

## KICKSHAWS

*Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws editor at drABC26@aol.com. Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.*

### From 911 to 110

Monte Zenger sent the following eerie set of alphanumerical coincidences related to the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. His analysis involves two numbers in particular, both of which appear consecutively in the date: 9-11-01 and 9-11-01.

Each of the twin towers was 110 stories high, for a total of 220 stories. Suppose we assign the numbers 1 to 26 sequentially to the letters of the alphabet, and compute the value of a word by adding the values of its letters:

OSAMA BIN LADEN = 110

BUSH + CHENEY = 110

NINE ONE ONE = 110

PRESIDENT = 110

GEORGE + LAURA = 110

TWO ZERO ZERO ONE = 220

Moving to what's presently playing on the world stage: GEORGE + SADDAM = 99 =  $9 \times 11$ . And a historical footnote: ADOLF HITLER = 110.

### **“Why New York Brand, Texas Garlic Toast, Made in Ohio?”**

This well-stated question appears on the back of the box of Texas Toast, but it's followed by a disappointing answer that sounds like it was made up by corporate writers. I noticed that the real answer, only two words long, is spelled out in the initial letters and the final letters of the three state names. Obviously Anthony, the company's founder, is very industrious!

Texas Ohio New York = TONY  
neW ohio yoRK texaS = WORKS

### **The Pangrammatic Crossword Question**

Chris McManus writes “In the February 1970 Word Ways, there was a query that gave an 8x7 rectangle containing the 26 letters of the alphabet, and asked for a smaller pangrammatic crossword. Pangrammatic was defined to mean that it contained each letter exactly once. The attached word sets are not solutions for that question, as they include repeated letters.”

- Each of the two rectangles displays all 26 letters in crossword format
- One is nearly square, the other is only 9x3
- Both follow an alternate crossword style in which word boundaries are marked by lines rather than shaded spaces
- As traditional in crosswords, the patterns are 180 degrees symmetric
- The first crossword uses only words from the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary; the second includes the word ZINK, found in Webster's Second Unabridged
- They have a relatively large incidence of letter intersections, 14 of 30 letters in the first and 9 of 27 in the second.

F	C	V	E	X	G
J	A	M	B	Q	L
O	W	N	B	U	Y
R	S	T	R	I	P
D	K	H	I	Z	H

F	J	O	R	D	Z	I	N	K
Q	U	A	V	O	X	C	W	M
B	E	T	S	G	L	Y	P	H

### Reversed Number Convergence Series

Take a number, add up the alphabetic values (A=1 to Z=26) of the letters in its name, take the sum, and then *reverse the sum's digits* to get the second number in the series. Take the second number and repeat the process to get the third number. Continue this process until reaching a number previously entered in the series. Beginning with ONE, the series is 1,43,41,811,681,432,292,772,703,591,732,792,482,662,182,42,241,52,421,572,482...

ONE = 34, reverses to 43

FORTY-THREE = 140, reverses to 041 (41)

FORTY-ONE = 118, reverses to 811

EIGHT HUNDRED ELEVEN = 186, reverses to 681..

The series eventually enters the eight-number loop (in italics) 482,662,182,42,241,52,421,572. Do all numbers converge to the eight-number loop, or are there other loops or single-number convergence points? Are there any self-referential numbers--numbers whose alphabetic value sum reverses to the number itself?

This reversed number convergence series is similar to one discovered by Howard Bergerson and discussed in Borgmann's *Beyond Language*. However, Bergerson did not reverse the digits before proceeding, with the result that all numbers eventually converge to the five-number loop 240,216,228,288,255.

