

## KICKSHAWS

*Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws editor at [drABC26@aol.com](mailto:drABC26@aol.com). Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.*

### Revisiting Mary and Her Lamb

It's been awhile since we've visited Mary and her Lamb under constraint. Using four-letter words one discovers that

Mary kept some tiny lamb with wool hues just like snow,  
Each spot that this girl (Mary) went, that lamb went also, slow.  
Once lamb went past home room with girl. That bent some rule last year.  
This made kids loud, glad, made them play: they eyed lamb, very near.

A double rhyme lamb:

Mary, very bad, had tiny whiny lamb (damn!).  
Full wool, quite white, snowy showy view, too.  
All tall places, spaces Mary'd tarried at, that  
Damn lamb raced, chased through, too.  
See? He followed, wallowed near here. Cruel school  
Had bad rule: "You'll stow slow lamb, ma'am."  
But what wild child laughed, daft at that?  
They'd played. "See free lamb scam!"

A lamb pie (words characterize the digits of pi):

Now, O, Mary, a sheep possessed, so fleecy, snowy, new.  
Where mistress journeyed, lambkin following did go, too.  
Recently lamb walked to school with her but violated law.  
At playful creature's entry, classmates so chuckled, noticing flaw.

The unrepeatable lamb:

Mary had a little lamb; its fleece looked white as snow,  
Now everywhere that young girl walked, her pet would surely go.  
He followed child in class one day (this went against some rule);  
It made the children laugh and play to see livestock in school.

The initially-consistent lamb:

Mary managed mirthful, milky,  
Little light-hearted lamb  
That tracked this tardy traveling tot,  
Behaving badly—bam!  
He hurried, hounding her—he hopped



So swiftly, seeing school.  
Can classmates, cheering ceaselessly,  
Reverse repulsive rule?

The lamb's story:

Lambie had a little girl; her hair was white as snow.  
And everywhere that Lambie went, the girl was sure to go.  
She followed him to graze one day; that was a real disaster.  
It made the lambs all baa and bleat to see a girl in pasture.

In the following, each word is shifted to the next word in the MWPD dictionary classified as the same part of speech (except Mary which was kept, and *the* which was replaced by *a*).

Mary haggle the litoral lambskin, itself fleet wash white-collar but snowbank,  
As exceedingly thee Mary wept, a lambskin was surefire toward gobble;  
Her foment hers toward schoolboy onerous daybed, thee was as a ruler;  
Itself magnetize a childbearing launch as plead toward seed the lambskin inside.  
schoolboy.

And finally, the end-to-end palindromic version:

Mary, baboon? To go to room? Gnu? Star? No, 'tis all lamb.  
O, bit on stool, eh, Mary? Won sore heel? Sit! One rule, so:  
No nose lure. No, 'tis Lee, hero, snowy ram. He loots! (Not I, Bob.)  
Mall, la. Sit on rat. Sung "Moo rot! O, got no, O baby ram!"

### A Tree of Body Parts

Ross notes that there are fifteen three-letter body parts (including one formed only when the body is in a certain position: LAP). These can be connected by a set of MWPD words, each one only a single letter-change away from its neighbors, to form a minimal (only 11 more words needed) spanning tree:

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      ARK-ASK-ASS
    ARM-ARE
      AYE      JAR-EAR
      EYE     JAW
      LYE      LAW
      LEG-LAG-LAP-LIP-LID
                        HIP
    GUM-GUT-TUT-TIT-TIP
    BUM          TOT
                  TOE

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### The Truth About Lee Keith

Back in the 1950s, Lee Keith compiled and sold a number of puzzle-solving books listing all the Web 2 words of a given length—a valuable logological tool in the pre-computer era. Recently Will Shortz, NY Times puzzle editor, received the following letter:



My name is Gary Gazaway and I live in Pocahontas, Arkansas. I'm writing to you because of your interest in puzzles. My aunt, who has been very close to me all my life, is Dorothy Lee Bates. Under her middle and maiden name Lee Keith, she authored several popular puzzle solving books in the 1950s. Many of her clients and customers thought she was a man and addressed orders and letters as Dear Mr. Keith. She is now 96 years old, and this September, we are celebrating Pocahontas Sesquicentennial, and are recognizing our important senior citizens that accomplished great feats. I have been told that the amount of hours it took for her to accomplish writing these books back then is mind boggling.

