

KICKSHAWS

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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.

San Francisco Earthquake Horror

At this writing, it's earthquake season in California. This is a good time to turn to a book I bought a few years ago at a garage sale for \$2.50 titled *San Francisco Earthquake Horror* by Hubert D. Russell. It's a great book, with a horrifying cover showing buildings quaking, a drawing no less, with eerie crumbling letters spelling out the title. It was published shortly after the 1906 quake, and at some point my copy got submerged in water. The pages are wrinkled because of the water, but it's not mildewed or dry rotted in any way. In a previous Kickshaw, the topic of long book titles came up. This book has the longest title-with-subtitle that I've ever seen. See if you can inhale as much as you can and then read the whole thing aloud without taking a breath. (On the third try I made it all the way to the end--just barely.) If you tried it, you're out of breath now. If you succeeded, congratulations! If you didn't, keep trying until you do. There you go—success at last!

Note how cleverly the title incorporates the names of two other authors; the principal author's name is on the copyright page. Here's the title-subtitle in all its quaky grandeur:

SAN FRANCISCO Earthquake Horror

A Comprehensive and Connected Account of the Terrible Tragedy that Befell the People of Our Golden City—The Metropolis of the Golden Gate, and the Death and Ruin Dealt Many Adjacent Cities and Surrounding Country. Destroying Earthquake Comes Without Warning, in the Early Hours of the Morning; Immense Structures Topple and Crumble
Great Leland

Stanford University Succumbs; Water Mains Demolished and
Fire Completes Devastation; Fighting Fire with Dynamite.

SCENES OF DEATH AND TERROR

Thousands Killed, Maimed, or Unaccounted For; Tens of Thousands Without Food or Shelter; Martial Law Declared; Millions Donated for Relief; Congress Makes an Appropriation; Sympathetic Citizens Throughout the Land Untie Their Purse-Strings to Aid the Suffering and Destitute; Property Loss Hundreds of Millions; Appalling Stories by Eye Witnesses and Survivors; the Disaster as Viewed by Scientists, etc.

Comprising Also a Vivid Portrayal of the Recent Death-Dealing

ERUPTION OF MT. VESUVIUS

BY RICHARD LINTHICUM

of the Editorial Staff of the Chicago Chronicle.

Together with twelve descriptive chapters giving a graphic and detailed account of the most interesting and historic disasters of the past from ancient times to the present day.

BY TRUMBULL WHITE

Historian, Traveler and Geographer.

Profusely illustrated with Photographic Scenes of the Great Disasters and Views
of the Devastated Cities and Their People.

A Punctuation Conundrum

Rich Lederer and Gary Hallock, director of the Great American Pun-Off in Austin, Texas, have this punctual puzzle for you to solve:

what is a four letter word for a three letter word which has five letters yet is still spelled with three letters, while it has only two and rarely has six and never is spelled with five

Jawbreaker Words

Eric Iverson has taken a game of balls and made it into a game of words—Jawbreaker Words. As Eric describes it “Jawbreaker is a game where you are presented with a grid of colored balls. If two or more directly adjacent balls are the same color, they can be selected and deleted. The remaining balls then move into the resulting space. If this brings together two or more previously non-adjacent balls of the same color, they can be selected and deleted, etc... The game stops when no groups of two or more directly adjacent colored balls are left.

“I define a jawbreaker word as one where all substrings of two or more of the same letter can be successively deleted, leaving at the end of the process a legal word. For example, one can remove NN and then II from SHINNIED, resulting in SHED. I give each word a score based on the number of letters that can be deleted; I limit results to words that yield a score of seven or more, and result in a final words of four or more letters. MISSISSIPPIANS with a score of ten results in MANS, VILLIANESSES and TENNESSEANS with scores of eight result in VANS and TANS, and TENNESSEANS and DRUNKENNESSES with scores of seven result in TANS and DRUNKS. There are a host of words with scores of six or less.”

