

## COLLOQUY

In the Feb 2005 Word Ways, Will Nediger noted that both Lewis Carroll and Douglas Adams had a predilection for the number 42. On page 283 of *The Music of the Primes* (Harper Collins, 2003), Marcus du Sautoy notes that 42 has a connection with the Riemann zeta function. A famous hypothesis concerning the location of the zeroes of this function, widely believed to be true, has for the past 150 years resisted all efforts by mathematicians to prove it. One of the byways followed up by researchers is a sequence of numbers with the first four terms 1, 2, 42 and 24024. Both number theorists and quantum physicists discovered this sequence, suggesting that the latter can play an important role in the search for the proof of the Riemann Hypothesis.

In “Unspeakably Absurd” in the Feb 2004 Word Ways, Ross West presented an A-to-Z list of euphemisms consisting of the initial letter of a forbidden word with *-word* appended to it. The Nov 13 1005 New York Times gave sources for this euphemism applied to amnesty, bubble, Christmas, drought, evolution, filibuster, genius, homemaker, inflation, junk, killed, liberal, marijuana, nuclear, override, prenuptials, quarantine, retire, stardom, tsunami, unconstitutional, Vioxx, wagon, xeric, yips, zero. Although West gave 15 examples per letter, only three of these (I,N,Z) appear there.

In the last Colloquy, Jim Puder noted that a 12x7 packing of the nine planets and the sun in the July 2005 Games Magazine had previously appeared (reflected and rotated) in the February 2005 Word Ways. Ray Love, credited with the packing in Games, writes “The idea for my planet puzzle came from you. That’s the primary reason I subscribe to WW – to steal ideas and possibly improve on them. Besides ‘When Worlds Collide’, two rather recent ones that come to mind which appeared as Wild Cards were in the April and July 2004 issues.”

John Henrick corrects Dave Morice’s quotation from ee cummings: “Buffalo Bill’s defunct who used to ride a watermouth-silver stallion and break onetwothreefourfive pigeons justlikethat” with the ending “how do you like your blueeyed boy Mister Death”.

Ray Love wonders whether Anil will accept any of the following combinations of synonymic verbs to form one noun that is not synonymic: SEE/SAW, DOWN/FALL, EYE/WITNESS, DRUM/BEAT.

Hugo Brandt Corstius responds to Leonard Ashley’s “English in Foreign Dress” as follows: “Dutch has borrowed thousands of words from English (and English hundreds of words from Dutch and Afrikaans), but *tiener* is not one of them. It is true that one dictionary claims that the word comes from the English *teener* (teenager), but *tiener* is a normal formation from the number *tien* (ten) with the ending *-er* as can be seen from *twintiger* (from *twintig*, twenty, someone between 20 and 30), *tachtiger* (from *tachtig*, eighty, a poet writing in the 1880s), etc.”

Anil writes “John Holgate again ‘stole the show’ for me with his DAB-in-the-UN piece, a thoroughly delightful and funny little novel reminiscent of *The DaVinci Code*. I personally identified with his kooky General Semantics character and the whole LAUGH crowd. At the risk of insulting him I’d say he and I think in a similarly twisted manner. Maybe it’s the Australian sun.” But he complains “For me and other dunderheads you might have explained in Answers and Solutions the nature of the wordplay in ‘Battus in Wonderland’. It’s all Dutch to me.” So here’s a hint: the Battus article is specifically cited in another article in the same issue.

Darryl Francis writes to say that 2005 is the 40th anniversary of the publication of the Times Index-Gazetteer, the extensive listing of over 300,000 place names worldwide. The TIG lists all the place names occurring in its sister publication, the Times World Atlas, as well as many other names too insignificant to rate inclusion in the Atlas. The TIG has been a fruitful source of names displaying a variety of logological properties, and has been referenced many times in the pages of Word Ways. He wonders about the extent to which places in the TIG have disappeared. Every week the news media carry stories about villages being wiped out by floods, earthquakes and the like. It isn’t clear to what extent place names in the US have disappeared as a consequence of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Darryl says “Here’s to the Times Index-Gazetteer’s 40th birthday!”

Concerning “The Borgmann Apocrypha”, Sir Jeremy Morse writes “I guess that Borgmann’s ‘Invisible Alphabet’ was light-hearted, but F is no more invisible in TELEPHONE than C in SEED or K in SAC or S in PRIZE or X in DUCKS. Arguably there is an invisible W in front of ONE/ONCE, but the only real example I know is the invisible first T sounded in EIGHTH, which does not rhyme with FAITH. By contrast the first T is visible in CUTTHROAT and MATTHEW, though silent in the latter...Borgmann’s homonymic word-pairs with no shared letters (I/EYE is another example) have etymological counterparts. Thus BISHOP (and Spanish OBISPO) share no letter with the French EVEQUE, yet all three derive naturally from Latin EPISCOPUS”.

He adds “Re ‘Beyond Agamemnon’ [in the August Word Ways], an obvious quadruple coinage is AGAMEMNONESE, a form of leader-speak which attacks subordinates for faults that the leader himself displays—see the Iliad *passim*—and still prevalent today!”

Allen Tice, creator of the “And Now The News” word square spoof admired by Willard Espy in his May 1987 Kickshaws, gently chides Susan Thorpe for not using SUBCONTINENTAL as an OED example in “AEIOU: A Thirty-Year Quest” in Aug 1999: “It was uncongenial to not find my own obvious, easily-grasped, simple, and curiously refreshing reverse alphabetic order UOIEA word—subcontinental!! I discovered subcontinental long, long, long ago, and have used it countless times when referring to, among other things, Hindustan, Pakistan, India as a whole, Mohenjo-Daro scripts, simple Jainism, Buddhism, Thuggees, the British Raj, and the land mass called the Indian subcontinental (you know, that thing that protrudes into the Indian Ocean). I have also successfully invoked subcontinental when discussing certain Godthaab features of Greenland, and even the land of the marsupials and home of the koalas. By people from all walks of life, it has always been instantly understood without a moment’s blink or hesitation! There’s a dictionary for you.”