

KICKSHAWS

DAVE MORICE

Iowa City, Iowa

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.

Katie Will You Mary Me?

It's the thought that counts when it comes to a marriage proposal. Chris Mueller had nearly finished etching the big question into a harvested soybean field near Hillsboro, North Dakota when he realized that the M in "marry" took up too much room. Since he couldn't erase a plowed field, he had a decision to make. He decided that it would look better to spell it wrong rather than botch it—fitting all the letters in would look "tacky". So he settled on the above message.

His next move was to take his girlfriend Katie Goltz on an airplane ride under the pretext of looking for deer. Overwhelmed by the message, she said Yes—but then she noticed it was a letter short. She thought it sweet that he spelled it wrong—it made it "more cute and more special."

A Memorable Memorial

According to Mike Keith, the following acrostic message can be found on a tombstone erected to the memory of John Laird McCaffery (1940–1995) in the Cimetiere Notre-Dame-des-Neiges in Montreal:

Free Your Body and Soul
 Unfold Your Powerful Wings
 Climb Up the Highest Mountain
 Kick Your Feet Up in the Air
 You May Now Live Forever
 Or Return to the Earth
 Unless You Feel Good Where You Are

Is it still there? I can't imagine the cemetery board, after learning of its existence, letting this stand.

An Accidental Reduplication

Dmitri Borgmann coined the phrase "second-order reduplication" to describe terms like HONG KONG, MISHMASH and KNICKKNACK, where the first and second halves differ by one letter in the same position in each half.

Darryl Francis recently discovered YIELDSHIELDS, a small village in Lanarkshire, about 15 miles southeast of Glasgow. It's findable on the Internet and also listed in Bartholomew's Gazetteer of Britain. This is especially noteworthy because of its unequal components, YIELD and SHIELDS. HOTSHOTS is another example of this phenomenon.

Transposable Swarthmore

At Thanksgiving the editor's granddaughter, a freshman at Swarthmore College, described two Ultimate Frisbee teams on campus: the EARTHWORMS and the WAR MOTHERS. This led him to pose the following questions:

HOW SMARTER EARTHWORMS WARM OTHERS

Is it WORTH REAMS of paper to describe HOMER'S WART?
 Did MORSE WRATH lead him to TRASH MOWER?
 Does a SMART WHORE radiate EROS WARMTH?
 Can one use a RAW THERMOS as a SHOT WARMER?
 Do WORM HATERS frequent the very WORST HAREMS?
 Is it permissible to THROW MARES into a TOWER MARSH?
 Will the OTHER SWARM of critters join a HAMSTER ROW?
 Can you call THEM ARROWS if they don't WHAM RESORT?
 Were WAR MOTHERS the ones WHOM SARTRE met?
 Will the tsunami from an earth TREMOR WASH out the SHOWER MART?

Done: A Playlet

In this playlet Louis Phillips gets the job done by mean of a few Dunns, Dunnes, and...but I'm giving away the surprise ending, where everything gets done. As the curtain rises, we hear

General party sounds, tinkling of glasses, smattering of conversations, violin music

Two men in tuxedos, the first one named DON DUNN

One woman (IRENE DUNNE) in an evening gown

One man (JOHN DONNE) dressed in the garments of the 17th century

FIRST MAN Have you introduced our guest Irene Dunne to the poet John Donne?

SECOND MAN Just what I was on my way to do.

FIRST MAN Please do it.

SECOND MAN crosses to IRENE DUNNE

SECOND MAN Miss Dunne, there is someone I should like you to meet. A distinguished poet.

DUNNE I always enjoy meeting writers. They always have more complaints than normal people.

IRENE DUNNE and SECOND MAN cross to where JOHN DONNE stands with his dry wit and even drier martini

SECOND MAN performs the introduction

SECOND MAN: Donne, Dunne. Dunne, Donne.

DONNE Dunne?

DUNNE Yes. And you? Donne?