Letter-Product Equivalency

“On page gq of *Opperlans!*,” the editor writes, “Hugo Corstius presents a 5x8 grid with FORTY and CUARENTA (Spanish for 40) inscribed on a vertical and a horizontal line, respectively. Are there any other number names from English and another language for which the product of the letters is equal to the number name? The only possible candidate number names in English are 6 (3 letters), 12 (6), 30 (6), 33 (11), 36 (9), 40 (5), 45 (9), 50 (5), 54 (9), 56 (8), 60 (5), 70 (7), 81 (9), 88 (11), 90 (6), 100 (10), 112 (16), 150 (15), 170 (17), 200 (10), 240 (15), 252 (18), 300 (12), 304 (16), 340 (17), 405 (15), 406 (14) and 418 (19), through 450. The only number names in other (common) languages that I have been able to find are Italian QUARANTA and French QUARANTE in the original example, plus French DEUX CENT QUARANTE (16) for 240. I deliberately refrained from looking for rarer language examples in the number problem, hoping that readers would do so.”

Two things are needed to find answers to this problem. First, the handy list above that Ross provided of possible English number names, and second, a book containing number names in other languages. I used Karl Menninger’s fascinating book *Number Words and Number Symbols: A Cultural History of Numbers* (MIT Press, 1969). Here are the ones I found, most of which are in less-common languages. Can readers find other examples?

TWELVE is *da* in Irish

THIRTY is *preis* in Gothic

FORTY is *de-ugient* in Welsh and *deu ugens* in Cornish

FIFTY is *pese-dhiete* in Albanian and *lahu-y-oxkal* in Mayan

SIXTY is *tre-sinds-tyve* in Danish

SEVENTY is *ant-sibunda* in Old Saxon and *dec ar tri-ug* in Welsh

ONE HUNDRED is *een honderd* in Dutch, *en hunderod* in Old Saxon, and *ein zehan-zo* in Old High German

Nine-Integer Magical Square

In the website *rec.puzzles*, Eric Angelini asked readers to find a nine-integer magical square where all eight alignments of three numbers would share a distinct letter. William Rex Marshall found the solution at left below in which the total of the nine numbers is 215:

3	7	5	E	3	13	14	R
2	46	4	O	2	1	4	O
8	36	104	H	8	7	5	E
T	S	F	diagonals I,R	T	N	F	

The editor comments that it would be more meaningful to find a true magic square with this property, in which at least the rows and the columns had a common letter (ignoring the diagonals). How about it, Lee Sallows? Considering just rows and columns as Ross suggests, there are several possible problems. For instance, which set of nine numbers has the shortest span from lowest to highest? The perfect square of this type would have nine numbers and a span of 8. The set at the right above goes from 1 to 14 and thus has a span of 13. It wasn't hard to assemble, but can a square with a shorter span be found? Are there any perfect squares? If not, what is the square having the smallest span? Can a four-square be found?

Soft Shoe Fits Hero

An interesting letterplay feature can be squeezed out of Angelini's square. If you take the middle letter of the horizontals and add it to the vertical, and the middle letter of the verticals and add it to the horizontal, the resulting sets of four letters transpose to *soft shoe*. In other words, TSF+O and EOH+S = SOFT SHOE. And then if you add one diagonal to the verticals, and the other diagonal to the horizontals, the resulting sets of four letters transpose to *fits hero*. In this case, TSF+I and EOH+R = FITS HERO. Now what that means is a completely different question...

American State Names as Personal Names

According to the editor, in the *Rootsweb Review* of Apr 13 2005 an obituary from the *Hampshire Review of Romney*, West Virginia states: "Montana Crosen, 85, of Winchester, formerly of Cross Junction, died Wednesday March 9 2005...Mr Crosen was born November 6 1919 in Frederick county, the son of Utah and Rhode Island (Place) Crosen...Surviving is a brother, Kansas Crosen. Three brothers, Oklahoma Crosen, Georgia Crosen and Vermont Crosen, and five sisters, Virginia Mayes, Minnesota Bishop, Maryland Wingfield, Florida Sfitler and Tennessee Hovermale, are deceased." Ross notes that Utah Crosen's family is enumerated in the 1930 Federal Census in Gainesborough, Frederick County, Virginia. A search of the 1930 census by given name revealed none for Massachusetts and only one each for Rhode Island and Connecticut, but many were called Texas, Indiana, Arizona, Kansas, Maine and Louisiana. Most were daughters, but Ohio and Vermont were mostly names for sons.