Will Shortz comments "I used her word lists for years to construct crosswords, before computer databases became common."

### **Max Gutmann, Word Poet**

In addition to writing limerick definitions, Max Gutmann has composed a number of linguistic whimsies which Word Ways readers will enjoy.

#### *Shenanigans*

However growled or grumbled in the throat,  
*Shenanigans*' good humor never sours;  
 It's others' pranks we use him to connote,  
 And yet he laughs as if he spoke of ours.

#### *Marsupial*

*Marsupial* is cute but lazy,  
 uneager to find extra ways he  
 can work. With some initiative,  
 he'd make a splendid adjective.  
 He'd speak about parental care.  
 (Marsupials are known for their  
 pouch sheltering.) The sound would deal  
 a somewhat homely, awkward feel.  
 I hope that soon some angry teen,  
 in his attempt to contravene  
 restrictions that he feels are loopy'll  
 whine, "Gee, Mom, don't be so marsupial."

#### *Bravery*

*Bravery*'s less self-possessed than *courage*,  
 and eager to show-off, a rotten habit  
 picked up from pal *bravado*. He's insistent  
 that he's a noun, a noun, there's nothing feminine  
 or adjectival in that "y"! What need  
 a noun could have for the bold, bragging "very"  
 he's tattooed to his biceps, he won't say.  
 To Freudians his conduct's a transparent  
 attempt to hide the fact he lacks a diphthong.



*Bikini*

Brief three-piece word, how fetchingly  
you fit. Your third string, saying "knee",  
lays perfect stress on what we see.

**Xictionary: A Dictionary of Extreme Words**

Here's the final installment of extreme words begun in May 2005 and continued in May 2006:

XYADPHART to snicker as if one were guffawing  
XYBI a comb whose teeth have never been brushed  
XYCYCLE a combination unicycle, bicycle, and tricycle that is gradually replacing the  
pogo stick in Australian boomerang wars  
XYDDIGOBLAH a preternatural disaster  
XYEYEAR an eyelash lodged in an ear  
XYFTWIC a person who has bowled a perfect 000 game by rolling 20 consecutive gutterballs  
XYGAGA a teacher whose shadow is a genius  
XYHHHHH the sound of air escaping through the hole in the ozone  
XYIMBUUTY terrifyingly beautiful  
XYJOF perfection achieved by combining one-third fate, one-third destiny, and one-third kismet  
XYKXYK a dead snowflake lying in the desert  
XYLLIABELLE a female bouncer; a trouncer  
XYMKRACKEETO something that has just quadrupled in size, such as a sea monkey or the  
national debt  
XYNOO a sport in which three teams of eight players compete on horseback for possession of a  
petrified banana  
XYO to drink by putting two straws up one's nose and inhaling rapidly over and over  
XYPHOT hysterically unfunny  
XYQAALA a temple within a temple within a temple; or a temple within a temple within a  
temple within a temple  
XYRALYR to play a piano covered with bees  
XYSTICIZE to apply magic transparent tape to the bald head of a mystic  
XYTTYXAT the twelfth king of Gondwanaland who married the goddess Fahrenheit during  
the time of the waterquakes  
XYUBBSTENKLE a person who tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth but  
still sounds like a liar  
XYVICKYTOMPICAL having features like someone named Vicky or Tom  
XYWHOAL a spear that sprouts wings and flies back to its thrower  
XYXOX the tic-tac-toe champion of the Northern Realm  
XYOOPIE the pain felt by an octopus when it hits an electric eel  
XYX a flab generator  
XYZURIOR a dish that hasn't been broken yet

