminded me of the times when my reflection and I used to hold conversations, albeit never able to agree upon which was our 'right' side and which our 'left'! Over the years, my reflection developed the irritating habit of repeating everything I said, but in reverse. It overstepped the mark, however, when, my having confided to it my feeling of *deja vu* one day, it retorted *you've aged!* Would that we could have gone our separate ways!"

Nine Against The Current

Susan has a reverse alphabetically-consecutive string of nine letters that more than doubles John Meyer's **spring-FED Creek**. As a preamble to hers, she tells about "that communication from one Oxford research chemist to another, concerning the highly classified composition of material 'X' which includes the hydrogen isotope Deuterium (D), as well as an extraordinary variety of elements. Neither chemist is willing to commit his name to paper in view, one must suppose, of the sensitive nature of his work..."

Dear -----,

Eureka! It's Ni.Ne. and I.Hg.Fe.D.C.

----- (B.A.)

Why Did The Chicken Cross The Road?

Susan has the answer to this age-old question: "What is frivolously dismissed by lesser mortals as a meaningless meander on the part of the bird turns out to be an intelligent and far-sighted act of self-preservation on her part. So just why did she risk what was, after all, a hazardous journey?"

THE CHICKEN CROSSES THE ROAD/SHE CHECKS CORN AT OTHER SIDE!

Straight And Taut

Susan has discovered a rare word indeed. She tells of her search "In 'Word Records from Webster's Third' (May 1990), Chris Cole noted the 19-letter METHYLETHYLPYRIDINE as containing that dictionary's longest internal tautonym, the 10-letter ETHYLETHYL. Looking at this word we note that, but for the P, R, and D, it would also consist of letters composed solely of straight lines. In order to discover long words which encompass internal tautonyms and which are at the same time constructed solely of straight-line letters, it seems we must consult medical sources. Sitting in the library consulting such dictionaries and dreaming of methylethyls and the like, we quickly discovered the 16-letter METHYLETHYLAMINE which fitted our requirements but, not content, we went on to consult the 11th Edition of Hawley's Condensed Medical Dictionary (Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1987) and, within a minute, the lovely 19-letter sym-METHYLETHYLETHYLENE leapt out of the page, complete with its 15-letter triple tautonym! We didn't improve on this word, but the ease with which it was found suggests that there may indeed be other such words waiting to be discovered."

Faustian Want-Ad

MY SOUL for your St. Gaudens, Morgans, Peace dollars, other collections, or anything of value. Nick's Soul, PO Box 957, Henniker, NH 03242

Numismatic News, a coin newspaper, carried this ad a few weeks ago. It appears that Faust is alive and well and less discriminating than when he traded his soul to the Devil for wordly success. Now anyone can trade anything for it. Read the ad carefully and cite three reasons that it might just be false advertising.

British Racehorses

"Legend hath it," Peter Newby writes, "that an 18th century British racehorse named POTOOOOOOOO (pronounced "pot eight O's") set a logological baptismal precedent that was followed some two hundred years later by a magnificent winner of no fewer than three Grand Nationals (a classic race 'over the sticks'), the incomparable RED RUM. Unless such an alcoholic beverage actually exists then I can only presume that the name was coined as a piece of wordsmithery; certainly it predates my own acquaintance with the palindrome based on it, RED RUM: MURDER (who composed this, and when?). Now the august body which governs British horseracing has just approved another equine given name presumably in total

ignorance of Dr. Spooner's contribution to wordplay, JO BLOB."

About "Around," And Around "About"

Peter tells of a tern not taken: "A sternine creature named by its mother as Around due to the spherical shape of its egg giving her an unusual experience during labour in the nest was equally unique in its choice of foodstuffs. Unlike his siblings who feasted on herring and other marine goodies, Around developed a taste for worms and, in consequence, never took to flying over the seas in search of lunch. Around much preferred scratching the soil in the hope of unearthing a lumbricine morsel or two. His fame spread amongst his fellows to the extent that Around was known to them as 'the tern who wormed'!" *One of Around's siblings, About, used his two sharp-clawed feet to skin fish before eating them, which led Around to say "tern About's pair flay!"*

Follow The Drinking Gourd

Peter tells of this incident: "Then there was the teetotaller who used to creep furtively past the local tavern as he knew that his presence upset many of the hardened imbibers. Last Monday, however, he was spotted by one of the regulars who, in his annoyance, threw an empty cider bottle at the abstainer. When he got home he examined his wound to discover that he had been stung by a flagon dry." Ouch!

