THE SPECULATION PUZZLE

JEREMIAH FARRELL
Indianapolis, Indiana
Farrell@butler.edu

The SPECULATION puzzle is an (11,3) word configuration using the eleven words OUI, PUN, UTE, COP, LOT, SIC, LIP, SAL, TAN, ACE, and SEN. The puzzle is to arrange the words on the eleven nodes of the graph so that every "line" of three (either on a straight line segment or on an arc) contains three words with a single letter in common. See "Puzzles and Games on Word Configurations" in the November 2001 issue of Word Ways for details about this type of puzzle.

There are 31 non-isomorphic (11,3) configurations and this puzzle is the first found of type (n,3) whose automorphism group is trivial. This means that the solution to the puzzle is unique (answer is found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue). It is also possible to play a tic-tac-toe like game on the nodes of the graph. The first player can always force a win. The analysis is left to the reader