**Mutual Name Reversals**

Ross notes that palindromic personal names have frequently graced the pages of Word Ways (see Jeff Grant's fine roundup in Aug 1996), but no one seems to have considered a related phenomenon, a pair of names which reverse to each other. An easy way to generate them is to take a group of palindromic names which have the same pivot letter, such as MARY BYRAM, LEE BEEL and LISA BASIL and rearrange them in all possible ways: MARY BEEL and LEE



BYRAM, MARY BASIL and LISA BYRAM, LEE BASIL and LISA BEEL. (At one time there were MARY BEELs in Johnstown NE and Grand Junction CO, and LEE BYRAMs in Mesa CO and St Paul MN). Examples with more than a single pivot letter include NED LAMANNA and ANNA MALDEN or TARA CAMDEN and NED MACARAT—all real-life surnames in Morris County. This is the kind of wordplay that begs for a computer search of huge lists of common given names and surnames, combining these to make reasonable names which can then be verified. (A good source for such lists is given at <http://www.census.gov/genealogy/names>.)

### Letter Perfect

Paul Maxim, Mallarmé specialist and riddle-proposer, sent along the following whimsy:

Are English eccentric?  
To find out, remove BRIT  
from ABNORMALITY  
to make ANOMALY  
out of A MOLTY BRAIN  
in LAYMAN ORBIT.

Although you seem to grasp  
“LIT BY A ROMAN,”  
MANY LABOR IT,  
and MAINLY ABORT.  
The clue is, BAN MORALITY...  
now BRIT, LAY MONA!

### A Half-Alphabet Dialogue

The following was sent to Ross by the late Cynthia Knight of the National Puzzlers' League in 1988. The first person speaks using only even-numbered letters of the alphabet, and the second using odd-numbered letters (not easy, as AEIOUY are all even):

Scene: a cold windy day in Chicago.

A: I may go see Miami

B: Brrr...

A: Gee, you is so coy! Miami is muggy.

B: Brrr...

A: May we go? Quick?

B: Brrr... [kicks A violently]

A: Ow! [A leaves in a huff]

B: Phfft!

### Language Conundrum

Don Hauptman wonders:

How come pop songs were once catchy but now have hooks?

Does it make sense for the forces at play to mean the same thing as the forces at work?

Shouldn't a dressing down be the opposite of dressing up?

Why is a running joke identical to a standing joke?



## What Do You Call a Dictionary-Collector?

There appears to be no term for this. According to Jerry Farrell, Sidney Laudau, who has written extensively on dictionaries, had no idea. David Vancil, curator of the Indiana State University Warren Cordell collection of twelve thousand dictionaries could not think of such a term, nor could Robert Rulon-Miller of St Paul MN, a bookseller specializing in dictionaries. The editor notes that Alfred Lubran, an erstwhile Word Ways contributor, was a collector of collector names, but he did not have dictionary-collector among them (Word Ways Feb 1992).

Faith suggests LEXICOLLECTOR, and Ross, LEXICOPHILIST; however, Jerry Farrell prefers DICTIONARIUMIST.

## Asthma

Richard Lederer wants to know if there are any other six-letter words beside ASTHMA which have vowels at the ends and consonants in the middle. Ross consulted his Webster and found ten more in the second edition:

ANDHRA the southeastern part of India  
 ANNWFU in Welsh tradition, a sea-girt revolving castle  
 APHTHA specks or flakes caused by parasitic fungi growing in the mouth  
 ARCHLY in an arch manner  
 ELTCHI variant of *elchee*, an ambassador or envoy  
 ENGHLE obsolete spelling of *ingle*  
 ERTHLY reformed spelling of *earthly*  
 ISTHME obsolete variant of *isthmus*  
 ISTHMI plural of *isthmus*  
 ITZTLI variant of *iztle*, a kind of obsidian

## Acronymic Movie Reviews

Will Shortz sent in the results of a July 2002 National Public Radio competition involving film titles. The object was to write a miniature review or description of a well-known movie in which the initial letters of the words named the movie.