Woe Snite

"When Dalt Wisney was casting the minor roles for his epic movie on the life of Woe Snite," writes Peter, "he interviewed various vertically challenged actors who arrived in pairs. The first to arrive were Dumpy and Grock; Hopey and Dappy followed; finally, Sneepy and Sleazy. But, Wisney still required a seventh. Who got the part?"

Margo Bits

"Crime in New Bybwen is a comparative rarity," says Peter. "Even so, the detection rate is excellent, thanks to the sterling work of the police force's expert of footprints, Margo Bits. New Bybwen criminals uniquely depart the scenes of their crimes by 'running back again', and this is where Margo comes into her element. She maintains the forensic STIBOGRAM which is not, as many suppose, some logological marvel invented by Dmitri Borgmann, but is, as defined by the OED, 'a graphic record of footprints'."

Word Molecules And Eodermdromes

Word molecules appeared in the last Kickshaws, and Eodermdromes appeared in the August 1980 **Word Ways**. Both are ways of diagramming the letters in a word. The repetition of non-adjacent letters at different points causes different words to have different molecules. Eodermdromes appear to work differently, or so I thought. As happens on occasion, apparently-distinct forms of wordplay may actually be the same. As Ross explained in a letter:

"I had a bit of time to think about the question of word molecules, and to my surprise I have discovered that they are equivalent to eodermdromes! That is to say, whenever a word fails to be an eodermdrome it also cannot be diagrammed as a two-dimensional word molecule, and vice versa. So, the answer to the shortest non-molecule and the longest molecule is already known - METASOMATOSES and SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS.

"One-dimensional molecules (strings of ling segments) are easy to analyze: the shortest non-molecule is a word like AREA, and the longest is a long isogram such as DERMATOGLYPHICS. For three-dimensional word molecules (the closest analogue, perhaps, to true molecules) I don't know the answers, but it is possible there are none (or very few) non-molecules. For starters, I suspect that a non-molecule must contain nearly all the bigram connections among six different letters, or nearly 21 different cases, leading to a word of a minimum of 22 letters. Certainly all the connections among five different letters is not enough for non-molecularity (consider a tetrahedron consisting of four equal spheres, with a fifth sphere embedded in its center).

"There is one apparent difference between eodermdromes and word molecules - the former allow one to "dwell" on a letter that is doubled, whereas the latter insists that one must make two copies of it (to include the bigram xx). However, I think it is true that whenever a word forms a word molecule, so does the reduced version (replacing all doubled letters with single letters), and vice versa.

"Words with their different letters on a hexagonal lattice correspond to a special case of word molecules in which all the circles are of equal size (and one does not disallow forbidden contacts). Interestingly, I think that the corresponding cubic words (words in a cubic lattice) are even more restricted than hexagonal words - for example, AREA cannot be traced out in a cubic lattice, but it can on a hexagonal one. The power to shrink and expand the spheres is a powerful one. Incidentally, there are other lattice packings of spheres that should be considered, such as offset square arrays on top of each other (a square on one layer fills the hole in the four squares on the layer below) or even triangular packings. These will turn out to be more efficient in accomodating words; any sphere in atriangular lattice contains 12 other spheres, and I would imagine that almost any reduced word could be traced out on such a lattice!"

Mary Poppins, Meet Dan Quayle

CNN featured a news brief about a Dan Quayle rally in May. Republicans were trying, in the words of their spokesperson, "to show that they, too, can laugh." The camera panned to a group of Quaylers carrying a sign saying SUPERFRANTICDEMOCRATICCLINTONLEGISLATION.