### A Postrophe Pot

Stuart Kidd asks "How many letters can a postrophe hold? I'D is a contraction of both I WOULD and I SHOULD in which the apostrophe 'contains' four (67 per cent of the total number) and five (71 per cent) letters respectfully [sic]. With two apostrophes, I'D'VE for I SHOULD HAVE

swallows seven of eleven (64 per cent) letters, and HA'P'ORTH (pronounced HAY-puth: HALF-PENNYWORTH) seven of its fourteen (50 per cent). That word appears in many dictionaries, including my (Aussie) Macquarie and even the shorter Oxford dictionaries." In the August 1996 Kickshaws, Fred Crane provided TO'GA'N'S'L (for TOPGALLANTSAIL, a seafarer's term in a Louis L'Amour novel). Both words have fourteen letters, half of which can be replaced by apostrophes. TO'P has the greater number of apostrophes (4 versus 2), but HA'P has the greater number of missing letters per apostrophe (3.5 versus 1.75).

Since apostrophes seem to be growing in their pop'ularity, I've got four more questions for dedicated apostrophe fans: (1) What is the longest word that can be shortened by one or more apostrophes? (Both TO'P and HA'P have 14.) (2) What is the greatest number of letters that can be replaced by a single apostrophe? (HA'P uses an apostrophe to replace ENNYW.) (3) What is the greatest number of *different* letters that can be replaced by all the apostrophes in a word of any length? (HA'P has 6 different letters out of 7, ELFNWY.) (4) What is the greatest number of *repeated* letters that can be replaced by all the apostrophes in a word? (TO'P has 4 out of 7, AALL.) Multiple word contractions that use 'S for IS, 'D for SHOULD, etc., aren't allowed, because they can be used with many host words, even TO'P and HA'P.

### **IOUEA Is Not Unique**

Susan Thorpe writes "In 'A Cretaceous Coup' (Word Ways 93085), I introduced IOUEA, a genus of fossil sponge. Until now, IOUEA has remained the only word to appear in Word Ways composed of one each of the 5 major vowels. Now, nearly 10 years later, I offer two companions. Bir AOUIE is a well in Chad, and OUAIE appears in three countries: OUAIE is a rock in Chad, Crique OUAIE is a stream in French Guiana, and OUAIE Sakkoum are hills in Mauritania."

### **New Half-Alphabet World Records**

Along with her five-vowel words, Susan has discovered several other record-breaking words. "What are the longest words which can be made from the first and second halves of the alphabet respectively? The longest to appear to date seem to be the 14-letter HAMAMELIDACEAE and the 11-letter NONSUPPORTS. HAMAMELIDACEAE made its first appearance in Word Ways 72026 in 'Brush Up Your Webster's' by Alden Myles and John Standish. NONSUPPORTS appeared somewhat earlier, on page 164 of *Language on Vacation* by Dmitri Borgmann. 30+ years seems a long time to have to wait for any improvements! I can now offer a first-half alphabet word with 17 letters, BAECCICIELGEJAKKA (the name of a stream in Norway) and two second-half alphabet words each having 13 letters TUTTOQQORTOOQ (an island in Greenland) and ROSSOUWSPOORT (the name of a pass and a farmstead in South Africa). This last word I dedicate to the editor of Word Ways."

### **The Longest Palindromic Sequence?**

And here's another possible record-breaker from Susan: "The 13-letter palindromic sequence in PAHALAWALAHAPITIYI (a populated place in Sri Lanka) must surely be a contender for the longest palindromic sequence forming part of a word."

### **Where Were We?**

Susan writes "In the November 2002 Kickshaws ('The Incredible Shrinking Word'), Mike Morton cited WHERE WERE WE? in which each word loses one or more letters to make the following word, keeping the letters in their original order. Here is a selection in which each word

loses one letter: HAIL HAL, AL; PATCH PATH, PAT; SWITCH WITCH WITH WIT (swap for a less-witty witch); MADGE (or MAUDE?) MADE MAD AD. In these, each word gains one letter: IT BIT BAIT; WE OWE OWEN; IT'S KIT'S KITES; LAD LAID LAIRD; BET BEAT BLEAT (she shut the window); HA, HAS HANS HANDS? and I'VE LIVE LIVER SLIVER." Sir Jeremy Morse came up with a headline about sluggish Far Eastern markets: COUNTRY-SIDE'S DISCOUNTERS' REDUCTIONS INTRODUCE NEUROTIC ROUTING—ORIENT INERT.