### Winner:

STAR WARS EPISODE II – ATTACK OF THE CLONES Sadly, This Awful Retread Will Apparently Reap Staggeringly Enormous Profits. It's Surprisingly One Dimensional. Even Its Intricate Action Tableaus Traverse Awkward Cliches. Kudos Only For The Highly Entertaining Christopher Lee, Overcoming Nonsensical, Erratic Storyline [John P Drew, Orangevale CA]

### Runners-Up:

CASABLANCA Clever American Saloonkeeper And Beautiful Lady Attract Nazi Commandant's Attention

ROCKY III Recycling Original Can Kill Your Interest In It

FATAL ATTRACTION Fickle Attorney Takes A Lover And Then Treacherously Reneges: Actress Close Terrifying In Oscar Nomination

AMADEUS Acclaimed Mozart Achievements Delight Everyone, Upsetting Salieri

SHREK Smelly Hero Rescues Enchanted Kingdom



*Honorable Mention:*

MY FAIR LADY Musical You Find Amusing, Intriguing, Really “Lovely”; A Delightful Yarn ]  
 SPARTACUS Slave Provokes A Rebellion That A Caesar Ultimately Squelches  
 AUSTIN POWERS Amorous Undercover Swinger Thawed In Nutty Parody—Overcomes  
 Wicked Empire’s Ridiculous Scheme  
 CHANGING LANES Cars Have Accident. Nobody Gets Injured. Neither Guy Likes Apologiz-  
 ing. Nastiness Escalates Steadily  
 AS GOOD AS IT GETS Angry, Sarcastic Guy Overcoming Obsessive Disorder Alienates  
 Several Individuals, Then Gradually Evokes Their Sympathy  
 STAR WARS Silly Tale About Robots, Wookies, And Rebel Skywalker  
 REAR WINDOW Relentlessly Eavesdropping, Ailing Reporter Wonders If Neighbor Dusted Off  
 Wife  
 THE BIRDS Tippi Hedren Escapes Battlesome, Intimidating Ravens, Deadly Seagulls  
 NAKED GUN Nielsen Acts Klutzy, Even Demented. Good, Unpretentious Nuttiness  
 BULWORTH Beatty Unleashes Liberalism With Offbeat Rapping That’s Hilarious  
 CASTAWAY Crashed Airplane Survivor Tames Archipelago- Waits And Yearns  
 TOP HAT Terpsichorean Opus Perfectly Highlights Astaire’s Talents  
 WINDTALKERS War Introduces Navajo Dialect To Allied Leathernecks, Kayoing Enemy  
 Radio Specialists  
 DAS BOOT Dangerous Axis Submarine Bears Onslaught Of Torpedos  
 THE STING Two Hoods Engineer Swindle, Taking In Nasty Gangster  
 LA BAMBAA Latin Artist Becomes A Major Band Attraction  
 MR. DEEDS Miserable Retread Demeans Even Excruciatingly Dopey Sandler  
 INSOMNIA Investigator Nears Solution Of Murderous Nightmare In Alaska  
 POLTERGEIST Parents Of Lovely Tot Eventually Realize Ghost Exists Inside Sinister  
 Television  
 BOB AND CAROL AND TED AND ALICE [starring Robert Culp, Natalie Wood, Elliott Gould,  
 and Dyan Cannon] Boy Oh Boy! Amorous Neighbors Desire Casual Affairs. Robert Outlines  
 Lusty And Naughty Deeds To Elliot, Dyan, And Natalie. Despite A Longing, It Collapses  
 Entirely

**A Paean to Words**

Charles Aschbacher, Journal of Recreational Mathematics editor, writes

Words are too important to be used only as a means of transmitting information; they should also be used to entertain and amuse. That is the philosophy behind the publication of this journal and the contributors are successful in their efforts. Some of the best puns that I have ever read appear in this journal. Other common topics include geometric patterns made with words, patterns of letters in words and dual meanings of words. It is a tribute to the richness of language that so many patterns arise in the words that we use. The authors also actively examine other languages in their searching for interesting linguistic material. While I did not do an extensive count of the countries mentioned as sources of words in the Nov 2002 issue, it is clear that nearly every country on earth is represented.

