

## KICKSHAWS

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*Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws editor (drABC26@aol.com). Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions.*

### THE YEAR OF MANY NAMES

This year is the first ever to change all four digits from the previous year, and that has caused many people to wonder whether the new millennium starts now or next year. I think it starts at the point of time between 2000 and 2001, and since a point occupies no time, it has no name. The old millennium ends at that same nameless point. However, this year does have a name, many names, more names than any other year in history. This is 2000 AD, or simply 2000. Some computers call it 1900. My trusty ten-year-old IBM calls it 1980, and who am I to argue? Many people call this year Y2K, but I doubt that anyone calls it Y2K AD. In this case, Y means "year" and K means "kilo" for 1000. Some people write 2000 as 00 on their checks. When I do, I think of 00 as "uh-oh." Movie-makers and other lovers of Roman numerals call it MM, and the M&M company added a second "m" to the traditional single "m" on their candy and called it "the millennium candy." Automobile companies call it Y in Vehicle Identification Numbers. Y doesn't stand for "year"; last year was X and next year will be 1. The Society for Creative Anachronism, the international organization of medievalists, calls it AS 35; AS stands for "Anni Somnii," meaning "Years of the Dream," and 35 is how many years have passed since the society was founded. So, let's see. It's 2000, 1900, 1980, Y2K, 00, MM, Y, AS 35. What is the year called in cultures that don't use the same calendar? Or in organizations that number the years in their own way? What are some non-numeric terms, such as the Chinese Year of the Dragon?

### BIGRAM AND TRIGRAM TRUTHFUL NUMBERS

Jim Puder and I have found some numbers that seem to be unique in the way they count their bigrams and trigrams. The first two are ones I noticed while thinking about the premier truthful number, FOUR. The last two, by Jim, are remarkable in that both show two kinds of truthfulness of the same number.

TWO has two consecutive bigrams (TW,WO)

THREE has three consecutive trigrams (THR,HRE,REE)

FOUR has four single letters

SIX has six different trigrams that its letters rearrange to (SXI,ISX,IXS,XSI,XIS,SIX)

SIX has six different bigrams that its letters rearrange to (SI,SX,IS,IX,XS,XI)

## HEADWORD TRUTHFULNESS

Jim has extended the idea of the truthfulness of numbers to the dictionary. A truthful number counts some facet of itself. Here are three numbers that count the number of words formed with its letters that are headwords in specific dictionaries:

FIVE (Webster's 10th Collegiate): FIVE, FIE, I'VE, VIE, IF

SEVEN (Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary): SEVEN, EVEN, SEEN, EVE, NEE,  
SEE, SEN

EIGHT (Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary): EIGHT, GET, HIE, HIT, THE, TIE, HE, IT

## TRUE LINES (AND CURVES)

TWENTY-NINE has been cited as the only number name that counts its lines when written in capital letters. One day I was showing this to someone by printing and counting at the same time. I accidentally made the capital Y with two lines instead of the necessary three. When I ended at 28, I was totally surprised, and all I could think of was "Why?" And Y was why!

Now Jim has discovered that the lower-case letters form two numbers that truthfully count their lines and curves, ELEVEN and SEVENTEEN. They total 28. Wouldn't it be fine if they totaled 29?

## COLORIZING THE RAINBOW

By a strange quirk, three of the rainbow colors are spelled with 3, 4 and 5 letters (RED, BLUE, GREEN), and the remaining four are spelled with 6 letters (VIOLET, INDIGO, YELLOW, ORANGE). It's as if the wordmakers of the past were attempting to achieve numeric consistency but wound up undecided on whether to spell the colors with the same letter length or with different lengths increasing by one letter from color to color. The two renamings below, one for each approach, address the problem with words from Webster's Third. Although the alternatives are related to the originals, they aren't exactly the same. Still, they paint a pretty good picture of what might have been:

VIOLET, INDIGO, BLUISH, GREENY, YELLOW, ORANGE, REDDER  
RED, BLUE, GREEN, ORANGE, VIOLETY, INDIGOID, YELLOWISH

Another flaw in the traditional words is that they provide no built-in way to remember the order of appearance of the colors in the rainbow (VIBGYOR or ROY G BIV). There are two ways to solve this: (1) find words of the same length beginning with different initial letters that, arranged alphabetically, appear in rainbow order, (2) find words of different lengths increasing by one letter that, arranged numerically, appear in rainbow order. All words in the solutions should differ from those used now. For instance, CARMINE, SCARLET or other dictionary colors could be used to replace RED. Now find your trusty crayon box and begin!