### **We Were Where?**

In answer to Mike's challenge, I wrote a few sentences that, in one way or another, use words whose letters come from a base word. Each sentence has a single letter that can be interpreted in different ways.

STONED? TONED? TONE ONE ON "N." (alternates dropping first letter and last letter)

"N" ON ONE TONE TONED? STONED! (alternates adding first letter and last letter)

WHIT HIT IT, "T," AT HAT. WHAT? (drops first letter until middle T, then adds first letter)

"TEACHER, TEACH TEA." "T?" (drops two letters each time)

REPAPER PAPER PER "R," ROY! ROYAL ROYALTY? (drops first two letters until middle R, then adds last two letters)

ATTRACT TRACT! ACT, "T!" ART? START, UPSTART! (drops first two letters until middle T, then adds first two letters)

### **Half-Alphabet Placenames**

Darryl Francis discovered a couple of interesting placenames on an armchair tour of Great Britain using only letters from one of the halves of the alphabet. BLACKHALL MILL is the name of a locality in the county of Northumberland, and the variant BLACK HALL MILL is a hamlet in the county of Durham. At the other end of the alphabet, STOUR PROVOST is a village in the county of Dorset. All three names appear in Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles, but only the last appears in the Times Index-Gazetteer. Can one find longer United States examples?

### **The Chemistry of Logology**

Darryl notes that in several instances the name of one chemical element is buried in the name of another: astaTINe, plaTINum, tERBIUM, ytterbium. In a unique instance of double embedment, there is acTINIum and protoACTINIUM. Several pairs of chemical element names are mutual substitute-letter transpositions:

argon-radon    barium-erbium    lithium-thulium    osmium-sodium    rhodium-thorium  
barium-radium    cerium-cesium    cerium-curium    cerium-erbium    hafnium-hahnium

Notice that the letter-substitution chain radium-barium-erbium-cerium-curium can be constructed. There are a couple of instances of element names being related through transadditions: neon-xenon, erbium-terbium. Finally, Darryl comments that only two element names share the same letter bank, the set of different letters contained in a word. The letter bank HILMTU provides both lithium and thulium.

## HIJKLMNO

The only two common words spelled by consecutive letters of the alphabet are HI and NO. They mark off an eight-letter segment of the alphabet that represents one of the commonest things in the world. What is its commoner name?

### French Flies

In the last Kickshaws, I mentioned two movie characters who tried to upgrade their names by pronouncing them with a French accent. Joe DIRT says "DEER-tay," and undercover agent PISSANT says "pee-SANH." Fred Crane points out an earlier example from the movies. "I would guess that both the examples in Kickshaws of movie names pronounced by French way are tributes to W.C. Fields. In *The Bank Dick* (1930), his heavy-drinking character's name is Egbert Souse, and he calls attention to the "accent grahve over the e" with the correct pronunciation being 'Sue-say.'"

### Hold The Homophone!

David Woodside writes "I've always liked homophones, words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings. A great example is the triple homophone PALATE, PALLET, and PALETTE. In a TV commercial someone said '...make a chick's knees wobble.' I heard this as the odd expression '...make a chick sneeze wobble...' Another time a radio announcer said '...in this week's news...' which I heard as '...in this weak snooze...' I think I'll write a weekly newsletter titled 'This Weak's Snooze'. In it I'll put such riddles as: How do you make a chick's knees wobble? Put a ticklish wobble in her nose!"