FIRST MAN crosses to SECOND MAN

FIRST MAN Done?

SECOND MAN (*brushes his hands*) Done. Din-din?

FIRST MAN and SECOND MAN exit

DONNE (*pointing to Irene Dunne's gown*) Dun?

DUNNE No, it's not dun--orange, actually. I see you are carrying a book; what are you reading?.

DONNE Dune.

DUNNE Dune, Donne?

DONNE Dune. And you?

DUNNE Doone. Lorna Doone.

DONNE Lorna Doone, Dunne?

DUNNE Yes. How far have you gotten with Dune?

DONNE Done, Miss Dunne.

DUNNE Done? Done with Dune, Donne?

DONNE Done with Dune, Miss Dunne. You done with Doone, Miss Dunne?

DUNNE I've never read your Dune, Mr. Donne. But I am done with my Doone. And tomorrow I am off to Dundee.

DONNE Dundee, Miss Dunne.

The two men in tuxedos return

SECOND MAN Mr. Donne and Miss Dunne, permit me to introduce you to Mr. Don Dunn. Dunn, Donne. Dunn, Dunne. Donne, Dunn. Dunne, Dunn.

DONNE Don?

FIRST MAN Yes, Don.

SECOND MAN turns away and brushes his hands

SECOND MAN Done!

DUNNE Mr. Dunn, Mr. Donne and I were discussing Dune and Lorna Doone. Are you reading anything?

FIRST MAN Please call me Don. I am reading Quiet Flows the Don.

DONNE Quiet Flows the Don, Don?

DUNNE And just how much of the novel have you read, Mr. Dunn?

FIRST MAN Don. Done with Don.

DUNNE Done with Don, Don?

FIRST MAN Yes, Miss Dunne and Mr. Donne. When does this party end?

SECOND MAN returns and taps a silver triangle

SECOND MAN Done.

DUNNE Done!

DONNE Done?

FIRST MAN Done.

Curtain

More Random Kickshaws

In the August Kickshaws, Alexian Gregory assembled a list of words having unique or near-unique spelling properties. Not so fast, Susan Thorpe responds:

Words beginning and ending HE: HEMOTROPHE (Web 2)

Words containing the sequence ACHACH: CRACHACH (Chambers) defined as “Welsh people who snobbishly affect English customs, manners and speech” and MACHACHI (Webster’s Geographical Dictionary) the name of a town in Ecuador

Words beginning and ending with CH: CHAFFINCH, CHICH (Web 3), CHINCH (Web 3), CHILIARCH (Web 3), CHOLEDOCH (Web 2), CHRISTCHURCH in New Zealand and CHALLOCH in Wigtownshire, Scotland. One can even make a case for CHEESE-SANDWICH and CHICKEN-SANDWICH!

Words containing the sequence WSP: BOWSPRIT.

Words containing the sequence SPB: CRISPBREAD.

Darryl Francis adds YUNX (Web 2) as another example of a word ending in UNX.

Rex Gooch writes “Ouch! ou-i-ja actually comes from French *oui* (yes) plus German *ja* (yes). The French have no W (except for foreign intrusions like *wagon*) so use OU, as in *oui* and *Ouzazarte*. It’s not the O that is being pronounced as a W, but OU. Of course, the W sound comes from the combination of OU and the beginning of I. One slurs from one to the other, rather than have a staccato OU I.”

Did Mercer Originate the Panama Palindrome?

Ove Michaelsen writes “A year or two ago, a contributor to Word Ways mentioned that the famous A MAN, A PLAN, A CANAL—PANAMA! palindrome was possibly written before Leigh Mercer published it in Notes & Queries on Nov 13 1948. ‘Palindrome’ wasn’t exactly a household word in 1948, and few people wrote them. However, it’s possible that someone predated Mercer with that palindrome without submitting it for publication. If I had come up with that gem, I would certainly have tried to publish it in at least a local newspaper—in which case it probably would have been mentioned in a puzzle magazine and/or found its way to Notes & Queries. That palindrome was too good to have been overlooked!

