~ THE WIZARD OF OGGIES

Ogden Nash, the great comic poet of the twentieth century, wrote the following, innocent-looking little 8-liner. In doing so, he progressed from one to three letters used in the most important words—lama, llama, and Illama. The Oggy Challenge is to write 26 parodies of the poem, one for each letter of the alphabet, using real words, of course, and good grammar, of course, and following Nash’s rhythm and structure, of course. This year’s winner of the chrished Oggy is Jeff Grant. Here’s Nash’s masterpiece:

The one-I lama,
He’s a priest.
The two-I llama,
He’s a beast.
And I will bet
A silk pajama
There isn’t any
Three-I llama.

Jeff’s Oggies for A-Z appear below, along with the Oggies for K and X (by DM) and the Oggy for L (by Bill Brandt). And here they are:

The one-a Bader,
He’s a hero.
The two- a Baader,
He’s a zero.
And I will bet
A lavish Lada 
There isn't any 
Three-a Baader.

[Sir Douglas Bader was a British WW2 flying ace. Andreas Baader was a founder of the German Baader-Meinhof terrorist gang.]

The one-b robins, 
They are birds. 
The two-b Robbins 
Works with words. 
And I will bet 
A box of bobbins 
There aren't any 
Three-b robbbins.

[Harold Robbins is a well-known American author.]

The one-c Bachus, 
He's a thinker. 
The two-c Bacchus, 
He's a drinker. 
And I will bet 
A card from Caracas 
There isn't any 
Three-c Baccchus.

[Spencer Bachus is a US rep and lawmaker. Bacchus is the Greek god of wine. Caracas is the capital of Venezuela.]

The one-d Adams, 
He was president. 
The two-d Addams 
Is a weird resident. 
And I will bet 
A house of madams 
There isn't any three-d Adddams.

[The Addams family were a macabre TV bunch.]

The one-e Erie, 
That's a lake. 
The two-e eerie 
Makes you quake. 
And I will bet 
An Einstein theory
There isn't any
Three-e eerie.

[The opportunity to get six e's in a row in the last line was too hard to resist! It's appropriate that the most famous of Einstein's theories involves the letter E (energy).]

The one-f Jafa,
He's a galoot.
The two-f Jaffa,
He's a fruit.
And I will bet
An ace from Rafa
There isn't any
Three-f Jaffa.

[A Jafa is a resident of Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city (derived from just another f-ing Auckland), and a Jaffa is a type of orange. Rafa is the nickname of Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal.]

The one-g Hagler,
He's a boxer.
The two-g haggler,
He's a foxer.
And I will bet
A crystal waggler
There isn't any
Three-g haggler.

['Marvelous' Marvin Hagler was middleweight world champion from 1980-87. A crystal waggler is a fishing float.]

[Jens Parsson is author of the book 'Dying of Money' (1974)]

----- Original Message

The one-h Lohan,
She's so fluid.
The two-h Lohan,
He's a Druid.
And I will bet
A messed-up Zohan
There isn't any
Three-h Lohan.

[Lohhan is a Druid in the massively multiplayer online role-playing game 'World of Warcraft'. Zohan was a character in the comedy film 'Don't Mess With The Zohan'.]
The one-i Danni,
She's in 'Vogue'.
The two-i Dannii,
She's a Minogue.
And I will bet
My dear old granny
There isn't any
Three-i Danniiii.

[Danni Li is a Chinese fashion model.]

The one-j raja,
He's a ruler.
The two-j Rajja,
He's just cooler.
And I will bet
A jet-black charger
There isn't any
Three-j rajija.

[Rajja is a Belgian DJ/producer. (soundcloud.com)]

The one-k baker,
He's a cook.
The two-k Bakker,
He's a crook.
And I will bet
An Indian faker
There isn't any
Three-k Bakker.

[Above is by DM.]

The one-l llama,
He's a priest.
The two-l llama,
He's a beast.
If you go
One-l higher
The three-l llama
Is a really big fire.

[Above is by Bill Brandt.]

The one-m lemon,
He's a flop.
The two-m Lemmon,
He's the top.
And I will bet
A fish from Yemen
There isn't any
Three-m lemmmon.

The one-n tenant,
He pays on cue.
The two-n Tennant,
He's Doctor Who.
And I will bet
A purple pennant
There isn't any
Three-n tehnnant.

[David Tennant is a Scottish actor who was the tenth incarnation of Doctor Who.]

The one-o shoer,
He's a farrier.
The two-o shoer,
He's a harrier.
And I will bet
A silver ewer
There isn't any three-o shooer.

[Hotels in some places employ 'monkey shoers' to harry the monkeys away.]

The one-p leper,
He's a pariah.
The two-p Lepper,
He's a trier.
And I will bet
A pot of pepper
There isn't any
Three-p lepper.