Wordplay also has an advantage over other areas, in that the database is non-static. Words are constantly being added to the language, and with the advantages of the modern archiving of information, words no longer leave our languages at the rate they used to. It is also possible for a practitioner to create a new word to describe a circumstance that had not been succinctly named before.



Wordplay is fun, but it also demonstrates many important characteristics of humans. We are imaginative, creative, and can find interesting information everywhere.

### Mikela Mikael

Darryl Francis recently noted the existence of an actress named Mikela Mikael who appeared in a made-for-TV thriller called "No Night Is Too Long". A Google search on the Internet turned up half a dozen references to her, but this was eclipsed by more than 17,000 references to Robert Trebor!

### Tompions

Mike Keith notes two pi-related properties of this word, which is the obsolete plural form of TAMPIONS "a plug" in Web 3, or "a kind of watch" in the OED. The two central letters of the word are PI, and the second differences of the letter values form a good approximation to pi:

T	O	M	P	I	O	N	S
20	15	13	16	9	15	14	19
	5	2	3	7	6	1	5
		3	1	4	1	5	4

### Armageddon

Marge D. Doan writes	Dear God, man	O! Grand dame
	Mad God near.	And mad ogre
	A modern gad	Drag a Demon.
	Nomad raged.	Man dare God?
	A God damner	Go dread, Man.
	Dragon dame	Go and dream...
	Raged on mad	and go armed.

### Alphabetical Enigma

Sue Mayer of Newton MA writes "Addled, bedazzled, charmed, deluded, enchanted, fooled, glad hands included. Jaded kindness, lethal mix...Not our problem! Quick, the rest! Sardonic tonic, unopened vial, wrinkled Xanthippe yonder, zaftig."

### Up

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are officers UP for an election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends, and we use the word to brighten UP a room, to polish UP the silver, warm UP leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and some guys fix UP the old car. At other times this little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed UP is special. And the UP is confusing: a drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open UP a store in the morning, but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP about one-fourth of a page and can add UP to about 30 definitions. If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP



is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more. When it threatens to rain we say that it is clouding UP. When it rains it wets UP the earth. When it doesn't rain for a while things dry UP. One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now my time is UP...time to shut UP. One more thing: what is the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night? U P

### Alphabetical Panama

In the Feb 1996 Word Ways, John Connett presented the Panamanian rejects such as "A man, a pal, Al, Art, a tra-la-la—Panama" and "A Man, a pallid dill—Panama". In my palindromes, I replace Panama with words beginning with each letter of the alphabet. All words can be found in Webster's Second. Some are proper nouns, and three (SAVAN, CASABA, XA) are listed below the line. All words (except the article) are nouns, and no noun is repeated except XA (the standard format cannot be employed because there are no Websterian nouns ending in -AXA). Oddly, the palindrome with PANAMA makes the most sense; three of the words in it (PANAMA, PAPAYA, YAPA) mention tropical trees in their definitions.

A cab, a tag, a gat—abaca!  
 A tal, a bag, a Maga—balata!  
 A lab, a crab, a bar—cabala!  
 A ramada, a map, a maa—Damara!  
 A hake, a nab, a cabana—ekaha!  
 A fan, a tan, a tana—fa!  
 A lag, a lagan, a kana—galagala!  
 A bahar, a tab, a batara—haba!  
 A lip, a gag, a gap—Ila!  
 A car, a raj, a baba—jararaca!  
 A lam, a kas, a kasa—kamala!  
 A malar, a pax, a para—lama!  
 A jar, a hamal, a la—maharaja!  
 A rag, a nap, a tapa—nagara!  
 A dog, a cat, a cag—oda!  
 A man, a papaya, a yapa—panama!  
 A bas, a quat, a tau—qasaba!  
 A mar, a Mara, a baa—ramarama!  
 A dal, a stab, a bat—salada!  
 A tar, a tam, aa ma—tarata!  
 A cur, a lass, a lar—Uca!  
 A savan, a mat, a mana—vasa!  
 A ram, a wap, a pa—wamara!  
 A xa, a xa, a xa—a xa!  
 A lak, a yam, a mama—Yakala!  
 A rap, a zap, a papa—Zapara!

