

JAILHOUSE BUSINESSWOMAN DISCOURAGES GREGARIOUS BARRELHOUSING

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This brief article has its origins in the late 1960s, but has been inspired by more recent work in the last two or three years. Howard Bergerson, the then editor of *Word Ways*, wrote me in July 1969 asking if I could help fill any of the gaps in a list of words sent him by Ross Eckler, a list of words using the vowels AEIOU in the 120 different orders possible. Along with Dmitri Borgmann, I modestly filled a few gaps. The extended list eventually found its way into print as Ross Eckler's article "Unsociable Housemaid Discourages Facetious Behaviour" which appeared in the November 1969 *Word Ways*.

Over the years, additional gaps have been filled, improved words have been found for some of the AEIOU permutations, and more recently Susan Thorpe and Eric Chaikin have substantially revisited the subject. Susan Thorpe took a long look at AEIOU words in "AEIOU: A Thirty-Year Quest" (August 1999) and provided further updates in *Colloquy* (November 1999). Eric weighed in with "120 Supervocalic Permutations" (May 2000) and "AEIOU: Supervocalics in Webster's Third" (November 2000). As Eric said in his May 2000 article, "long shrift has been given recently to AEIOU words." Susan extended the problem with "AEIOUY Words" (August 2000).

Eric's article on supervocalics presented four lists of AEIOU words: (a) Webster's Third: Best Entry, (b) Webster's Third: Best of the Rest, (c) Ross Eckler et al's original list, plus accumulated additions and minor modifications, and (d) Susan Thorpe's OED-based list. Having recently acquired the CD-ROM of Webster's Third, I was able to use this in an attempt to improve on some of the words in Eric Chaikin's Webster's Third lists, and to plug some of the gaps. My comments follow.

Errata

First off, let's pick up on some minor errors which appeared in Eric's lists. I'm including these not because I'm trying to be picky, but because their presence confused me initially, and it's probably worth trying to allay confusion on the part of others.

- In the Untainted Section of Eric's lists, the combination AUEIO / CARBURETION should be corrected to AUEIO / CARBURETION
- In the Near Misses section, the words FIEULAMORT, POPLITAEUS and PULVERIZATOR are all indicated as coming from Webster's Third. This should be Webster's Second
- In the Solid Words section, COINTREAU should be spelled with an initial capital
- In the Multi-Word Phrases section, the AEUIO (Latin) word PRESUMPTIO should be corrected to PRAESUMPTIO. And the combination AUEIO / BLACK GULLEMOT should be corrected to AUIEO / BLACK GUILLEMOT (did anyone else notice that Eric's choice of terminology "Multi-Word Phrases" is itself an AEIOU term?)

Improvements and Observations

AEUIO The Best of the Rest list has PRAESUMPTIO, a Latin word occurring in the etymology of PRESUMPTION. This can be replaced with any of several multi-word terms: BASE BULLION, FALSE UNICORN, FLANGE UNION and SNAKE MUISHOND.

AOIEU The Webster's Third Best of the Rest list has GASOLINE PUMP. I think that CARBOLINEUM and SCAPHOIDEUS, both capitalized, are improvements. I prefer solidly spelt capitalized words to uncapitalized multi-word terms. Perhaps other readers disagree?

AUIEO BLACK GUILLEMOT is the best untainted term for this sequence, but there is a gap on the Best of the Rest list. How about plugging the gap with MANDT'S GUILLEMOT?

AUOEI The Best of the Rest list is empty for this combo! I suggest the addition of ADDUCTOR BREVIS, an uncapitalized term from Webster's Third.

EAIUO The best of the Rest list has BEATITUDO, a Latin word occurring in the etymology of BEATITUDE. This can be replaced with either of two multi-word terms: BREAK IN UPON and EARTH INDUCTOR.