## ALPHOMIC WORD LADDER

"An alphomic word," Susan Thorpe writes, "is one in which the letters occur in alphabetical order. The ladder below is made of four-letter alphomic words. I added the constraint that each letter-change must be to a letter farther along the alphabet. Thus BENT could be changed to BEST but not BELT, even though BELT itself is a perfectly good alphomic word. All 34 words can be found in the OED Second Edition as head words, variant forms, or text words including citations."

ABBE-ABCE-ABEE-ADEE-ADEL-ADEM-ADEN-ADEO-ADER-ADES-ADIS-ADIT-  
AEIT-BEIT-BELT-BENT-CENT-DENT-DERT-DEST-EEST-EIST-FIST-GIST-HOST-  
HOTT-IOTT-JOTT-LOTT-MOTT-NOTT-NOTU-NOTZ-NOYZ

## ALPHOMIC PALINDROMES

Susan's ladder made me wonder whether palindromes could be constructed based on alphomes. The answer is barely. There are two types of alphomic palindromes. In one type the letters in the first half occur in alphabetic order and those in the last half occur in reverse alphabetic order. The other type works the opposite way. This is a particularly difficult type of palindrome to write. Here are three examples of each kind:

DEE, HILL OR TROLL I HEED  
"ADD 'E,' NOT 'X,' TO NED, D.A.  
EH, I'LL -O ROLL! I? HE!

SPONGE, BEG NO P.S.  
OM! LIFE, BE FILM, O!  
SPOON IN--OOPS!

## A LITTLE SHORT STORY

Mike Keith has constructed a short story in which the title is a transposition of the story itself. He writes that the challenge is to strike a balance between a too-long story (in which case the title looks ridiculous) and a too-short title (in which case there isn't enough material for a cohesive story).

THE HUMBLE SENIOR PIPER AND A DEPRAVED ENGLISH REDHEAD  
(REVENGE STORY)

"He played the bagpipes," she moaned, surrendering the drained revolver.

## TWO TIDBITS FROM JEFF GRANT

There are three men named JOHN MILK on the American telephone directory database PhoneDisc, and 17 named JOHN KLIM. Apart from being transposals, can you see what other unusual feature these two names possess?

LOSTHUGS was spotted on the wall of a bus shelter recently. It is rare to see wordplay of this quality in modern 'tagging'. One wonders if LOS THUGS feel the need to express themselves in this way because of LOST HUGS when younger?

## THE LONGEST MONOCONSONANTALS AND MONOVOCALICS

The following list, compiled by Sir Jeremy Morse, contains the longest words that use the same consonant or the same vowel throughout. Since Y can be considered on both sides of the alphabetic coin, there are 27 words in all. They can be found in Chambers or the OED.

BAOBAB, ACACIA, DEEDEED, FEOFFEE, GAGGEE, HOOEY, JUJU, KOOKIE, LOYALLY, MAMMAE, ONIONY, EPOPOEIA, QUEUE, ARRIERO, ASSESSEES, ATTUITE, EVVIVA, AWAY, OXEYE, YOU, ZOOEA

TARAMASALATAS, STRENGTHLESSNESS, DISINHIBITING, STRONGROOMS, UNTRUTHFUL, SYMPHYSY

## MONOCONSOVOCALICS FROM A/B to Y/Z

Two words in Sir Jeremy's list have a similarity that makes them different from the others, DEEDEED and JUJU. They are both monoconsonantal and monovocalic--in other words, monoconsovocalic. Which are the longest monoconsovocalic words for all consonant/vowel combinations? 21 consonants and 6 vowels make 126 pairs, or (subtracting the Y/Y pair) 125 words. One of my favorite words, KAKKAK, must be the longest for A/K. That leaves only 124 to go.