The Poker Alphabet

Martin Gardner found this alphabet poem from **The Witmark Min-**

strel Guide and Burnt Cork Encyclopedia, available for \$1 in 1899.
Can anyone explain the choice for V?

A is the ante, B is the bluff;
C is the cash which is vulgarly stuff;
D is the draw, a momentous event;
E is for elevate, takes your last cent;
F is the fun you have when you win;
G is the gillie who loses his tin;
H is the hand that is dealt to you;
I stands for in, an important thing, too;
J is the jack pot, whose praises we sing;
K is the kitty, vivacious thing;
L is the loser, he's always around;
M is the money which does not abound;
N is the noodle that plays up two pair;
O is the opener, laying his snare;
P is for poker, our national game;
Q stands for quit, but you don't all the same;
R is for raise, and it often sounds hard;
S is the squeezer that's marked on the card;
T is the time that you waste when you deal;
U is your uncle to whom you appeal;
V was the come in, you know the cost;
W is the widow who wins what you lost;
X is the sum that you bet upon trips;
Y is the youngster who collared the chips;
Z is the zeal with which one will expend
Time, money and gaslight to do up a friend.

Legal Palindromes

O, LEGAL LAW! TIMES EMIT WALL AGE - LO! That is, too many laws erode the criminal justice system just as time cracks the paint on a wall to reveal its age. Justice may be blind, but palindromes look both ways. Here's a palindromic look at crime, criminals, and the legal system, beginning with a classic.

SEX AT NOON TAXES the IRS law about lunch-hour love

SEX AT ONE, NO TAXES after the lunch hour, the previous law goes out of effect till noon the next day

NOON TAXATION? NO, I TAX AT NOON an IRS agent explains the lunch-hour love law to a very taxed couple

NO ON-TASK LAWYER PREY WALKS AT NOON by now, most lawyers know that it's hard to find clients during the lunch hour

WAL-MART NIXES SEX IN TRAM LAW lovemaking in streetcars is forbidden within visual proximity of the chain store

TIE, TAG IT - I'LL LITIGATE IT the motto of the legal profession meaning "You come up with a lawsuit, I'll defend you in court"

SUN ON IT - A LEGALITY TIL A GELATIN ON US when lawyers go sunbathing with witnesses, they avoid using a sunscreen that leaves an incriminating residue

IGNORE TALL IOWA LAW, OIL LATER ON, GI the US army advises the troops not to pay attention to an Iowa law forbidding anyone

over six feet tall to use sunscreen

STAR TORTS TROT RATS even minor cases can get nasty

O, GAG NO LEGAL AGE LONG AGO the plaintive cry of a lawyer trying to get his 18-year-old client tried as a juvenile

RED ROD ORDER the practice of caning as a legal punishment - instead of putting the criminal behind bars, it puts bars on the criminal's behind

NO, SIR: PRISON! a judge's reply to a probation request

MUG FOR A BAR OF GUM the bandit holds up his victim for a piece of Wrigley's

RED RUM TO NEIL A., SIR, IS A LIE, NOT MURDER the defendant, Neil A., doesn't kill when he gets drunk, but fibs instead

AMORALITY 'TIL AROMA the latest plan for decreasing crime: first offenders get sprayed with an evil-smelling liquid

GANG NAG when a group of people surround a victim and complain about what he or she is doing (a misdemeanor)

SUN, O PULL A TACIT ARREST IF IT'S ERRATIC AT ALL UPON US in the sunlight, police hope to make an arrest without saying the words required by the Miranda Decision, even though it's irregular

St. Imi! Legal Age Limits!

Peter Newby wrote the above Cheater's Palindrome as a rebuttal to the legal palindromes. He also sent an unusual comment on youth crime and punishment that was made many years ago. As he writes: "Out of the mouths of bishops! Robert Hardy, the Anglican bishop of Lincoln, when being interviewed on the subject of juvenile crime, came up with the following statement of the obvious: 'You cannot lock up young people for fifty or sixty years!'"