A Whale of a Homophone That I'm Parroting to my Friend

Edward (Ted) Murray of Hagatna, Guam wrote to Rich Lederer, punmaster of the English-speaking world, about an amazing pair of words: "After reading *Treasure Island* 50 years ago, then finishing off *Moby Dick* last week, a most amazing homonym possessed me. Could there be a more outrageous pair of adjectives so oddly conjoined in [sound] and disparity of creatures involved: *cetaceous* (refers to whales and dolphins) and *psittaceous* (refers to parrots)?"

Rich replies "My strong hunch is that you are the very first person on this planet to have noted this particular homophone. Please note that I use the term homophone rather than homonym. I find the latter term useless because nobody can agree about what it is. I'm sharing your insight with a friend of mine who writes a column for Word Ways."

A Tip O' the Hat

Regarding "At the Edge of Words" in the May Kickshaws, Ed Wolpow writes "Your next-to-last OFF should be DOFF. But is DON/DOFF so puzzling after all? Dictionary derivation seems to be DO ON = DON and DO OFF = DOFF." I doff my hat to Ed. Next time I will don the dictionary.

"Where Is Your Blue-eyed Boy Now, Mr. Death?"

The title of this Kickshaw is the last line of an ee cummings poem beginning "Buffalo Bill shot onetwothreefourfive clay pigeons just like that..." Is this the first time that a "Mr. Death" appears in print? Are there any other Mr. Deaths around? There are two Dr. Deaths, one being Dr. Jack Kevorkian and the other the ring name of a professional wrestler. In both cases, they are nicknames. There is a real-life Death in the world today, and he's not one of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Ove Michelsen sends the following news article about what happens when Death breaks the law. The article in question is "Death Charged in Theft From Cemetery" by Associated Press writer Frank Eltman. You can tell the writer enjoyed giving the name Death a lot of the ironic play in the story. To begin with, the first paragraph talks about Donald Death of Locust Valley, which recalls Longfellow's Charge of the Light Brigade: "Into the Valley of Death rode the \$300,000." But read on:

NEW YORK – His name is Death, and prosecutors say he stole from a cemetery. Donald Death, Jr., 60, of Locust Valley, was arraigned Wednesday on charges he stole nearly \$300,000 from the Locust Valley Cemetery association on Long Island. Death, who is the chairman and assistant treasurer of the cemetery association, pleaded not guilty to two counts of second-degree grand larceny and one count of third-degree grand larceny for allegedly using cemetery funds for his own purposes, a spokeswoman for Nassau county District Attorney Denis Dillon said in a statement. Death was released on his own recognizance and was ordered back to court April 6. If convicted he would face up to 15 years in prison.

The charges follow an audit of the cemetery association that took place last summer. The audit found that Death wrote checks totaling \$170,000 from the cemetery association's account to Harbor Fuel Co. Inc., at which Death served as president, CEO and 54 percent shareholder, Dillon said. The audit also found that Death used an association employee to provide landscaping and other work on properties he and his father owned and added a family member to the association's health and dental insurance plans, prosecutors said. The total amount of money diverted by Death was estimated at more than \$293,000, Dillon said.

Death's attorney, Melvin Roth, said the entire amount has been repaid to the association. He said he was "disappointed the district attorney filed criminal charges, especially because everyone concerned has been made whole from this unfortunate incident." He called Death an "upstanding member of the community

who has served on many boards and charities” and attributed the incident to “business pressures Mr. Death was experiencing.” “We anticipate a favorable conclusion,” he said.

Deathly Fantasy

Taking the Deathly story further, suppose Mr. Death had murdered someone, a victim named Miss Life. Here’s the AP story that would follow: “Last night, Mr. Death killed Miss Life, who was reading a Life Magazine on the bus. When Life departed from the bus, so did Death. Death stalked Life for two blocks to her house. He went inside with her, and that was where she met her death. Mr. Death took Life’s life that night in her kitchen. An investigation into Life’s death revealed that Life and Death were lovers, living together, but Life was becoming tired of Death and wanted to break up. That night Death threatened Life’s life. Life tried leaving Death by taking the bus, but Death jumped on behind Life. “No!” said Death furiously, “if you leave me, you will meet your death before you get out the bus door!” Life raced out at the next stop and left Death in her dust, but Death quickly caught up with Life. “You’re not going to leave alive, Life.” To prove his point, Death punched Life hard over and over. Life protested Death’s deathly blows. Life threatened Death, but Death ignored Life’s words and beat Life to death in her home. Death’s trial lasted six months. Death wanted life in prison with a chance for parole, but the judge gave Death death. The prisoners became friends with Death. The guard told the other prisoners that they will die soon after Death dies. Now the other prisoners are scared to death of the death of Death on Death Row.