### The Pythagorean Theorem

The Pythagorean Theorem states that  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$  for a right triangle, where  $a$  and  $b$  are the lengths of the two sides that intersect at a 90-degree angle, and where  $c$  is the length of the third and longest side. In other words, adding the squares of the first two sides gives the square of the third side, and then taking the square root of the third side gives its length. Turning to logology, the alphabetic values ( $A=1$  to  $Z=26$ ) of certain extremely significant letters can be used to demonstrate in three simple steps the Pythagorean Theorem in the decimal system: (1) the first three letters of DECIMAL have alphabetic values of  $C=3$ ,  $D=4$ , and  $E=5$ , (2) the first two letters of PYTHAGOREAN and the third letter of TRIANGLE have alphabetic values of  $I=9$ ,  $P=16$ , and  $Y=25$ , (3) those two sets of letters form equations that represent the 3-4-5 triangle, the best-known right triangle of all ( $C^2 + D^2 = E^2$  equals  $I + P = Y$ , both 25). Ergo, Q.E.D. and R.S.V.P.

### Einstein's Theory of Relativity

In a related note, the word DECIMAL has the word MICE in reverse. The four letters in MICE transpose to Einstein's formula for the conversion of energy to matter— $E = MC^2$  (energy equals mass times the speed of light squared). Three of the letters are perfectly visible, but the fourth letter, I, isn't quite in the light—or is it? A quick logological check of the formula shows that the alphabetic value of C is 3 and that  $C^2$  is 9, the alphabetic value of I. Thus, all four letters are present and accounted for—EMCI. If that isn't enough, the letters of MICE form an appropriate acronym to represent the formula: Matter Is Converted Energy. If that still isn't enough, the letters of MICE in reverse form an equally appropriate back-up acronym that is also a word-unit reversal: Energy Converted Is Matter.

## Presidential Sentence

John H. Logie of Grand Rapids, Michigan created the following sentence which embeds the surnames of all 44 presidents: "The world we inhabit is irrevocably changed with zealots questioning our values, exhorting our enemies, and making jokes about us, but our passion for justice will preserve our future."

## Prez Prose

Inspired by John's presidential sentence, I tried my hand at writing a prose piece in which the presidents' surnames occur in overlapping words and in order of their presidencies. To do it, I had to use two words with variant spellings (bur = burr, charr = char), one unfamiliar word (col, a pass in a mountain range), one name of a character in an early surrealist play (Ubu in *Ubu Roi*), and a few other tricks of the trade. However, none of the words is simply made up. Almost, but not quite.

I, washing tons of clothes at a dam, see Jeff. Er, so no one makes him mad. Is one man a demon? Roes jump over a dam. A jack's on the front tire of my van. Bur envelops the fruit that we cook, but be careful—to charr is "on fire." Dancing in the French style reduces the polka to a waltz. Stay, Lord! Fill more seats in the theater and then return to the pier, celebrities! The play is Ubu. Chan, an old actor, climbs a hill in col, needing to find a john. Songs taken for granted include "A Roll in the Hay," "Escape from a Cigar," "Field of Dreams," and "Chart Hurricane Hazel." How chic, level, and cool, but remember: To charr is "on fire" still [sic]. Lev, elands roam the plains looking for the TV show's MC. Kin? Leyden jars line the shelves like the pouches of kangaroos, Ev. Elton John left after visiting Barrow, IL. Sonic booms rang out. Har! Dingbats flew overhead. Cool! I'd get an airplane to Soho. Overt jumping creatures are kangaroos, Ev. Elton John returned to strum an odd tune, "Is En How?" Error! "Em" is how type is correctly measured. You disagree? OK, "En," Ned! Yes, the john's on fire, too. Don't nix one's choice for details. A scar terrifies, but not as much as a fire. A gander on a bus has never scared anyone, not even Mr. Eastwood. Look! There's Clint on a bus home now.

## Slow Day in Traffic

"Stuck in traffic yesterday," Mike Morton writes, "my eye was drawn to a truck which said [phrase to the right]. Notice anything about it?"

DRY ICE  
DELIVERY SERVICE

## Mirror or Rim?

The word MIRROR reflects in an unusual way. It fits into a very nice palindrome: MIRROR OR RIM? However, the second half of MIRROR is the truly reflective part: in ROR, there is O, a mini-mirror with R on each side. The word OR, a homophone of the letter R, is spelled in both directions. Yet with the passage of time, even the best MIRROR will change, and in chAnGE there is AGE. At some point, AGE replaces ROR, and the reflection in the MIRROR is merely a MIRAGE.