I will give five dollars to the person who finds an earlier source for the Panama palindrome.”

An Elemental Word Square

Recently the editor was asked in an e-mail whether it was possible to construct a 3x3 word square placing chemical element symbols in each box. He found a number of single word squares, all variations on the patterns H I S / I N K / S K Y and S O B / O B I / B I N. A double word square was a little harder to construct, but he finally succeeded with B U S / A I S O / K Er B. No doubt larger single or double word squares are possible, but it may take a computer to find them.

In the May 1995 issue of Word Ways, Leonard Gordon exhibited two 5x5 word squares with bigrams in each box:

PR OM IN EN CE	RE ME DI AB LE
OM NI TE NE NT	ME LA ST OM AD
IN TE RM AS ON	DI ST RA IN ER
EN NE AS EM IC	AB OM IN AB LE
CE NT ON IC AL	LE AD ER LE SS

Emma Sammes

According to Darryl Francis, Emma Sammes is the name of a property management company in Whitianga, New Zealand. What's so special about this name? Write it in a circle, and it can be spelled out both clockwise and anticlockwise. Dmitri Borgmann provided some similar 12-letter examples on page 30 of *Language on Vacation*, such as YATATA YATATA and ANANAS ANANAS, but these rely on the items concerned being tautonymic. Any other examples as good as Emma Sammes?

More Taxicab Words

In the November Kickshaws, Alexian Gregory pointed out that TAXICAB, TAXI and CAB are synonyms of each other. Doug Hoylman adds OLEOMARGARINE, and Raymond Love wrote the following essay:

I read with interest Alexian Gregory's Taxicab Words kickshaw about compound words where com and pound and compound are synonymous. Acting on his inquiry about whether there are other words that break apart to become tri-synonymic, I offer this rambling wreckage: 'The speeding taxicab bounced off the guardrail and was further slowed by the rainwater that had turned its pathway into a quagmire. Then the hack eased past my regal estate where one of my kinfolk was taking a snapshot of some jackass sitting in a bathtub in my courtyard. Evidently he marched to a different drumbeat and that was his downfall. I was an eyewitness to this bizarre occurrence as I looked through the dim lamplight of the living room and out the front windowpane of my storybook mansion. Since the bather was naked as a jaybird, I caught a glimpse of his rear end (unfortunately two words but we'll turn the other cheek) as he hopped out and shivered off to some faraway place.' If this makes any sense in a roundabout way, put a checkmark alongside my name; otherwise, let the sledge hammer fall. Did I mention grubstake, hacksaw, coleslaw, typewrite, cockleshell and sinkhole (as in Sinkhole de Mayo)?

And the Answer Is...Not!

In the August Kickshaws I presented a punctuation conundrum by Rich Lederer and Gary Hallock, the answer to which was given in November:

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

When I editorialized "Dang, that's good, and it gets better every time!" Rex Gooch begged to differ. "The sentence is a total cheat. Words in it like WHAT and FOUR need to be distinguished by italics or quotes or by other means. Dreadful punctuation is not a puzzle, but an occasion for shame (although I suppose there have been thousands of such disreputable "puzzles"). Still, nothing that *Fahrenheit 451* would not correct!"

Drat!

Rex notes that the question "What was the prime minister's surname in 1940?" posed during Margaret Thatcher's tenure, is ambiguous. It is not a matter of one answer being right and another wrong, but a problem with the questioner, who needs to learn English. As in real life, it is difficult to justify deceit in puzzles.