Medical Palindromes

After legal palindromes, medical palindromes seem the logological next step. My first two attempts had their terms mixed up. SIS, AIR IS SIRIASIS refers to a sunstroke, but where's the sun? It's in SINUSITIS, IS IT I? SUN IS, but this is where the air should be, irritating the sinuses. To solve this problem, I cut the first one in half and transplanted the second one within it. At last, the palindrome seems medically correct, and with that I hang up my stethoscope:

SIS, AIR IS SINUSITIS. IS IT I? SUN IS SIRIASIS

Song Of The Missing Link

Last issue, Susan Thorpe presented a set of fifteen evolutionary anagrams such as FOSSIL RECORD/OLD FORCES, SIR and THE MISSING LINK/THIS GEM LINKS IN. The latter anagram inspired me to write a poem whose lines are anagrams of THE MISSING LINK. It's a comic book view of evolution, starring SLIME THING, a creature similar to DC Comics' SWAMP THING, but missing a few more links.

Think! Sing, slime!

Slime's thinking.

Sink, Slime Thing,

Set him slinking.

Night's ink! Slime

Lets him, sinking

Slime Thing's kin:

Helm is stinking.

Sing! Think slime!

Slime's thinking.

Celebrity Anagram Words

In the following puzzle by Mike Reiss, each of these common words can be anagrammed into the name of a living celebrity. The last two are by Alan Levine. Mike notes that "MEG RYAN makes ME ANGRY", but he's not sure why. The enumerations give the length of the first and the last names.

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. HOCKED 2,4 | 4. GENERAL 2,5 | 7. ENDEARS 2,5 |
| 2. GALORE 2,4 | 5. COSTUMIER 3,6 | 8. WATERFALLS 4,6 |
| 3. GERMANY 3,4 | 6. ASCERTAINS 5,5 | 9. NARCOLEPTIC 4,7 |

Possessive Celebrities

Steve writes that his brother takes celebrity last names that begin with an S, and scoots the S over to make a possessive ending - Robert Stack becomes Robert's Tack. His list includes performing artists. The last two actors' names describe their respective offspring.

Soupy's ales	Loretta's wit	Gloria's wan son
Garry's handling	sharon's tone	Sylvester's tall one
Larry's torch	Tom & Dick's mothers	

Al Gore Rhythm For Vice-Presidential Words

If Vice-President Gore becomes our next president, he'll set a logological precedent. His name, written A.GORE, can be found going in either direction in fairly common words. AGORE is in PYTHABOREAN, and EROGA is in PREROGATIVE and DEROGATORY. The latter fits into a cryptic palindrome: STAR? COME, DEEROGATORY ROT! A. GORE, DEMOCRATS. Can you find others?

In keeping with the equal-time rule, I should point out that Robert Dole's name makes him a less-desirable candidate. DOLE is in INDOLENT and REDOLENT, and ELOD is in MELODIC, but words with his first-initial R (or nickname, B) are impossible to find in either direction. Can you find any?

Personal Auto Names

While browsing through the phone book, I ran across an especially interesting name, SANDY PICKUP. Are there any other people named after automobiles? Where are DUSTY HATCHBACK, RUSTY COMPACT CARR, or STANLEY STEAMER? [Editor's note: they aren't on PhoneDisc, the national telephone directory on CD-ROM.]

Numerically Self-Referential Words

Lester Dickey has sent some examples of self-referential words that echo their numbers. Lester writes "My biggest disappointment is that PERFECT has 7 letters, and 7 is not perfect (the sum of its divisors, including 1). If it only had 6 letters I would be convinced that there is a power in the universe that has a numerical sense of humor. Can anyone think of others?" All fraction words (HALF, THIRD, FOURTH) are self referential since their numbers are fractions of larger numbers. HALF has 4 letters, and

4 is half of 8.