## Duplicate Spelling

The word HULA, according to Webster's Tenth Collegiate, is "also HULA-HULA." There must be other dictionary or non-dictionary words that mean the same when their spelling is doubled by repeating the original set of letters (with or without a hyphen). My son has used the word BUM-

BUM to refer to BUM, as in butt. Any words with triplicate spelling? Do I hear laughter? HA! HA-HA! HA-HA-HA!

### Bathroom Rumor

Dr. Deb Suda writes the following: "There is a sign on the bathroom here [in the clinic] that says PATIENT TOILET. Is that as opposed to a 'harried toilet'?"

### A Person in Love With the Alphabet Goes to the Movies

Louis Phillips sent this amazing list of movie titles that, in most cases, begin with a single letter of the alphabet:

A-Haunting We Will Go (1942)	M (1931)
B F's Daughter (1948)	N.Y. N.Y. (1955)
C-Man (1949)	O'Henry's Full House (1952)
D-Day, The Sixth of June	P.J. (1968)
E.T. (1982)	Q Ship (1928)
F-Man (1936)	R.S.V.P. (1921)
G-I Blues (1960)	S.O.S. (1934)
H.M. Pulham Esq. (1941)	T-Men (1948)
I, A Woman (1966)	U-Boat (1963)
J'Accuse (1920)	W Play, The (1963)
K The Unknown (1924)	X, Y and Zee (1972)
L-Shaped Room (1963)	

### Man's Best Friend

In the quatrain at the right, Louis compares two legendary actresses. But I heard a nasty rumor that one of them was actually a male!

As a dog, Lassie  
Is pretty classy,  
But as a lover  
Liz Taylor ranks above her.

### The Title's the Thing

Long titles of books used to be popular, but now authors spend more time on the contents instead. Some critics say the shortening of titles is a sign that literature has forgotten its purpose. Others mourn the loss of literary innocence. A few believe that titles will soon disappear from the face of the earth and that, without titles to make them memorable, literary works will vanish, too. "Untitled," they say, "is a poor excuse for a title." "The road to hell," they say, "is paved with short, poor titles." In any case, the question arises: what is the longest title of a novel, poem, short story, play, or other work of literature? For a long time I've been assembling an anthology of long titles. At this point its working title is

THE BOOK OF TITLES, RANGING IN LENGTH FROM NOT TOO LONG TO VERY, VERY, VERY LONG, BEING A PLEASING COLLECTION, COMPILATION, COMPENDIUM, AND CYCLOPEDIA OF WORDY TITLES OF ALL KINDS OF LITERARY AND/OR NON-LITERARY WORKS, INCLUDING NOVELS, NOVELLAS, SHORT STORIES, SHORT SHORT STORIES, ESSAYS, AUTOMATIC WRITING, EPIC POEMS, SONNETS, HAIKU, OTHER FORMS OF PROSE AND POETRY, EVEN PROSE POETRY, AS WELL AS PLAYS, BROADSIDES, SKITS, BLURBS, BELLES LETTRES, LOVE LETTERS, DEAR JOHN LETTERS, JUNK MAIL, GRAFFITI, TEXTBOOKS, COMIC BOOKS, JOKES, CURSES, GREETING CARDS, ROCK SONGS, GREGORIAN CHANTS, HISTORIES, BIOGRAPHIES, PORNOGRAPHIES, SKY-WRITING, AND EPHEMERA, ALL OF WHICH HAVING BEEN

GATHERED, ASSEMBLED, AND ORGANIZED INTO A SINGLE VOLUME, A SMALL TOME, A MODEST THING THAT INCLUDES AN INVALUABLE APPENDIX OF FASCINATING TITLES THAT ARE LONGER THAN THE WRITINGS THEY NAME, FORMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THIS MUCH-NEEDED REFERENCE WORK, WHICH DEMONSTRATES ONCE AND FOR ALL TO YOU, DEAR READER, THE VAST IMPORTANCE OF HIGH-QUALITY TITLES, THE LONGER THE BETTER, SUCH AS THE TITLE OF 'THE BOOK OF TITLES...'