## DON'T CRY OVER SPLIT MILK

At Donutland, the logological center of Coralville, the twin city of Iowa City, there's a problem of milky proportions. For those who like cream in their coffee, they serve little cups of cream called HALF AND HALF. I usually order a pot of coffee and five cups, pluralizing them in different ways depending on my mood. "A pot of coffee and five HALF AND HALFS...HALVES AND HALF...HALF AND HALVES...HALVES AND HALVES...HALFS AND HALF...HALVES AND HALFS...HALFS AND HALFS...HALFS AND HALVES. I once asked for five WHOLES AND ZEROS to see if I could trick the waitress, but she plunked down the little cups and said "Thought you could fool me, hmm?"

Does any dictionary give the correct plural for the term? What do they use at the Half and Half Factory? Do two separate but equal groups of employees work in two different buildings, one devoted to the first HALF and the other devoted to the second HALF, always careful that the two don't get mixed together until they're ready? I've see what happens when the two have been mixed too soon--they form little tiny floating things

called HUNDREDTHS the instant they hit the coffee surface. Is there a third group of workers who make the little white cups with nothing in them, the HALF NOTS?

Since Donutland is presently owned and operated by a group of very nice people whose native language isn't English, I usually say "five cups of cream." But one of the waiters always replies, "You want HAP AND HAPS?" Now that introduces a tempting new twist!

## ANAGRAMMATIC SONNET

Lewis Carroll wrote the poem on the left below, calling it an anagrammatic sonnet, although it has six lines of four feet. He added in a letter to Maud Standen, "each foot is an anagram, i.e., the letters of it can be rearranged so as to make one word. Thus there are 24 anagrams. Remember, I don't limit myself to substantives, as some do. I should consider WE DISH - WISHED a fair anagram."

Not all the mystery anagrams have been found (see *Rediscovered Lewis Carroll Puzzles* (Dover, 1995) edited by Edward Wakeling). Some of his feet require obscure words such as THEWES for HE'S WET, and the anagrams merely form a list of unrelated elements: OATS, WREATH, TERMLY, TIDIER, etc. I decided to see what would happen if I rewrote the poem allowing one or two words per foot without any particular rhyme or regular rhythm. The new poem appears below on the right, and now the world is a better place.

As to the war, try elm. I tried.  
The wig cast in, I went to ride.  
"Ring? Yes." We rang. "Let's rap." We don't.  
"O shew her wit!" As yet she won't.  
Saw eel in Rome. Dry one: he's wet.  
I am dry. O forge! Th' rogue! Why a net?

Oats threw a myrtle. Ride it.  
Twig! He can sit in wet rod, tie  
Greys in new rag (last per wet nod).  
Whose wither? Yes, at the snow  
We seal on mire. Yonder, west, eh?  
My arid ego for huge rot? The yawn.

## PRIME, FIBONACCI, AND SQUARE WORDS ON THE TELEPHONE DIAL

Prime words, introduced in the last Kickshaws, are words entirely composed of letters from the groups 2-ABC, 3-DEF, 5-JKL and 7-PRS; Fibonacci and square words are defined analogously. Rex Gooch came up with some long ones:

Prime: abracadabraella (Nomenclator Zoologicus), cracker-peddler (OED), jakes-barreller (OED), paracerebellar (Web 2), saddleback jackal (OED)

Fibonacci: balatabeltduck (?), back-calculate (Chamb), leather-jacketed (OED), white-jacketed (OED), laced-jacketed (13) cellacefate (?), clavellated, (OED), cultellated (OED), deflectable (many sources), effectuable (OED), labefacted (OED), vallecuate (Web 2)

Square: XXXIII (Latin number), IWIIWI (Palindromicon). WHIGG (OED). WHIGH (OED) WIGGY (many sources), WIGHY (OED)

## SECOND S'S

Bill Webster amassed a list of 61 words that become other words by adding a second S. Are there any that become other words by adding a third S, excluding possessives like ROSS'S)?