Travel Office Tale

Bill Brant tells of a recent trip to the local travel office: “I noticed that when the names of the travel office staff and their clients are combined, they seem to tell a story about one client trying to arrange a vacation trip.” The travel office speaks first, followed by the client:

Kenny Hillpue? Ivana C. DeWelt.
 Wanda C. Europe? Arthur Toors.
 V.F. Manny. Connie C. DeBrosurs?
 Alma Gettum. Don Giovanni Moore.
 Bud F. Korse! Aloysius Sunshine.
 N. Sunny Skies? Anita Rekamendashoon.
 Anne D. Lucia? Agatha Goh.
 Winnie U. Gowin? Venus A. Goodtim?
 June S. DeBest. Emma Chisit?
 Manny Bucks. Viola Kost?
 Hugo Firstclass. Sarah Cheaperone?
 Donna C. Any. Ken I. Tinkaboutit?
 Ivan I. Dea. Hope S. Cheaper!
 April N. Paris. Ottis S. Goud!
 Ed B. Locust. Fitz Meewallet.
 Juan D. Full! Dewey Pacalot?
 Chester Cameron Philm. I Wanda Tinku.
 Obadiah M. Gladtahep.

Blues For Whites

Ove Michaelsen is a musician as well as wordplayer. He wrote me about the difficulty of a white guy being taken seriously in playing the blues. ("Play that funky music, white boy!") Under my bluesy pseudonym of Uptowndownlow, I tried to console Ove with this little poem:

If you can't play the blues
 'Cause you ain't paid your dues,
 Grab your balls, clubs, and jeans
 And you can play the greens.

Reviews That We Wouldn't Like to See

Ove sends the following list of reviews of his stagemanship. Are they for real? Let's flash back to the eighties for a minute and remember these koans: "It's good to be bad" and "It's hip to be square." These reviews should be worn proudly as red badges of courage.

He's been known to outnumber an entire audience (*Open Mic Journal*)

Man, can HE fill an empty chair! (*Views and Reviews*)

He's a dead ringer for Brad Pitt, minus the body and face (*The Evening Rag*)

Guitarded (*Fret Magazine*)

He's living proof that the stage is where a performer can attend his own funeral (*Cynics Monthly*)

Wild Words

Alexian Gregory assembled the following list of words that have unique or near-unique spelling properties:

QUINCUNX the only English word ending either in *unx* or *cunx*

WELTANSCHAUUNG one of a few words with *uu* (others include *vacuum*, *continuum*, *residuum*, *duumvirate*; also see the August 1988 Kickshaws)

STAR spelled backwards it's *rats*; spelled from the inside out right to left it's *arts*; spelled inside out left to right it's *tsar* (I know of no other word that can do this)

NTH the only word in modern English with not a single vowel (acronyms don't count)

PHTHISIS one of a very few words starting with four consonants

HEADACHE, HEARTACHE the only words I know beginning and ending with *he*

STOMACHACHE the only word I know with the *achach* combination

CHURCH the only word I know beginning and ending with *ch*

Follow-Ups

Rex Gooch sends these follow-ups to the May Kickshaws:

The Rainbow Colors: Unless I've gone crazy, red is low frequency. By the way, indigo and violet as two separate colours has long been contentious.

Fraternity Names: Where you had Eta Beta Pie, I always knew the accurate Eta Beta Pie—that's because we pronounce beta as "beeta" not "bayta". Your Sigma Phi Nothing actually reads Sigma Phi Omicron, as you put an uppercase O rather than a zero (0).