One, Two, Three

The Summer 2005 Verbatim featured an article by Francis Heaney about a two-person cooperative word game entitled One, Two, Three. The participants count out in unison “one, two, three” and then simultaneously utter a word or phrase. The object of the game is to converge on the same word or phrase in as few rounds as possible. In an especially short game, the two players began with Purple and Sherlock Holmes; on the second round both picked Scarlet. The virtue of this game is that it requires no pencil and paper; it can be played while riding in a car, or even in the dark. One can conceive of a competition in which several pairs of people are given the same starting words, the winners being the ones who converge the fastest. The game was invented in 1992 by counselors at Camp Winnarainbow (a circus camp near San Francisco) and introduced to the National Puzzlers’ League at its 2002 convention.

Poetic Footprints

Ove Michaelsen writes that when he was a child, he made up a joke based on poetic feet: “Are you a poet?—Iamb.” He invites readers to follow in his poetic footsteps. Here are my two feet worth:

What will you do after you lock the door?—Trochee
So you think I’m a jerk?—Anapest

The Commonest English Words

In the last Kickshaws I created a poem using the twelve commonest words in the English language as tabulated by the World Almanac in 1950 from a corpus of 240,000 words: *the, of, and, to, at, in, that, is, I, it, for, as*. In 1967, Kučera and Francis published *Computational Analysis of Present-Day American English*, based on a carefully-selected sample of a million words, finding the commonest to be *the, of, and, to, a, in, that, is, was, he, for, it*. Here the last four words are different; *was* and *he* appear for the first time, replacing *I* and *as* which drop to positions 20 and 14, respectively.

Rex Gooch writes “Using a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources designed to represent an accurate cross-section of current English usage, the most used words in order are *the, of, and, to, a, in, that, it, is, was, I, for*.” The Internet upgrades *it* and *was* but downgrades *I* with respect to the World Almanac.

Number Names and Infinite Truth

Anil writes “It’s no wonder that N represents number—of all named numbers, there are only 43 (including forty-three!) that do not contain N: 12 and $x+0$, $x+2$ through $x+6$ and $x+8$, where $x = 0, 30, 40, 50, 60$ or 80 . And since we count by tens, it is surprising that every number name contains a T, an E, an N or an S except, ironically, four, the only truthful number. This complementarity closes the set and means that every single integer name is truthful in one sense or another.”

One + Twelve = Eleven + Two Re-Visited

A sentence was inadvertently omitted in Anil’s August Kickshaw about the etymologies of these four number names. Let’s try again: “My opinion of this anagram as the most perfect of all English anagrams suffered a bit of a setback when I got around to checking out the etymologies. Alas, they’re as thick as thieves! Eleven and twelve share a common root, the pre-OE *lif* (leave), i.e., meaning “left over after ten”. 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?" He adds that "it's still an incredibly good and surprising anagram" with many coincidences detailed in November 2002 and August 2004.

Sleepwriting

Anil writes "Here's a poem I got literally from a dream. Honest. In a penny arcade I saw a mechanical fortune teller in a glass box describing a circle on the ground with its hand, rolling a lump of something resembling gray clay or moist cement. Little bits came off as it circled, leaving a trail behind. But as it circled, the lump also kept picking pieces back up and dropping off other pieces. Underneath on the outside was printed this verse:

There is no particle
That is not at some time
A part of growth
And at some time lone.

Is this nonsense, or is my mind more profound when I'm asleep than when I'm awake?"

And speaking of dreams, the editor's wife recently had an especially vivid one in which she was trying to construct a chain of personal names of famous people that overlap in two letters, such as George Bush – Shelley Berman – Andrew Carnegie. She was especially struck by the fact that Ngaio Marsh enabled her to continue a host of names ending –NG.

Language Musings by Anil

"What's that in the road, a head?" and "Where do you think it'll get you, in the end?" are oldies. Here's another in the same vein: "What, is this world coming to?" (I dearly hope so.)

Is SELF-REFERENTIAL itself a self-referential word? I can't decide, but it reminds me of my self-referential anagram *reflections : self-noticer* ("The Oz Contradictionary: Part 1" Feb 2001).