EOIUA The Best of the Rest list has the near-miss (i.e., inferred) PRECOMMISSURAL. It is arguable whether this could be replaced by the two-word term YELLOWFIN TUNA. Although this contains the five vowels in the correct order, there is the issue of the initial Y. Eric has obviously avoided words and terms containing Y from his lists, but that seems unnecessary in an exercise concentrating on the five other vowels. Perhaps readers can decide for themselves.

IEAUO The Best of the Rest list has a gap for this sequence of the five vowels. How about plugging it with IN DEFAULT OF?

IEOAU The Best of the Rest list has the three-word term FINGER OF SATURN. This could be replaced by either of the two-word terms LIFEBOAT GUN or WHITE OAKUM.

IEUAO The Best of the Rest list has the three-word Latin term SINE QUA NON. It could be argued that the more English-looking two-word terms SILVER QUANDONG and SLIP REGULATOR are improvements.

IUEAO The Best of the Rest list has the near-miss SIX-HUNDRED-AND-TWO. This can be replaced by DISJUNCT TETRACHORD, an uncapitalized term from Webster's Third.

OAEIU The Best of the Rest list has the two-word term CONTRAST MEDIUM. I prefer the solidly spelt but capitalized DORCATHERIUM.

OAIEU The Best of the Rest has CONNAISSEUR, a French word occurring in the etymology of CONNOISSEUR. This can be replaced by FORK-TAILED GULL.

OAEUI The Best Entry list has the hyphenated term BLOCKADE-RUNNING. It may be worth noting the existence of the word PYROCATECHUIC in the two-word term PYROCATECHUIC ACID. Does the word's existence only as part of a multi-word term and its letter Y make it more or less preferable to the hyphenated BLOCKADE-RUNNING? If not, perhaps it should replace COTTAGE TULIP, given in the Best of the Rest list. Readers can choose for themselves.

OIUEA The Best Entry list has SOLIUFUGEAN, and marks it to show this is the only untainted word in Webster's Third with this specific vowel sequence. The Best of the Rest list has the two-word form CONTINUED BASS. The dictionary contains a Latin phrase from Roman law PACTUM DE CONSTITUENDA DOTE, with the third word having the appropriate sequence of vowels. It isn't clear whether Eric's criteria for taintedness include individual words from multi-word terms. If not, CONSTITUENDA is a nice new bedfellow for SOLIFUGEAN. If the taintedness criteria do extend to include individual words from multi-word terms, then perhaps CONSTITUENDA can be used to replace the two-word CONTINUED BASS. A difficult call!

UAIEO The Best of the Rest list has the near-miss (i.e., inferred) SUBCHAIRPERSON. This can be replaced by the uncapitalized two-word term DUDAIM MELON.

UEAOI The Best Entry list has UNREASONING, and marks it to show this is the only untainted word in Webster's Third with this specific vowel sequence. The Best of the Rest list has the three-word BLUE PARROT FISH. The word UNDECANOIC appears in the multi-word term UNDECANOIC ACID. Similar to the CONSTITUENDA problem above, UNDECANOIC could be a new mate for UNREASONING or could be a better choice than BLUE PARROT FISH.

UEIAO The Best of the Rest list has a gap for this sequence. It could be filled by MULLERIAN BODY, but let's look at the term more carefully first. The dictionary says the M is sometimes capitalized, but that's not a problem for the Best of the Rest list. The U has an umlaut over it—does this simply make it tainted or completely invalid for our purposes? And yet again, there's an obtruding Y—should this be ignored in an exercise cataloguing AEIOU words? Choose for yourself whether MULLERIAN BODY is preferable to a gap on the list.

UOAEI The Best of the Rest list offers nothing for this vowel sequence. This gap could be filled by the two-word term PULMONARY VEIN, but the presence of the letter Y might be objected to by Eric and others.

And what of the title of this article? Over 30-plus years, the original Unsociable Housemaid has evolved into a Jailhouse Buisnesswoman. And now, instead of discouraging Facetious Behaviour, she has moved on to discouraging Gregarious Barrelhousing. What will the next thirty years bring?