Wasted Wordplay

“Two years ago,” writes Ove, “I lost interest in online chatting and wasted a lot of anagrams on the nicknames of regulars of the #30Plus channel on IRC’s Efnets. Only a few of the anagrams were keepers. Among the wasted ones were ED—SOUTH CAROLINA (the resident chef of the channel) = HAND OUT CALORIES, and CAROLENA = AN ORACLE. One of the keepers was two women whose nicknames were anagrams of each other: NICE GAL and ANGELIC. The lengths I’ve gone to amuse...it’s a crying shame.”

The Glory That Is eBay

Have you heard of ‘eBay pulse’? It’s a listing of eBay’s top ten auctions in terms of how many people viewed them. It’s funny to see which topics attract the most attention. Mystery auctions like *Buy My Fat Wallet* and weird auctions like the *Blessed Virgin Cheese Sandwich* make up three or four of the top ten. Boring investment properties and even more boring farm equipment make up the rest. Farm equipment? Yes, but don’t ask me why twenty thousand or more people would view a tractor described as “a good little machine.”

I’ve noticed a trend toward people concocting elaborate stories to go with what they are selling. It’s becoming a folk literature genre. *Help Me Say Hello to My Daddy in Korea*, *What the Runaway Bride Really Did*, *I’m Back to Sell Da Ole Hag’s Bag*, and *My Daughter Wants to Find the Tooth Fairy* were on the auction block this past week. Classify these four in order of appearance as super cute, obsessively goofy, rabidly homicidal, and kee-razy. Actually, they sound like the titles of country ‘n’ western songs.

Like them? Here are some more: *The First Real Time Machine*, *The Baseball That Started it All*, *The Popcorn Poodle*, *The Million-Dollar Vault*, *The Car Hidden Under the Snow*, and *I Found the Runaway Bride on My Toast*. As you can see, the news story about Jennifer Wilbanks, the woman who skipped out on her wedding, was a big hit on eBay. In fact, there were at least 140 auctions for different things related to the Runaway Bride, including five that involved toast! Those toast auctions all had stories to go with them.

Moving along, one of the most popular stories of all time so far was an epic tale of cheating, *My Sexy Wife’s Out of Town and I’m Selling Her Stuff*, which went on for several auction listings and attracted well over one hundred thousand onlookers. The guy milked that one for all he could. He called himself Reverend Robb, and his last auction was for a signed photo of himself! His adventures inspired *Da Ole Hag* stories mentioned above.

The winner in the Most Unbelievable Category was a Good Samaritan tale titled *The Pants That Jesus Wore*. You want a synopsis? Here is an instant replay from memory. It was a cold winter’s night, and a storm popped up, and Jesus appeared in this guy’s house, and the guy could see that Jesus was cold, so he loaned the Savior a shirt, a pair of pants, and some grey underwear. After a few hours of conversation, Jesus said he had to get going. Our Lord returned the shirt, pants and grey underwear, and then left. The lucky guy kept the sacred clothing for about twenty years. Then God said “Let there be eBay” and next thing you know, a woman sold the *Virgin Mary Grilled Cheese Sandwich* for \$37,000, and another woman sold *The Pope’s Face on a Chicken Breast* for \$140—a big drop in value from Savior to Pontiff (you can sure tell who’s more popular on eBay). An on-line auction house, Golden Saddle, has won many of these items, and has gotten one hundred times their value in the publicity they generated. Their auction site shows the *Cheese Sandwich* which now has over two million browsers! Those two miraculous auctions were enough to convince the guy with the clothes he loaned Jesus that the time had come to share

his holy wardrobe with the world, beginning with the pants. I assume he was going to have two more auctions, one for the shirt and the other for the underwear, but we'll never know. eBay cut the first auction—no pants auction—effectively ending the seller's religious fervor. Or perhaps the poor fellow was struck dead by a lightning bolt. That would be more dramatic and more in keeping with the spirit of eBay.

The Minnesota-Sitomanee Problem

"While browsing the Internet recently," Darryl Francis writes, "I came across the name SITOMANEE. This was the name of a village in Kurtz Township, Minnesota, which was incorporated on May 23, 1857; no trace remains. What makes SITOMANEE so interesting is that it uses all the different letters of its state name, AEIMNOST, and it differs from MINNESOTA by only one letter, two E's instead of two N's, making it a substitute-letter transposition. Are Word Ways readers able to find any comparable town names in other states?"

