# COLLOQUY

Ed Wolpow writes about Darryl Francis's "Chemical Symbols of Elements 110 and Beyond" "We seem surely to be at the very edges of elemenymy, with putative element names in the thousands. Let me suggest a list of names that are possibly more deserving—the original Latin names for those eleven elements where there is a mismatch between the English name and the chemical symbol:

Ag silver ARGENTUM: ARGUMENT

Au gold AURUM: KURUMA (Web3). Susan Thorpe found 15 transposals, all locations, including AMURU (Papua New Guinea), MAURU (Finland), RUUMA (Somalia), and UMURA (Nigeria)

Cu copper CUPRUM: OPERCULUM (Web3). Darryl Francis notes RUM PUNCH (Chambers), and Susan Thorpe found CHUMPUR (Bolivia) and CURUPIM (Brazil)

Fe iron FERRUM: FRUMPERY. Darryl Francis found FRUMPER (OED), and Susan Thorpe found transposals REFURM (OED, reform) and FREMUR (France)

Hg mercury HYDRARGYRUM: TETRAHYDROPTEROYLGLUTAMATE (Dorland's Medical Dictionary) was unearthed by Susan Thorpe. Is there a MARY HURDY-GURDY?

K potassium KALIUM: LEUKEMIA. Darryl Francis located KAMULI (Times Index-Gazetteer) and Susan Thorpe found 30 transposals, including IMALUK (Australia), LUKAMI (India), MULIKA (Kenya) and KUMAIL (Iran). LAMPUKI and MAULKIN are both in the OED.

Na sodium NATRIUM: MATURIN.

Pb lead PLUMBUM: BLUE-SPOTTED HUMMINGBIRD (Hummingbirds of the Caribbean, by Tynell & Tynell). Darryl Francis proposes RUMBLEGUMPTION (Web3) and BUPHTHALMUM (Web3); Susan Thorpe found LUMPUMBU (Congo)

Sn tin STANNUM: HUNTSMAN. Darryl Francis equals this with PUNTSMAN (Web3) or STUNTMAN (Chambers; two words in Web3).

Sb antimony STIBIUM: AMBITIOUS. Darryl Francis equals this with BISMUTHIC (Web3); both he and Susan Thorpe suggest MISBUILT (OSPD, Random House) and Susan adds SUBLIMIT (American Heritage). She also found transposals MUSIBIT (Oman) and BISMUTI (Indonesia).

W tungsten WOLFRAM: FLATWORM


Sir Jeremy Morse writes "Two of Rex Gooch's highly professional articles provoke the following reflections: (1) Where there is a serendipitously perfect example of a word-type such as the heterogrammatic AMBIDEXTROUS, is there any point in rehearsing inferior (obscure, archaic, coined, etc.) examples—unless of course they exceed it on its own terms? (2) Rex attacks the *Oxford Guide to Word Games* over its treatment of Lewis Carroll's APE—MAN word ladder. But examples using ordinary words have a value of their own. Even if they are not records, they demonstrate the delights of logology to outsiders and newcomers—something Carroll well understood."


Ed and Gudrun Wolpow write " In 'We Need a Word For It', the first example *What do you call it when one nods off for a few seconds and then jolts awake?* has an answer. The word NYSTAGMUS, now only used for certain abnormalities of eye movements, was originally coined with just this meaning; as I recall it started with the head movements of senators in the Roman Forum listening to a dull speech. It badly needs revival, in its original sense."

Rex Gooch writes "In his article 'Toward a More Logical Keyboard' Anil uses the same basic data [as he did in 'Anacrograms'], though he loses much of its value by using rankings...Depending on frequency, but not rank, it might make sense to put some keys underneath the keyboard! He writes as if there is one keyboard layout, but there are necessarily very many even just in Europe (two in Canada), including AZERTY layouts. His keyboard is different from mine. Extensive studies more than 50 years ago made use of laboratories to trace glowing fingertips; [keyboard reformers] have a huge amount of work and expense ahead. He does not mention home keys. Losing the semicolon encourages those who do not know what it is for; abolishing the carat (^) stops non-text searches in many word processors and text editors; ~ and {} are meaningful in mathematics. There is no dot (decimal point) on keyboards. So far, he has only considered about one-third of the [non-letter] keys. There are designs which physically separate the keys for each hand.

"In the same article, he upbraids the USA for not going metric. That, however, is true of many countries, however things may seem on the surface. The United Kingdom is a country in which, for example, by EU diktat, it is a criminal offence to sell potatoes by the pound. But when I shop, I buy 450g (.99lb) or 907g (2lb) jars of jam, 568ml bottles of milk (one pint), and so on, and there is no choice. In the same way, many engineering parts worldwide are specified with dimensions such as 25.4mm. I wonder if Australia is 'metricated' likewise...The metric system is not in any case designed for everyday use, as with inches, feet, yards, cubits and miles (mille passuum = 1000 paces), which are all based on the human body. The meter (and hence kilogram) is based on an inaccurate estimate of a quarter of the earth's circumference, which is difficult to compare with the rod whose length you may wish to guess. A problem has been that people have not accepted that science and everyday life have very different demands, so different systems are appropriate."

Darryl Francis notes in the May 28 Sunday (London) Times the following 96-letter pangrammatic window in an article headlined 'Global Warming Might Not Be So Bad, if We Keep Our Cool': "in his ne[w book Revenge of Gaia, he scares himself into the apocalypse lobby by gazing at the ubiquitous J-curve of carbon diox]ide emissions as it shoots off the top of the graph".

George Jellis asked Rex Gooch a question which will interest fans of the idea that words consist of alternate vowels and consonants (CVCVCV...). Was it, he asked, helpful to use words of this form in hunting 10-squares? In fact, Rex's best four 10-squares have just three such words among the 40. Only another eleven words have just one departure from the pattern, leaving 26 with multiple departures, like deSCeNDaNT itself. At 10 letters, the number of words excluded includes words beginning SC, SH, ST, CR, as well as words ending –NG, -NT etc, so the word stock, which needs to be huge, is grievously affected.

In the May issue Anil used the number of pages in Web 3 to estimate the number of words starting with each letter. The following table compares Web 3 with the actual word count from the Oxford American Dictionary (180,000 words); the dictionaries agree quite well. ("0" = <0.5.)

| letter | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W3 pages ~% | 6 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OAD entries ~% | 5 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| W3 rank | 4 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 11 | 15 | 22 | 21 | 13 | 7 | 18 | 17 | 3 | 23 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 19 | 20 | 16 | 26 | 24 | 25 |
| OAD rank | 8 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 15 | 22 | 21 | 14 | 6 | 18 | 17 | 3 | 23 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 19 | 20 | 16 | 26 | 24 | 25. |