

COLLOQUY

Matt Jensen, a new subscriber, writes "By the way, allow me to say 'great job' to you for Word Ways. Or the nearly-palindromic "huzzah!" I found out about Word Ways about a week ago, and have been reading back issues at the local university ever since..."

The May Colloquy was too quick to call Sienna an erroneous spelling of the Italian city; Daniel McGrath notes that this spelling appears as an alternate in Webster's 10th Collegiate. John Connett adds "Well, it used to be called Sienna, or so saith my dictionary." Bill O'Connor notes "Spelling Siena 'Sienna' is neither a typo nor a mistake; Sienna was evidently the standard spelling well into the 19th century. Our word 'sienna' is derived from *terra di Sienna* (OED). The OED gives Siennese as a legitimate variant of Sienese, and Sienna, by implication, of Siena. Will the world never be safe for palindromists?"

Errata: In "Let's Trade Phantom Monkeys" the 10-letter examples are 8-letter ones, and the 12-letter example has only 10 letters in it. Dan Tilque corrects his answer to Question 2 in "Common Placenames"; it's Clinton, not Franklin. In the February Colloquy at the bottom of p 26, unfortunately should be infortunately. Daniel McGrath and Bill O'Connor both spotted a typo in "Palindromic Decalogues": canonize should have been canonise. "In Six-Letter Connoisseur's Ladders", the second word on the first line starting CABINS should be CABINE (vf), and the line below can be eliminated. In "Designer Isomorphs", Ohio and that are not non-crashing; how about Ohio-test instead?

Sir Jeremy Thorpe enjoyed "Prime Time" despite the "outrageously improbable words". He suggests a sixth test, whereby you reverse the letters and given them alphabetic numbers rather than reverse the forward alphabetic number. So, MEW reversed would be 23513, not 32531. On this test, GEEGS fails, 197557 being composite; indeed, the only "sextuple primes" would be CEC, CEK, GEG, KEC and MEM. It is much easier to produce a sextuple composite; the longest I can find is UNTRUTHFULLY.

Hugo Brandt Corstius has been searching for Dutch examples of Ouroboros worms (in *Making the Alphabet Dance*, word worms that bite their own tail), coming up with RIVIER VOL ZAND (river full of sand), and on a single plane, WEDUWE (widow).

Rex Gooch adds the following pi-words to the February 2001 article on this subject: ENSUIVRE (Chambers, early form of 'ensue'), SCHWAERMER (OED, meaning 'enthusiast'), VAGUITIES (Web 2) and VALVARLY (Stedman, 'like a valve'). So much for the idea that UNIVERSE is the only such word! And in "Near-Ideal Nine-Letter Word Ladders" he wishes to add a seventh condition: *all* words in an ideal word ladder should be heterograms.