Darryl followed up his original discussion with several variations on the theme. "I guess there's various strands to the MINNESOTA-SITOMANEE problem. The two themes of a common letter pool and substitute-letter transposition works because MINNESOTA has a second N, allowing it to be changed to one of the other letters (E) in the letter pool. You can't do the same trick with state names that don't repeat letters. For example, consider MAINE. To do a substitute-letter transposition, you've got to drop one of the unique letters, and the result (whatever it is) no longer shares the same letter pool (MAINE has MINCE as a substitute-letter transposition, but the words no longer share the same letter pool). Of course, you can look for words longer than MAINE that share the letter pool (for example, ANAEMIA or MANIERE in Webster's Second), but these are no longer substitute-letter transpos.

"But where there's one or more repeat letters, you can attempt to replicate the trick. For example, in NEVADA you can drop one of the duplicate A's and replace it with any of N, V, E or D (for example, EVADNE, VANNED). But these six-letter examples look pretty weak alongside MINNESOTA-SITOMANEE.

"TENNESSEE-TENSENESS works. From TENNESSEE, drop the fourth E, add another S, and rearrange to get TENSENESS, the same length as MINNESOTA-SITOMANEE. Any other examples? Try WISCONSIN-WICONISCO. The latter is a place in Pennsylvania. Any longer examples, I can't find any."

Anagram For the Two Sides of Romance

EVILDOER = I LOVED 'ER.

New Film

Louis Phillips writes "I am working on a new film, Dr. Jekyll and Dr . Jekyll. A scientist drinks a dangerous potion but it has no effect on him whatsoever."

Lower-Upper Case Letters

The cow is a farm animal whose name is spelled with letters that look the same in lowercase and uppercase in the singular—cow and COW—and in the plural—cows and COWS. The castrated male of the same species has a name that works the same way in the singular only—ox and OX. Another farm animal with names that work that way is a sow and SOW, pluralizing to sows and

SOWS. In a zoo, the first thing that stands out is that zoo and ZOO look the same. Birds coo and COO in the ZOO. What other words don't change their looks in a major way from lower to uppercase? Some people might like to let Pp in this exclusive club of shapes. This would be a fine addition, but in lower case it goes below the line. COPS and cops have letters looking the same, but the p makes the words look different. Others might suggest Uu, but the bottom right of the small u has a serif on it that the big U doesn't have. Still, that is nit-picking. They look so alike that they are admitted into the lower-upper case club. CUSS and cuss look alike. Another letter is Kk. The lowercase k has an uppercase back line; sock has the k extending above the rest of the word, but SOCK does not. Like COP and cop, these two must be viewed with a grain of salt. COPY and copy show another problem—the curving shape of the lowercase y doesn't match the sturdy straight shape of the uppercase Y. The ghostly word SPOOKY in lowercase shows the three flawed letters: spooky. The best lower-upper letters are cosuvwxz. What are the longest words using only lower-upper letters? COUSCOUS, a North African dish of steamed semolina, looks just like itself in lowercase: couscous. Its etymology can be traced back to the eleven-letter COUSCOUSSOU, matching couscoussou. These words are made of curved letters exclusively.

One + Twelve = Eleven + Two Revisited

Anil gives us a heartbreaking revelation about this well-known anagram: “My opinion of this anagram as the most perfect of all English anagrams suffered a bit of a setback when I finally got around to checking out the etymologies. Alas, they're as thick as thieves! Likewise, and not surprisingly, two and twelve as well as one and eleven have the same roots. Don't you just hate it when a beautiful fantasy is tarnished? But not shattered—it's still an incredibly good and surprising anagram. Nor does this imperfection diminish the many other coincidences I found for the equation (see my articles in Nov 2002 and August 2004).”

Some Self-Defining Glyph Words: #as#, st*r, s/ash

“Similarly, but naughtily,” says Anil in a wonderfully appropriate observation, “BOOB is a triply (or sex-tuply) self-depicting word—a frontal view flanked by two Dolly Parton top views.” Now that's hot!

Synonym Musings

Anil poses the logological question “WHIP and LASH are synonyms, yet WHIPLASH is not. Any others?”

He proposes “an exercise in turning a word into its opposite via a chain of synonyms: brilliance = resemblance to the brill (a flatfish) = flatness = dullness.”