In a February 2003 Kickshaw, Anil showed how CONTRONYM is itself a contronym. Now he argues that CULL is a contronym at two different levels: "First, it's a contronym as it means 'remove the best' or its opposite, 'remove the worst'. But it means these two things simultaneously, really meaning 'segregate the two groups', so it's not a contronym. Well, being a contronym and not being a contronym makes it a second-order contronym!

I thought I'd die when my hand carelessly slipped to the left as I tried to type FOR and watched it DIE!

A daddy longlegs is the same as a granddaddy longlegs—so daddy's its own daddy. Does that beat "I'm My Own Grandpa"?

I say "ow" when I'm downhearted for the simple reason that it's the heart of down.

Double negative: my reaction to PHOENIX is "Pho-e! Nix!"

OZ NZ	The first word square, reading acrosses then downs, asks the penetrating question "Are Australia (Oz) and New Zealand asleep (on zz)?", i.e., is sleep the preferred occupation of us antipodeans? The second square is our standard
NZ OZ	

denial “New Zealand and Australia don’t sleep!” (At lest when you podeans do.)

What do you call a ferret-like carnivore that’s been run over by a truck? Stoat toast.

SOOTHE is a very soothing word. Its ever-so-gentle transition from the S to the TH phone makes it a much smoother word than SMOOTH. It surely ranks as one of the most beautiful English words.

Dessert Is A Disservice: this obesity-epidemic dictum is supported by etymology. Dessert (see stressed) originally meant “clear the table, remove the service”.

Mom and Pop as palindromes reminded me of an old Family Circle cartoon I’m modifying slightly to illustrate what an elusive concept a palindrome is: The kid rushes through the door exclaiming “Mom, Dad, guess what. Bob can spell his name forwards or backwards!”

What The L?

“Could” should (would) sound the same without the L.
I vote we drop it.
Coud I? Shoud I? Woud I!

Homophonic Phrases in Reverse

Susan Thorpe writes “In the Aug 2001 Kickshaws (“One Phrase Sounds Much Like Another”) I offered a selection of homophonic phrases which sound the same but which are spelt differently and have different meanings. One such is BEECH ROOT – BEACH ROUTE.

Now, I search for reverse homophonic phrases, those in which the first word of the first phrase sounds the same as the second word of the second phrase, and the second word of the first phrase sounds the same as the first word of the second phrase:

Raise Sons – Sun’s Rays	Whole Steak – Stake Hole	Ate Steak – Stake Eight
Tease Maid – Made Teas	Hire Taxis – Taxes Higher	Seems So – Sew Seams
Vane Blew – Blue Vein	Sail Swayed – Suede Sale	Floe Bear – Bare Flo
Haw Berry – Bury Whore	Hare Course – Coarse Hair	Hear Prey – Pray Here

The two phrases can sometimes be run together to make a longer phrase:

Hi There, They’re High	Panders To Two Pandas
Sore Rex Wrecks Saw	‘Farther Side’ Sighed Father

Or included in a sentence: he whispered ‘HEY, MAID’ and they MADE HAY!

One of the phrases can be a personal name:

Niels Bohr – Boar Kneels	Sean Bean (has) Been Shorn
Artie Shaw (was) Sure Arty	

A pair of homophonic phrases can be turned into a pair of reverse homophonic phrases:

Buoy Blew – Boy Blue (or) Blue Boy	Yew Wood – You Would! (or)
Prise Drawer – Prize Draw (or) Draw Prize	Would You?

Alphabet Zoo

Raymond Love writes “Loved St. Alphabet [book review in Kickshaws]! That’s one of those ideas I wish I had thought up. I have a short kid’s poem that embraces the alphabet idea. I wrote this about 15 years ago when I was trying to write an illustrated book of children’s poetry:

A, B, C all the animals in the zoo.
 D, E, F you want to touch one or two,
 G, H, I will help you find a few.
 J, K, L ephants like being petted by you.
 M, N, O here comes a lion into view.
 P, Q, R you going to touch him too?
 S, T, U better count your fingers if you do!
 V, W, X tra meat is what they like to chew.
 Y don’t we just go find a well-fed
 Z bra instead?

