

COLLOQUY

Nurse Pathos, Susan Thorpe, Brent Weepy and Peter Newby offer their congratulations to the editor on 25 years at the **Word Ways** helm (beginning with the February 1970 issue), and look forward to his second "century" (second 100 issues) as the maestro of recreational linguistics: Eckler (A. Ross) / The linguistics boss / Never ceases to amaze / With his eclectic word ways. Thanks!

Leonard Gordon, responding to Susan Thorpe's "Balanced Words", wonders whether anyone has considered balancing words on a balance-beam, taking into account letter position as well as weight. POISON and WEAPON balance midway between the third and fourth letters. FISHBONE balances between the fourth and fifth, FLUMMOX also between the fourth and fifth, and CABARET between the fifth and sixth. Similarly, VALIDITY balances on the fourth letter, and BANALITY on the sixth. Words such as POISON and WEAPON were christened Central Balanced Beam Words by J.A. Lindon in February 1969, but the generalization to other balance-points was not then recognized. Leonard suggests balancing poems by suitable choice of spacing between words, for example

M A R Y H A D A L I T T L E L A M B
I T S F L E E C E W A S ‡ W H I T E A S S N O W

Or how about Democrats left, Republicans right?

A L B E R T G O R E ‡ D A N Q U A Y L E

Mark Saltveit (email address msalt@well.com) plans to establish a new Usenet group for discussion of palindromes (alt.palindromes) around the end of 1994. The computer service whose word discussions he enjoys so much (The WELL) now has local toll-free phone numbers in New York City, Long Island, Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Arizona. To sign up, (415)332-4335.

The maximal spanning tree in the August **Word Ways** contains an error: one cannot step from ABORT to ABOVE. To rectify this with OSPD words, excise the groups numbered 183, 192 and 42 and replace them with the following word ladder beginning at SHANK: slank-slant---alant---alane-aline-amine-amide-abide-abode-anode-anole---angle. Other errata: Philip Cohen points out that Monte Zenger is incorrect in calling 13 a Mersenne prime; actually, the Mersenne prime is $2^{13} - 1$. And, in "Split Wit Definitions", MIASMA is Maureen O'Sullivan, not O'Hara.

Wordplay is not just for adults! The editor's 7-year-old granddaughter, Rachel Day, constructed an R-less version of Mary Had

a Little Lamb to accompany the ones in the August 1969 **Word Ways**:

Polly had a little lamb with fleece as white as snow,
And all the places Polly went the lamb did also go.
It followed Polly to school one day which was against the law
It made the students laugh and play a lamb in class all saw.

Michael Helsem writes "After seeing 'Mixed Reviews' in November 1994 my friend Melanie Pruitt & I went to work on anagram reviews of some of the movies we've seen recently. The most perfect match was ODD WOE for ED WOOD. STARGATE becomes RATES TAG. THE CRYING GAME is MAGIC, THEN GREY. BULLETS OVER BROADWAY, like the more overtly autobiographical predecessors, transforms the messiness of life using WOODY'S VALE-RUBBLE ART."