Louis Phillips sent a poem that would fit nicely in the book proper and in the appendix of titles that are longer than the writing they name. Here is his poem, preceded by its finely-crafted title:

A FILM PROJECTIONIST NAMED RON TELLS HIS GIRLFRIEND (WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE NAMED IRENE) THAT HE HAS SHOWN THE LATEST KUROSAWA MOVIE IN A COUNTRY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

I, Ron,  
Ran  
Ran  
In Iran,  
Irene.

### **The Smallest Dictionary in the World**

A few years ago, someone gave my son a Furby, an electronic toy that could learn how to talk its own language, called Furbish. As its mastery of language grew, it would blurt out words or phrases at random times. When I couldn't get it to stop blurting, I tried to turn it off, but I couldn't find an on-off switch. I finally figured out a way to pry its batteries out. Then, as I put it back in its box, I found a little book that had gone unnoticed under the cardboard—the "Electronic Furby Furbish-English Dictionary," the Rosetta Stone connecting our language to the language of that nightmarish machine creature. The dictionary is a little bigger than a playing card with squared edges. It has a cover and four pages numbered 1 to 4. There are 34 Furbish-to-English word entries, 40 English-to-Furbish word entries, and 10 Furbish-to-English phrase entries. As the language grows, so will Furbish literary tradition. I'm looking forward to the day they publish the Furbish translation of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" or Sylvia Plath's "Daddy." Meanwhile, does anyone know of a dictionary with fewer entries or fewer pages? Here are five entries from each of these categories:

BOO = NO  
E-TAH = YES  
MAY-MAY = LOVE  
O-KAY = OK  
WEE-TEE = SING

ASK = OH-TO-MAH  
FUN = DOO-AY  
GOOD = E-DAY  
JOKE = LOO-LOO  
SUN = DAH/AH-LO

Kah/toh-loo/may-tay = Me like kisses  
Wee-tee/kah/way loh = Sing me to sleep  
E-day/doo-ay/wah! = I like this!  
Nee-tye/kah = Tickle me  
Boo/koo-doh/e-day = Don't feel good



## Mulierology

On the title page of *Local and National Poets of America* (1890, The American Publishers' Association), the editor, one Thos. W. Herringshaw, is credited as the author of such best-sellers as *Home Occupations*, *Prominent Men and Women of the Day*, *Aids to Literary Success*, and *Mulierology*. Mulierology? I looked closer to see if it was Mineralogy, but it wasn't. There are many, many words I don't know, but most of them aren't the titles of books written by authors whose other books use everyday words like *Home Occupations*. I looked it up in several dictionaries, including an 1864 unabridged Webster's as well as the OED. Although I didn't find it listed in any of them, the OED provided the best clues. In 1375, used as a noun, *mulier* meant "Wife," a good wholesome term. About that time, its adjectival meaning was "Of a child: Born in wedlock, legitimate, as opposed to 'bastard'; also in *Eccl. Law*, legitimized by marriage." That last phrase means the child was technically a bastard, conceived out of wedlock, but the parents were married in the nick of time, before the child was born. In 1721, the adjective *mulierose* meant "fond of women." Back in 1664, the noun *mulierosity* meant "excessive fondness for women," and that definition seems to have lasted at least two centuries, as this quote from 1860 suggests: "So prithee tell me; how did you ever detect the noodle's mulierosity?" Oh, behave, baby! A funny question like that sounds like something you'd hear in one of the Austin Powers movies. Still, there is no dictionary entry or mention of *mulierology*. Does it have to do with wives, legitimate children, children legitimized by marriage, and/or horny guys with an excessive fondness for women? Is there a mulierologist in the house?