Hesitation Verse

The editor writes “Echo verse, where words at the end of a line are repeated, is an ancient form of wordplay; there are many examples in Walsh’s *Handy-Book of Literary Curiosities* and Bombaugh’s *Oddities and Curiosities of Words and Literature*. However, I have never seen the inverse phenomenon discussed anywhere. This might be called Hesitation Verse. Here is a somewhat ribald example that I learned as a boy:

For cu- for cu- for curiosity
 A sol- a sol- a soldier I will be
 Two pis- two pis- two pistols at my side
 A hor- a hor- a horsie I will ride...”

It is with great hesitation that I take the liberty to reply to your libertine example:

You suc- you suc- you succor no one well,
 A turt- a turt- a turtle in your shell.
 No count- no count- no country I will fear:
 My dic- my dic- my dictionary’s here.

Scrabble Challenge Revisited

In the August 2005 Kickshaws I asked readers for words that use all of the Scrabble tiles with a value of one. Several candidates were suggested in November, and Darryl Francis comes up with two more if letters are repeated: NEUTRALISATIONS and URETEROINTESTINAL (Web 2).

Penalties

The following paeon to Palestine (present-day Israel) appeared in *Punch* on Nov 5 1947:

Familiar country, loved this many a year,
 I write thee AN EPISTLE ere we part;
 Though with my PEN I SLATE thee, yet how dear,
 Image of woe, thou LEAPEST IN my heart!

Has any left thee with a worse regret?
 Could any ELSE PAINT with a warmer zeal
 Thy towering scenery (like an ALPINE SET)
 Crowned with NEAT PILES of radiant SATIN-PEEL?

Where the INEPT SEAL hunts his scaly fest,
 The SILENT APE desports him in the trees,
 Rapt I would roam, nor ever in the LEAST
 PINE by thy Jordan for my own PLAIN TEES.

But now, SEE PLIANT bands surround my track,
 Men grim to view, and more than half inclined
 To take a LATE SNIPE at my transient back
 Or push A STEEL PIN deep in my behind.

So with a spirit free from all LEAN SPITE,
 Heavy in heart I turn me to the West;
 My billet here is not A PENAL SIT
 And I am counted as an ALIEN PEST.

A Boustrophedonic Word Square

Anil asks "Has anyone explored 'snake' word squares with words weaving across and back and down and up, i.e., alternate lines reading in opposite directions? Here are two examples:

S I Z E	E K E S
E R E S	R E C A
T A R O	G E N S
S S O L	O L O S

The first square reads size-sere-taro-loss and sets-sari-zero-lose; the second, ekes-acer-gens-solo-ogre-keel-once-sass or ogre-keel-once-sass-solo-gens-acer-ekes. I like the second one better, as it forms one continuous snake, horizontal to vertical or vice versa, jointed by an overlapping O. It would be even neater if all eight words were reversals like the first two verticals."

A Puzzle

What is the message hidden in the following paragraph?

Mice! For! You! To! King! Thus! Sprout! Ant! Grey! In! Total! And! Fleece! Mum! As! Term!
 As! Flop! As! Joy! Journey! Quack! It! Bob! Every! Whoosh! Hip! See! Catsup! Ketchup! Seek!
 Umpire! Ink! Zorro! Slap! Noodle! It! It! It! Aghast! Quietly! Car! Holy! Just! Per! Beagle! That!
 Dime! Lassitude! Reap! This! Part! Makes! Sense! Did! You! Spot! It! Violin! Haze!
 Constantinople! Down! By! Who! Anchor! Institutionalization! For! Won't! Lincoln! In! Eek!
 Sport! Ink! Put! Xenon! One! Won!