[David Lepper is a British politician.]

The one-q aqua,
It's a pale blue-green.
The two-q Aqqua,
It's the place to be seen.
And I will bet
A velvet makwa
There isn't any
Three-q aqqqua.
[Aqqua is a salon and spa in Mississauga, Canada. A makwa is an oriental jacket.]

The one-r baron,
He's a peer.
The two-r Barron
He's a skier.
And I will bet
A dish of marron
There isn't any
Three-r barrron.

Peter-James Barron is an Irish cross-country skier who competed at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Marron is an Australian freshwater crayfish.]

The one-s parson,
He praises glory.
The two-s Parsson,
He tells a story.
And I will bet
That Gary Larson
Never drew
A three-s parsson.
(unless he was a snake!)

Jens Parsson is author of the book 'Dying of Money' (1974)]

The one-t basset,
He's a hound.
The two-t Bassett,
He's renowned.
And I will bet a diamond facet
There isn't any three-t bassett.

John Bassett is a noted American historian.]

The one-u Tuta,
He plays soccer.
The two-u Tuuta,
He's a shocker.
And I will bet
A Vespa scooter
There isn't any
Three-u Tuuuta.
[Tuta is a Brazilian association football (soccer) player. Brendon Tuuta is an ex-New Zealand rugby league player known as 'The Baby-Faced Assassin'.]

The one-v Chevy,
Likes the chase.
The two-v Chevvy,
Plays at pace.
And I will bet
A buxom bevy
There isn't any
Three-v Chevvy.

[Punning on Chevy Chase, with allusion to the Chevy (Chevrolet) car. Chevvy Pennycook is an English rugby player.]

The one-w Jewel,
She's a treasure.
The two-w Jewwel,
She's a pleasure.
And I will bet
A crest in crewel
There isn't any
Three-w Jewwwel.

[Jewwel is 'an uninhibited, fun girl' who 'likes to please'. Crewel is a type of embroidery.]

The one-x Nixon,
Said "Me, crook?"
The two-x Nixxon,
Said "read book."
But I would bet
Old Santa's Blitzen
There just ain't any
Three-x Nixxxon.

[The X-Oggy is by DM. It appeared in a slightly different rewriter in the previous Kickshaws. Nixxon is a musician whose name pops up in a Google search.]

The one-y Gayou,
She's of note.
The two-y gayyou,
That's a boat.
And I will bet
A Texas bayou
There isn't any
Three-y gayyyou.

[Evelyne Gayou is a French musicologist. A gayyou is a flat-bottomed fishing boat.]

The one-z hazard,
That's a danger.
The two-z Hazzard,
He's a changer.
And I will bet
A juicy mazzard
There isn't any
Three-z hazzzard.

[Brad Hazzard is an Australian politician. A mazzard is a large wild cherry.]

~ ONION PALINDROMES

Jeff has this follow up to Anil's piece about 'onion palindromes' on page 125 of the previous issue. "There are no 7-letter palindromes allowed in Scrabble with this feature. However, one of those that is allowed (HALALAH) appears in a nice 9-letter 'onion':

SHALALAHSH a former settlement on the lower Umpqua River in western Oregon [Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Hodge, 1907]
ALALA ancient Greek battle cry [Oxford English Dict.]
LAL a dawdling child hanging around its mother [English Dialect Dict.]
A indefinite article

~ CEILIDHS, UKULELES AND EQUINE ODDITIES

Jeff tells how an unusual word in Scrabble led to a musical ad that led to Gulliver's Travels. Here is Jeff's tale...

My Scrabble friend Paul was in town recently when he ran into his mate Sam who was wearing a kilt. He said that he was going to attend a 'kaylee' that evening where they would do Scottish and Irish dancing and singing.

"How on earth do you spell 'kaylee' then?" asked Paul. Sam had no idea. Then the lightbulb flashed in Paul's head. What his mate knew well and spoke of but couldn't spell was a word Paul knew how to spell but not pronounce - the infamous Scrabble showoff word CEILIDH! If you had to guess the spelling of the word, I don't think that CEILIDH would feature in your first 100 tries.
This little incident brought to mind the following advert, which appeared under 'Musical Instruments' in our local paper a couple of months ago:

YOOKALAYLEE As new $25

If you had never seen the word UKULELE written down, I guess this would be a reasonable spelling based on the way it is pronounced.

So what is the hardest word to spell if all you know is the meaning and pronunciation? My top contender comes from a famous book first published in 1726 - *Gulliver's Travels*, by Anglo-Irish poet and satirist Jonathan Swift. In this work, Swift features a race of intelligent horses with a name pronounced 'winnim', who control the brutish race of men called Yahoos. Unfortunately, most dictionaries list the word in capitalised form only, so it isn't allowed in Scrabble. However, it can be used generally for a horse with human characteristics (Mr Ed?), and the OED records evidence of an alternative uncapitalised spelling.