Ronald Reagan and the nation's doctors had a health plan that involved sending sick people to Panama, where the view was expected to cure them. Political problems prevented the plan from being implemented, leaving only the palindrome:

A.M.A., Ron, a plan—a canal panorama



## The Quotable Notable

Adam and Napoleon aren't the only historical figures who spoke palindromically. Here are a few more examples by people who left two-way voiceprints in the sands of time:

HE PINS HAIR! I—AH—SNIP, EH? Delilah whispering to herself as she gives Samson a haircut

KOAN: I SIN, A-OK Buddha zenning about his first love affair

DIALOG: I GO, LAID Plato philosophizing about his first love affair

SPLAT! I HIT ALPS! Hannibal crashing his elephant into a snowy mountain

ANOMALY? LA, MONA Leonardo da Vinci rejoicing at successfully painting a smile on the frowning La Gioconda

I DID DAVID AS A DIVA, D-DID I? Michelangelo realizing that his initial attempt at the famous statue resulted in a female

HOT, OH! Joan of Arc commenting on her latest flame

SUN, O ERA, BARE ON US Lady Godiva under the mistaken impression that she was leading a whole parade of naked riders

SUN O'ER A BARE ONUS after Lady Godiva discovered that her ride was a solo exhibition

WOOD'LL DO—OW! George Washington getting a splinter in his mouth from his false teeth

SO RED IS ID, EROS Freud muttering about his subconscious

## Charade Essays

Each section is divided into two pairs having the same letters in the same order, but different capitalization, punctuation and spacing.

A song, old: "I am Erica, America, lone now, here."

As on gold: "I, America, am Eric, alone nowhere."

O, rise, Xylophone Song, rounder again. Say "out here!" No, tout land! Is he a tin god darting, lass?

Or I sexy? Lo, phone's on ground. Era gains a "you there". Not outlandish, eating odd art in glass.

"We are the raw, are the now!"

"Eek! Each opera's edifications a tiny, ardent, errant Savoy ages top, silly! Out, heros!

Vowels even ice Venice's water, O tick in grace. A span, icy east.

Wear ether? Aware, then.

O, we eke a chop erased if I, cat, I on satin yard enter. Rants! A voyage stops ill youth.

Eros, vow, else Venice, Venice! Swat erotic king. Race as panic yeast.

## A Christmas Present

In October 2005 my Christmas book, *A Visit From St. Alphabet*, came out in hardcover for the first time. St. Alphabet rides a sleigh just like his predecessor, but he brings poems to children and the grown-ups. Recently I wrote a parody of another, more recent Christmas classic, and St. Alphabet makes a cameo appearance in it.



*Write-On, The Ink-Stained Reindeer*

You know Marker and Printer, and Shader and Tracer,  
Sketcher and Doodler, and Jot and Eraser,  
But do you recall  
The most ink-stained wretch of all?

Write-On, the Ink-Stained Reindeer  
Had a shiny ball-point nose,  
And if you saw his poems,  
You would say each stanza glows.

All of the writing reindeer  
Laughed at Write-On's poems at night.  
They never let poor Write-On  
Join in any poems they'd write.

Then one prosy Christmas Eve,  
St. Alphabet came to say,  
"Write-On, with your ball-point nose,  
Fix my sled. The poems just froze!"

Write-On wrote shining light verse,  
Covered St. Alphabet's sled.  
Each of the words blazed brightly.  
"Let's fly!" St. Alphabet said.

Write-On led all the reindeer  
Through the foggy midnight prose.  
Light verse lit all the sky up,  
Thanks to his ball-point nose!

All of the other reindeer  
Laughed and scribbled out with glee:  
"Write-On, the Ink-Stained Reindeer,  
You'll go down in po-e-try."