## An Even Number of Odd Letters

On page 165 of *Language on Vacation*, Borgmann proposes QUASI SUCCESS as the longest term using only letters from odd-numbered positions in the alphabet (ACEGIKMOQSUY). Darryl Francis offers a slight improvement with the hyphenated term QUASI-SAGACIOUS.

## Self-Synonymy

Anil has come up with a concept that seems almost like a linguistic Mobius strip, which he describes as follows: "A self-synonym is the opposite/complement of a contronym. It's two words of unrelated origin that are spelled the same and have about the same meaning. Suggested names for it include 'ipsonym,' 'iterogram' and 'synonym' (oops, taken). I haven't actually found any yet, so it may be a null category not deserving a name. But I've noted a close approximation to one in the dual word RIVER. A river divides and shapes the land; it's a rive-r or sculptor. Rive is of Scandinavian ancestry, river Latin. Compare ARRIVER, which is related to the waterway but is an unrelated opposite of rive-r, a joiner v. a separator. Intriguingly similar to the classic contronym CLEAVE, to hold together *or* to rive. Also of interest would be homophonic self-synonyms. I haven't given this one any thought yet but I suspect they will be easier to find than literal ones, especially if some latitude is given to the degree of homophony. (Should near-homophones be called homophonies? Or is that word reserved for undercover cops in gay bars?) Has anyone seen any of these concepts before? Or the RIVER example? Do any readers know of any other words approximating self-synonymy?"

## Is Contronym a Contronym? No, So Yes

Anil adds a paradoxical note about contronyms: "a contronym, as most Word Ways readers know, is a single spelling that has two opposite or complementary meanings. But the word 'contronym' is not itself a contronym for it has no double meaning. Not until I came along! I

declare that it *is* a contronym for the simple reason that it isn't! It is both a self-opposite and not a self-opposite. QED.

You may dispute some of the following contronyms; the first two are jokes, the rest more legit.

EXTRAORDINARY not ordinary; exceptionally ordinary

BOUNDLESS unbounded; bounded by inability or failure to bound off

DIET food; anti food

MOSEY decamp quickly or go fast; stroll off leisurely

REACH move toward; be at (arrive!)

SKIN remove; add to (as a skin to a drum)

SPARE to save from being discarded; to discard (as 'spare me the details')

SUCCEED lead; follow

### Go And Syn No More

Anil's discussion of self-synonymy reminded me of the following unusual relationships between SYNONYM and ANTONYM: the word SYNONYM has no synonym, but ANTONYM is its antonym, and the word ANTONYM has no synonym, but SYNONYM is its antonym. This means that SYNONYM's antonym's antonym is the antonym of ANTONYM's antonym's antonym.

### Bunyips: The Poem

Jay Ames sent the following poem about a creature little-known in North America. As Jay explains: "Reading an article on Australia in the past few days reminded me that they have weird critters down under other than the kangaroo, the wombat, the platypus, etc. This one is what the aboriginals dub 'bunyip'. Striking the leprechaunic chord it did, and I 'toised voice at me woist.' Hope it brings a chuckle or three."

Bunyips haunt the rushy spots and places where the damp  
 requires no English bumbershoot, no brollies, nor a gamp.  
 They're worse than gramblings, leprechauns, and sundry gnarly gnomes  
 you wouldn't want around your fence, much less inside yer homes.  
 Just ask the Aussie Wamba folk—they'll tell you how they roar  
 enough to scare the kangaroos and wombats from your door.

### Ironic Iconics

Mike Miller points out the irony behind computer icons, those little hieroglyphics of the computer age that are intended to symbolize program functions or other things in the e-world. For instance, a drawing of a rural mailbox usually symbolizes e-mail. Icons, Mike said, were supposed to replace words in order to save computer memory. After awhile, however, the computer makers realized that not everyone knew what all the icons meant. To solve the problem, they put words next to the very icons that were supposed to replace words. What is the icon for "word"?

### Noted Philosophers

David Armstrong sent a list of philosophers noted for many things, including, well, you'll see...

George WILL    Rollo MAY    Herman KAHN    Robert WOOD    Immanuel KANT