as, bas, las, mas, amas, pas, bras, moras, tas, kvas  
 es, abbes, princes, larges, Bibles, needles, handles, kindles, windles, tackles,  
 suckles, inkles, tailles, rumples, carles, footles, hurtles, rustles, wattles, kermes,  
 gamines, homines, cosines, saltines, lownes, cares, ogres, dures, asses, posses,  
 marques  
 dis, his, mis, amis, koumis, pis, wis  
 bos, cos, dos, mos, pros  
 bus, discus, mus, pus  
 abys, koumys

## SCRABBLED EGGS AND BECKON

Here's a Scrabble-inspired quiz by Bill: "Your worthy opponent opened with a 5 to 7 letter word. What 3 letters can you add to the left to make bonus points?" In the list below, the lower-and upper-case words go together to form the single-word answers. To figure out each new word, transpose the two parts to form new words and then place those words together to form the single-word solution. For instance, the clue words "bas ROBIN" would become "abs ORBIN" which becomes ABSORBING.

aal BREAST, lab OSCINE, nab GAOLER, bra EARING, mac RECORD, pac CIRES,  
 arc LOOPS, act SHADE, dag FILES, lad LINGY, dam WORST, ape WOLFS,  
 are GULPS, sae PANEL, gam ANTES, nag RITES, rag BROAD, gat DOBRA,  
 has ROWED

## CLUSTERINGS

Jay Ames has the amazing ability to find the most unusual names. The following have clusterings of letters that demonstrate once again the versatility of the alphabet:

Schryburt, Schryer, Schutzenmeier, Schwyngheimer, Schymbroszczyk, Czmvcyk,  
 Chytyl, Czmyliewski, Czyszczlon

## NEW GOOSE EGG REPORTED

In the last Kickshaws, the Goose Egg Register was established to record all synonyms or other words with meanings related to ZERO or NOTHING. Jed Martinez nominated a wonderfully off-the-wall slang for "0" that I'd never heard before: BUPKISS. It should be used in math texts: EIGHT + SIX - FOURTEEN = BUPKISS. Of course,

division by bupkiss is undefined. That brings the grand total of 0-like words to 53! More bupkisses are needed to reach the goal of 100, which will actually be reached at 99 entries. The 100th entry would be simply the empty spot on the list that follows 99: nothing is better than nothing at all.

## LAST-LETTER POSTAL ABBREVIATIONS

Jed points out that two movies voted Best Picture of the Year have final letters that form two-letter state postal abbreviations: *AmericaN BeautY* (1999) ends in NY for New York, and *ToM JoneS* (1963) ends in MS for Mississippi.

This concept opens up all sorts of possibilities for the names of people. *AbrahaM Lincoln* and *WilliaM ClintoN* both end in MN, while Clinton's favorite president, *Ken- nedY*, ends in NY or KY depending on whether he's called *JohN* or *Jack*. How many famous people in all fields have state postal abbreviations concluding their names? And how many of those people were actually born and/or live in that state? How about your name? Mine, written *DaviD MoricE*, ends in DE, which suggests I'm from Dela- ware, but I'm really from Missouri, as shown by the first two letters of my last name. Are there any persons with a middle name that enables two or three state postal abbre- viations? *WilliaM HowarD Taft* has MD (first-middle) and MT (first-last). Here's a challenge: find one famous person having the last-letter postal abbreviation for each state. Too easy? Then add the requirement that each must be from the state of their last-letter postal abbreviation or that they must be all in the same occupation. Still too easy? Then require both.

## LAST LETTERS OF THE NUMBERS

Applying Jed's idea to number names, the results are quite interesting. For the entire number system, taking each number and its successor as a single entity, there are only three last-letter postal abbreviations, shown here with their first occurrences: NE (*eleveN*, *twelvE*; *one millioN*, *one million onE*), NY (*nineteenN*, *twentY*), and DE (*one hundreD*, *one hundred onE*; *one thousanD*, *one thousand onE*).

## THE POWER OF TEN

We use the decimal system which is based on 10. The only number spelled with the last letters of consecutive number names happens to be TEN: it first occurs in the last letters of *eighT*, *ninE*, *teN*. (No number is spelled with the first letters of consecutive number names.)