ODD 3 letters, 3 is odd

EVEN 4 letters, 4 is even

PRIME 5 letters, 5 is prime

COMPOSITE 9 letters, 9 is composite

PALINDROMIC 11 letters, 11 is palindromic

FIFTH 5 letters, 5 is the fifth integer

SEVENTH 7 letters, 7 is the seventh integer

FIGURE, NUMERAL, NUMBER, DIGIT and INTEGER are self referential no matter what number of letters they have!

Self-Referential Differences

Take a number and subtract it from the number of letters in its number name, and if the difference is a negative number drop the minus sign. A difference is self-referential if it equals the original number. For instance, ONE (three letters) - 1 = 2 is not self-referential. How many numbers have self-referential differences in English? Instead of subtraction, you can add, multiply or divide the two numbers. Of course, addition can't produce self-referential sums, but what about multiplication or division?

Media Wordplay

On a Lucy Show rerun, Lucy is pretending to be a secret agent. She says to an FBI man "You don't think I'm an S-P-Y, do you?" He replies "A spy?" And she says "Oh, you broke our code!"

From Married With Children, two animalistic malapropisms by Kelly Bundy: "I'm sweating cats and dogs" and "Your words fall off me like water off a duck's quack".

In a Charlie's Angels episode, two women in a women's prison are discussing how to pressure a third woman. What happened to the passive voice? First woman: "With no kids, she'll be tougher to push." Second woman: "She'll push."

In The Collector's Marketplace, this impressively obscure ad: "If you enjoy deltiology and if you like philately you will love maximaphily..."

In a Newsweek article on figure-skater Tonya Harding, this sentence: "She was never regarded as an artist on ice, so when she missed her jumps, there was no one there."

On a comedy program whose name I missed: "LIFE without an F is a LIE." Hmm...SKIN without a K is a SIN, SAND without an N is SAD, WING without an N is a WIG, HAIR without an H is AIR, and NOW NOW without the W's is a NO NO.

Cleveland Is Our President

In 1885, according to O.V. Michaelson, a contributor to the Toronto Truth constructed a square of the words CLEVELAND IS OUR PRESIDENT with C at the center, surrounded by a diamond of four L's (up, down, right, left), in turn surrounded by a

diamond of 8 E's, and so on to 4 T's at the corners. The author claimed that the message can be traced out more than five thousand ways by moving from letter to adjacent letter from center to corner. Would you believe something like eleven million is more nearly correct? It isn't too hard to count paths for smaller squares of this type; for squares of size 3,5,7,9 and 11, the corresponding number of different paths is 8, 24, 80, 280 and 1008, says Ross.

L E O N Peter Newby created a word ladder (at left) from
 N E O N LEON to NOEL (NOEN is Middle English form of NOON
 N O O N in the OED) which contains a puzzle built within it:
 N O E N using the king's move of chess, how many ways can
 N C E L you trace the word NOON?

Follow The Bouncing Donut

Terri and Melissa, two waitresses at the local Donutland, were laughing heartily when I came in three or four weeks ago. A drive-in customer, they said, had just ordered a BARBARIAN CREME, which is supposed to be a BAVARIAN CREME. Terri said that customers make lots of mistakes reading the signs outside and inside. She and Melissa started ticking off some of the errors, and I wrote them down. She assured me that they weren't said in jest. Later I asked another waitress, and she named most of them on the list. Here are some you can nibble on:

BOW TIES booties, bow tees
 LONG JOHN long Tom
 SLIVERED ALMOND silvered almond
 CHOP SUEY chop Suzy
 DUTCH CRUMB Dutch crumble
 CROISSANTS crescents
 SPRINKLETTS sparklers
 APPLE DANDIES apple daddies
 ALMOND POPPY SEED MUFFIN Allah poppy seed muffin
 TIGER TAIL finger tail

A few days ago, the manager was out front putting up the letters for a new sign. As usual, the slogan was fairly bland. Terri handed me a pen and paper and asked me to write a better one. "Make it something we could keep up all summer." The last word triggered the poem. She wanted to use it, but the manager didn't go for it: SUMMER FRESH / SUMMER STALE / TRY OUR SUMMER / DONUT SALE.