Anyone who spells this word correctly from the pronunciation deserves to win the lottery! Apparently Swift created HOUYHNHNM in imitation of the sound of a horse's neigh.

~ PURPLE COW CHALLENGE

Following Jeff’s success with Llamas, here’s a challenge inspired by Gellett Burgess’s famous poem, the “Purple Cow”:

I never saw a purple cow,
I never hope to see one.
But I can tell you anyhow
I'd rather see than be one.

Simply rewrite this poem, using a different animal for each letter of the alphabet, or a different color for each cow, or both! Here’s mine. Since I’m going first, I can use the cow. If any of you others would like to do the cow, make it a different color or a different something.

I never saw a satin cow,
I never saw a silk one.
But I can tell you anyhow
I’d rather wear than milk one.

~ From Ouija Board to Wijiji Site
Louis Phillips found a word with an unusual challenge. "Wijiji" is an archeological site in Chaco National Historical Park with 5 dotted letters in a row. Is that the most consecutive dotted letters that can appear in any sentence?

He adds 2 dotted letters by writing his sentence carefully to bring the count up to seven. In Wijiji ijiji jimmed the lock to the storage shed.

The sentence: "The burglars in town, whose boss was Wijiji jimmed the lock to the storage shed."

I did a Google search for ijiji and found lots of examples, most of which are companies or their products. However, the word ijiji, a palindromic word, brings it up to eleven by slipping it into Louis's sentence. The online Urban Dictionary defines it as: "n. (gE-gE) Ridicule with extreme and pure sarcasm, where the recipient of the sarcasm has done something clearly offensive or completely unnecessary."

~ TWO TOPICS FROM JEREMY

Jeremy Morse has some responses to a couple of the kickshaws in the last issue. Let's see what Jeremy has to say:

1. I enjoyed this month's article on TNT, (p. 138), but am not sure that they are as more in English as the author suggests. A brief investigation unearthed TABLET to match REDDER, the progressive. T/OE/CAP, the regressive BLE/AR/S, and other unsymmetrical examples DU/ALL/Y and LAIC/ALL/Y.

2. Ross Eckler has a table about days of the week on p. 135 of Making the Alphabet Dance, which I enjoyed as follows.

A. The only transposable day is Monday with two anagrams DYNAMO and NOMADY.
B. Five days have transadditions (UNADY, DYNAMOS, UNSTEADY, CANDYWEEDS and SUBDATARY), but Thursday and Friday have to add 2 letters to make HYDRAULIST and FAIRYDOM.
C. Six days have transadditions (SANDY, NOMAD, STAYED, SANDWEED, DAIRY AND DAYSTAR), but Tuesday has to subtract 2 letters to make TRASHY.
D. Every day has a transposition with one letter changed (DYNAST, YEOMAN, ESTUARY, SANDWEEDS, HYDRATES, MYRIAD, and SUDATORY), but only Sunday can change all its letters (MAUNDY, DYNAST, SUDARY, UNEASY, SUNDAY, DAUNTS.)
E. The highest percentages of coincidence for each day are: SUNDAY (83%), MONDAY and FRILLY (67%), SATURATE (62%), OUTSTAY (57%), YESTERDAY (56%) AND THIRSTED (50%)
Lo, despite Monday’s anagrams, Sunday seems to be the most accommodating
day, while the most recalitrant day is not Wednesday, as one might well expect,
but Thursday.”

~ PALINDROMING PERMUTATOR

Walt Quader describes a novel computer program that he wrote: “It’s a
Palindroming Permutator. It writes a palindrome containing all the unique
permutations of a given word. I know this is silly, but part of the name of the
program is a proper noun I wanted to play with. When I spelled a companion
word to the Palindroming Permutator, the program wrote out

Sarah-sarha-shara-shraa-sraah-sraha-sraha-srah-sraah-
sarha-shara-shraa-srah-shara-srah-shara-shraa-
saraa-ahs-arsh-arsh-arsa-asah-asar-ahs-ahs-ahs-ahs
possibly, the first ever (permutational) ‘Sarah’ palindromonym.”

~ ENDURING ACCIDENTAL ACROSTICS

Walt sends this very curious link between the lines of two classic pieces of
literature. The second line of Edmund Spenser’s *Faire Queene* (1596), Vol. 1,
Book I, Canto viii, stanza 11, containing a phonetic {a, e, i, o, u} acrostic in

108.11

Dismaied with so desperate deadly wound,
And eke impatient of vnwonted paine,
He loudly brayd with beastly yelling sound,
....