And he found this amazing physiological twist. “And a first (and last?) example of a similar form employing chains of synonyms to turn non-synonymic anagrams into synonyms: spine = thorn = prick = penis. It was a lucky coincidence, not a requirement, that all four words were of the same length.”

Poet Tree Without Mist Aches

Judith Bridges sends the following poem that appeared anonymously on the internet. Its title above indicates the computer-wise language you are about to read:

I have a spelling chequer
 It came with my pea sea.
 It plainly marks for my revue
 Miss steaks I cannot sea.
 Each thyme when eye have struck the quays
 I weight for it to say
 If watt I rote is wrong or rite.
 It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is made
 It nose bee fore two late
 So eye can make the error rite
 End I shall see—its grate!
 I've run this poem threw it,
 I'm sure yore policed two no.
 Its letter perfect in its weigh:
 My chequer tolled me sew.

Giving More than 100 Per Cent

Here is a terrific little math exercise provided by Judith. When letters and numbers do the meaning dance, interesting secrets pop up to the surface. What makes 100%? What does it mean to give more than 100%? If A=1, B=2, ... Z=26, HARD WORK is 98%, KNOWLEDGE is 96%, and ATTITUDE is 100%, but BULLSHIT is 130%, and look how far ASS KISSING will take you—118%!

Eighthly

Spelled with eight letters, EIGHTHLY is the only truthful adverbial number. Dividing 8 by 2 gives the four-letter FOUR, the only truthful cardinal (noun number). FOURTHLY, however, has the same number of letters as EIGHTHLY. Adding 8+4 gives 12, the only truthful Scrabble number. Adding 5+7 gives 12; FIFTH and SEVENTH are the only two truthful adjectival numbers.

Autumn is in the Air

My favorite month has always been autumn. It is the only season with another name, FALL. AUTUMN does many things that the other season names don't do. It begins with a vowel that is pronounced and ends with a consonant that isn't. It has two pairs of letters that occur next to each other in the alphabet and in the word—TU and MN. It has a palindromic set of letters—UTU. It has a different letter in common with each the other season names—fAll, sUmmer, winTer, and sprINg, but FALL has a letter in common only with Autumn. Ironically, AUTUMN rhymes with no other word, but FALL rhymes with ALL. However, I like the season because of the sights, smells, sounds, and unpredictable whether that grows more ominous as winter approaches.

Scrabble Challenge

Can you find a word that uses all the letters in Scrabble that have a value of one? Naturally, using the letters once and only once is even better. On the other hand, it would be interesting to see the longest word that uses only those letters as many times as possible. The word ULTRANOISE (synonym for ULTRASOUND) uses the ten one-tiles once apiece. But is it a real word?

A Close Look at Eye-Rhymes

Sir Jeremy Morse writes "I was delighted to see the Lederer/McKenty/Gregory article on eye-rhymes in this month's Word Ways. Pronunciation differs from time to time and place to place, but its oddities should be of no less interest to the logologist than those of orthography. Comparing their six rules to poetic practice, I find the first to be too restrictive (they break it themselves by rhyming THROUGH with TROUGH) and the third and sixth too lax (nobody would seriously rhyme BEAT with WHEREAT or ICY with POLICY).

“That said, they give a fine range of other examples, which could be analysed according to whether it is the vowel(s) or following consonant(s) that differ in pronunciation. Thus, HONE-DONE-GONE shows two vocalic changes, as does BEAT-GREAT-SWEAT with a diphthong; FINGER-GINGER-RINGER would show two consonantal changes, and ROSE-DOSE-LOSE shows one of each. Broadening the rules, they add APLOMB (pronounced in various ways including the French) to the conventional trio of COMB-BOMB-TOMB. They could also have added RHOMB, in which the final B is sometimes sounded. On the same broader basis, the ending -OUGH, which they describe as the champion with nine soundings, can fairly claim eleven or twelve: BOUGH (ow), DOUGH (o), THROUGH (oo), BOROUGH (uh), HOUGH (hamstring, ock), LOUGH (och), SHOUGH (a breed of dog cited in *Macbeth*, og), COUGH (off), ROUGH (uff), WOUGH (oǒf) and HICCOUGH (up). Some holders of the surname HOUGH pronounce it (or), as in mid-word BOUGHT. Around Milton Keynes in England are the three villages LOUGHTON (ow), BROUGHTON (or) and WOUGHTON (oǒf).”