In the string of all number names, TEN is the first spelled with consecutive letters in reverse. Its first three occurrences are in *oNETwo*, *niNETen*, and *niNETeen*. The only other numbers to appear in reverse are ONE and NINE, which add up to TEN. ENO

first appears in sevENOctillion, and ENIN in ninetyonENINetytwo. NET appears far more frequently than ENO and ENIN together.

## BIBLICAL SCRABBLE

Using the computer, Mike Keith has made several interesting discoveries concerning Bible verses that can be entirely spelled out using the 100 Scrabble tiles. In the King James version, Proverbs 25:26 (with 77 letters) is the longest verse that can be so written. But if one is permitted to select any two verses, then the longest pair of verses that can be written in Scrabble (with 83 letters) is Gen 26:6 and Jas 2:4. Similarly, the longest triple is Gen 8:15, Mark 14:28 and 1 Th 5:16 (with 87 letters). This answer is unique; no other set of three verses exists. (In this case, both blank tiles are needed.) No set of four Bible verses can be spelled out with Scrabble tiles, due to the fact that there are not enough short verses available to choose from.

## EXISTENTIALISM

Can you decipher the following quatrain? In true existentialist tradition, its existence preceded its essence, which required a lot of rewriting:

On existent wove quality,  
Listen! Five sand visit's on,  
Mad and disordered, misc.  
Tent, I'm essentially one.

## ORANGE FREE STATE

Peter Newby relates this true blue tale about oranges: "At the end of the First World War, Britain occupied Trans-Caspia, an anti-Bolshevik independent 'nation' comprising a mainly Turkoman population. A Captain Reginald Teague-Jones was responsible for British political interests. Desperate for some oranges, a fruit completely unobtainable locally, Teague-Jones commanded one of his junior officers to order 'fifty good oranges' from some other part of what had been Imperial Russia. When the fruit arrived an orderly asked the captain where he should store 'all the orange boxes.' Apparently the junior officer had instructed a Russian telegraphist by letter and, as the letters for P and G are virtually indistinguishable, 'fifty pood oranges' arrived. Pood? A measure of approximately 40 pounds, so fifty pood would be about a ton."

## FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT FOR IOWA

Peter notes that "W sometimes functions as a vowel in various words. Thus, IOWA is a rare example of a four-letter word consisting entirely of vowels." Maybe there should be an all-vowel legend on our state flag: "We owe, you owe, I owe Iowa." The problem



is, Iowans aren't that vowel-conscious. Kansas and Nebraska could change their names to Weowa and Youowa, and Iowa would still pronounce them Kansas and Nebraska. In fact, the Iowa legislature could probably pass a bill changing the O to Q, making the official state name IQWA, and few would notice as long as the Iqwa Hawkeyes were having a winning football season. Gq, Hawks!

### CROWS PIPPED POE'S CRYPT?

"Even George Bernard Shaw added to the corpus of spoonerisms," Peter writes, "with his 'A critic is a man who leaves no turn unstoned.' However, the following are true spoonerisms, being accidental coinages."

If the barriers and tariffs are torn down, the economy will grow (George W Bush)  
 Oh, I've got a soul in the heat of my pants (Marion Mort)  
 We are going to key you up and throw away the lock! (low-budget TV drama)

### PERMUTATIONS OF A ROMANCE

This poem includes all 24 permutations of the letters in the tetragram AIRT, as listed on pages 68-9 of *Making the Alphabet Dance*:

The AIRTight  
 Case against the wAITRESS  
 Involved mARITAl  
 Troubles and a pARTIcle  
 Of sATIRE  
 Locked in a romantic mATRix.

She heard "night rate," a tRAIT  
 That angered her, RATIng  
 A vehement response, a laRIAT  
 Of rage, a veRITable  
 Iron cuRTAIN  
 Of fury. During a paRTIAL

Such a semiARTiculate  
 Love dIATRibe!  
 It was admIRATion!  
 It was flIRTation!  
 It was over when her millTARy  
 Boyfriend said "nITRATE."

