

A MODEST PROPOSAL

BOB MAIER

Southfield, Michigan

As you already know, a palindrome is a word or phrase that spells the same way forward and backward. Some examples are BOB, MADAM I'M ADAM and A MAN, A PLAN, A CANAL: PANAMA.

The word **palindrome** has been in the English language at least since 1638 when somebody named Peacham used it in *Truth of Our Times*. It comes from the Greek words **palin** (again) and **drome** (running). Palindrome is a good word, but it has a major shortcoming; it is not itself a palindrome.

A concept as exquisite as palindromy deserves to have a name that is palindromic. In keeping with the spirit of the etymology, but adding the requirement of its being what it describes, we could do a lot worse than **PALINILAP** from the Greek **palin** (again) and **nilap** (spelled backwards).

By adding the appropriate suffix to the back of the word and the reverse spelling of the suffix to its front, each of the parts of speech can be formed while still maintaining the word's self-reflecting quality. Thus, the plural is **SPALINILAPS**, the adjectival form is **LAPALINILAPAL**, the adverbial form is **YLLAPALINILAPALLY** and the infinitive is **ETAPALINILAPATE**, which is conjugated as I etapalinilapate, you etapalinilapate, he/she/it setapalinilapates.

The past tense is formed by adding a D to the front and the back of the infinitive. This gives us I/you/he/she/it/they **DETAPALINILAPATED**. The gerund is **GNITAPALINILAPATING**, and the science and study of spalnilaps is **YGOLOPALINILAPOLOGY**.

These words, though long, are easy to spell because you only have to remember the first half.

Not only does **ETAPALINILAPATE** add to the list of English's regular verbs, but **PALINILAP** gives us another word that can be used as an example of what it means.