Pig Latin in the Movies

Here are four movies that briefly use Pig Latin in the dialog, and a fifth that uses a different spoken language code. The names of the movies appear in italics; do you know of others?

1941, a movie about World War 2. John Belushi, a pilot, says to his Air Force buddies as he hops into his plane, “We’re eady-ray to oll-ray.”

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, a movie about the drug-and-drive experiences of Hunter Thomson. At one point, Hunter says, “So why don’t, uh, ou-yay and I-ay o-gay and, uh, et-gay the uff-stay out of the unk-tray.” (These Pig Latin words appear in the English subtitles which shows the intended spelling.)

Young Dr. Frankenstein, a comedy in which a descendant of Frankenstein goes back to find the monster. He meets a modern Igor, who asks that his name be pronounced “Eye-Gore.” As they’re getting the proper brain, the only good jar breaks. So young Dr. Frankenstein picks up the rotten brain. Later, Dr. Frankenstein tells the monster that the monster has a rotten brain. The monster growls, and Igor warns Dr. Frankenstein in Pig Latin, “Ix-nay on the otten-ray.”

The movie in which the following Pig Latin appeared was a teen flick. The name of the movie has faded, along with the movie itself, but the words ring on loud and clear: “Itch-bay alert!”

The Pest, starring John Leguizamo, used a different code language based on adding a B in the middle of the first vowel: PARENTS become PA-BARENTS. In the dialogue that uses this, the characters speak it quickly and naturally as if it were their first language:

Other Guy: Hi-bis pa-baerents a-bare go-bone.

Pest: so-bo.

Other Guy: Poo-bool pa-barty!

Pest: We-bell, why-by di-bidn’t you-bou sa-bay so-bo, fre-beak?

Everywoman

She is defined as “the typical or ordinary woman.” The first three letters spell EVE, the Biblical first woman. Since she was first, she was automatically “the typical or ordinary woman.” She is the mother of EVERYMAN, who begins with EVE, too.

Yet Another Millennium Name

In the August 2004 Kickshaws I suggested seven synonyms for the millennium year, such as Chiliad, Decadecadecade and Kiloyear, and in the November Kickshaws Anil added sixteen more. With tongue in cheek he points out that there is also a way of expressing it Manually (with spelling license).

That Daring Young Man and His Writing Machine

In St. Louis in the 1960s, a hippy poet wanted to write an epic poem with a constraint that beats the E's out of the restraint in *Gadsby*, in which the typewriter's e-key was taped down to prevent accidental usage. The hippy poet wanted to figure out a way to enable himself to type while lying flat on his back. To achieve his reclining dream, he nailed a manual typewriter upside down to the ceiling above his bed. He found a long roll of paper that measured about ten inches wide (not adding machine tape) and using coat hangers nailed to the wall he arranged the roll so it went up the wall, across the ceiling, into the typewriter carriage, and out to a holding area made of more coat hangers for the completed work. Then, using a long pole that reached from bed to ceiling, he commenced to write his epic. It was a slow process, but he didn't care--he only wrote when he was stoned. When he typed a capital letter, he had to first press the caps lock key, then type the letter, and then the caps lock key again to return to lower case. Even more difficult was the normally simple movement of going down to the next line, which probably involved improving his skill at manipulating a pole. I never saw the contraption, but a friend told me about it and said that he had seen it. This was in the days when St. Louis had a hippy area called Gaslight Square, which had a lot of wild things going on. Whether this legendary hippy with the upside-down typewriter really existed or not is uncertain. However, if he did exist, it's a tribute to the human spirit that he could come up with such a Rube Goldberg device to write upside-down, and if he didn't exist, it's a tribute to the human spirit that someone could make up a poet who created such a writing device. His story has inspired me all my life to try writing in many different ways, but I've never come up with anything to equal his fantastically fantastic achievement. I have always admired that daring young inventor and his wonderful writing machine!

Language on Vacation

The editor offers for sale a used copy of Dmitri Borgmann's landmark book on logology for \$12 postpaid (check beforehand by e-mail to see if it has been sold).