Pause on the sTAIR,  
 While she was sTARIng  
 At her TIARa,  
 Her violent TIRADE  
 Paved a TRAIL  
 That led to her TRIAL.

### THE TRANSPOSITIONS OF YOUTH, THE TRANSADDITIONS OF AGE

In this poem, each line contains one of the numbers from one to twenty-one, plus a transposition or transaddition of it, taken from page 237 of *Making the Alphabet Dance*:

One eon began:  
 I had two cars to tow, but it  
 Seemed like three in the ether of night.

Four trucks of flour crashed,  
 And five cops had to verify the names  
 Of all six victims on the road's axis.

Seven years later, evens turned odd.  
 I grew eight feet of outer height  
 And nine feet of inner dreams.

In ten years, my net was full of fish  
 And eleven loaves of unleavened bread,  
 Where twelve surfers looked for a wavelet.

When I was thirteen, I liked tethering tides:  
 I passed fourteen counterfeit coins  
 To fifteen people drunk on stiffener.

At sixteen, I was still existent,  
 But seventeen girlfriends lost retentiveness  
 When eighteen others heightened their hairdos.

At nineteen, I fought internecine battles  
 With twenty noteworthy teachers.  
 When I turned twenty-one, this noteworthy eon ended.

### DAEDALUS'S SONG

This uses the circle square appearing on the back of *Making the Alphabet Dance*:

In a	C I R C L E	of sky
Dear	I C A R U S	fly
With	R A R E S T	wings
I'll	C R E A T E	such things
With	L U S T R E	sun-bright
Gold	E S T E E M	is my light!

### LAKE CHARGOGGAGOGGMANCHAUGGAGOGGCHAUBUNAGUNGAMAUGG

Martin Gardner sends along a newspaper clipping about this Massachusetts lake, reported to have the longest place name in the United States according to the US Geological Survey. With 45 letters, it is equal in length to the nonexistent disease caused by breathing volcanic dust. Strangely, exactly one-third of its letters are G!

The name is an Indian one, meaning "the fishing place at the boundaries and neutral meeting grounds" according to Wise Owl, chief of the Chaubunagungamaug band of Nipmucks, who were the first ones to fish in the lake. In fact, their neighbors, the Narra-

gansetts, Pequots and Mohegans all gathered at this 1300-acre lake, still noted for its bass, trout and pike fishing.

In the 1920s Lawrence J. Daly, a local newspaper reporter, invented an etymology. Two tribes living at opposite ends of the lake named it after the terms of their treaty: Chargoggagogg (you fish on your side), Manchauggagogg (I fish on my side), and Chaubungagungamaugg (nobody fish in the middle). Alas, this fanciful tale is still cited as the origin of the lake's name.

When the state legislature tried to eliminate a few of the double G's in 1949, residents of the nearby town of Webster squelched the scheme. After all, hundreds of tourists come to the lake just to pose next to the signs. One can purchase T-shirts or bumper stickers with the name on it. And in the 1920s the lake name was the subject of a song with a tom-tom beat, sung by Ethel Merman and Ray Bolger!

## AMBIGUOUS HEADLINES

These have often been mentioned in *Word Ways*; Martin Gardner passes on a fresh collection from Timothy Rowett of England. Many seem too good to be true!

Include Your Children When Baking Cookies  
 Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers  
 Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case  
 Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents  
 Prostitutes Appeal to Pope  
 Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over  
 British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands  
 Eye Drops Off Shelf  
 Clinton Wins on Budget, But More Lies Ahead  
 Teacher Strikes Idle Kids  
 Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant  
 Two Sisters Reunited After 18 Years in Checkout Counter  
 Never Withhold Herpes Infection From Loved One  
 Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges  
 Enraged Cow Injures Farmer With Ax  
 New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group  
 Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft  
 Arson Suspect Held in Massachusetts Fire  
 Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half  
 New Vaccine May Contain Rabies

## A BUCK, CUBA

Rich Lederer noticed that Elian Gonzalez, the Cuban boy caught in the famous Little Havana custody battle, is an alien, and that ELIAN is an anagram of ALIEN!