*eke*—also

*vnwonted*—unusual

accidentally links to the only sentence in Thomas Paine’s Common Sense, The
Crisis No. X

—On the King of England’s Speech (Philadelphia, March 5, 1782)

that contains an {a, e, i, o, u} acrostic? This stretch of unusual Paine is “an
expression I once used” in the second line of

To be nobly wrong is more manly than to be meanly
right, is an expression I once used on a former occasion, and it is equally applicable now.

Also the Fairie Queene quote contains the word *paine* in it.

**~ MARY’S COMPACT~**

Anil provides a new Mary Lamb constraint, to “maxi-condense it. Aim for the maximum number of words or letters that tell the story. It’s hard to tell if a version is adequate since we know the story so well we might unconsciously assume parts of the story without spelling them out. For example, my entry,

Mary’s white lamb follows to school; taboo; kids kid. (= 9 words, 41 letters.),

fails to mention that the lamb followed her everywhere, not just to school one day. And do I need to add “her” after “follows”? On the other hand, have I used an unnecessary word by saying the lamb was white? Are all lambs white? Even baabaababy black sheep when young? I dunno. Ask Alan the Shepherd. Anyhow, you have a go!”

**~ WORD LADDER PALINDROME~**

“As semi-promised,” Anil promises, “here’s a classic Carroll-type doublet, uniting opposities, which then flips to create a word ladder palindrome, a new form as far as I’m aware. It was easy to reverse as the two parties are so much alike. It’s relevant to this year’s US election but is more about the 2000 and 2008 elections.”

**GOP, DEM.**

GOB MOB, DAM DEM “DIM DIP LIP”,
LOB LOW LAW, “LIB!” LOB, “JOB JOY!”
LAY PAY PAC PAX ...BOY TOY TOP,
(POX TOX TAX PAX!!), TAP TAX,
LAX TAX, LAX PAX
TAP TOP TOY BOY JOY JOB, (TAX TOX POX PAX!) PAC PAY,
LOB “LIB” LIP DIP, LAY LAW LOW LOB,
DIM DEM DAM “MOB GOB”
DEM. GOP.

He includes this translation of the above:

“The Republicans, a talkative lot, advocate ‘less laws’ and make taxpayers fund a couple of ‘peace’ wars (pay pack pax)—a toxic pox of a tax paid ‘peace’, say Democrats—while at the same time cutting taxes [for the rich]. They tapped a rich playboy for the top job and by smearing the ‘liberal’ (now a dirty word) Dems, eclipse them in the 2000 election. In 2008 the Dems strike back against
the small-minded lips, campaign as ‘liberal’ (a good word again) and making the working class happy, and thereby topple the playboy’s party, increase HE&W spending, gradually lighten the ‘peace’ effort budget—a toxic pox of a ‘peace’ relaxing, say Republicans—and lay into the latter’s law axing spree, calling them mouthpieces for the covertly ruling plutocrat ‘mafia’.

“Many of these claims and counterclaims,” he concludes, “are controversial or inaccurate, but what do you expect from a palindromic word ladder?”

~ CONCERTO FOR THE LEFT HAND, UN-RAVELED

Bringing wordplay into the realm of music, Anil conducted this piece. As he explains it: “Maurice Ravel wrote a (piano) Concerto for the Left Hand. Dew-gaze = the shiny white look of dew-covered lawn. Grade Academy = primary or grade school. Graders = its students. ragged = teased, mocked; ragged = cut loose, danced on and on—rag, ragga and/or reggae. This lipogram of left hand keyboard letters QWERT ASDFG ZXCVB was harder than expected from over half the alphabet—but only a third of the vowels. Can you improve it? It could especially use better lipograms for white, school, children and laughed.”

Tara was a ewe-babe babe,
Tara’s ewe-babe was dew-gaze based.
As Tara raced, ever ewe-babe raced after Tara.
Tara raced at Grade Acad., ewe-babe raced at Grade Acad.
Bad, bad ewe-babe!
'Graders' gagged, gaga, "A gag?'", ragged ewe-babe, raved, rag-ragga-reggae raged.

~ ELECTION ANAGRAMS

Anil’s anagrammatic take on the American political arena:

1. **Romney**  ‘R’ money  (R meaning “are”, “Republican”, “Rightwing”, or your own version)
2. **Romney’s Mom**  Mormon?  Yes’m.
3. **primary election**  pre-main cloy rite

~ PALINDROMIC DATES

According to Anil, “Most years have one or more palindromic dates, expressed digitally. The US and Oz have different systems for ciphering dates: month/day/year vs. day/month/year. Both systems had palindromic dates in February this year but on different days. The US had ten—the 10th thru the 19th (2/x/12, where x=10-19) but no more in 2012. Oz had but one in February—the 21st (21/2/12)—but had/will have nine others on the 21st of all months January thru September plus November (21/x/12, where x = 1-9 or 11). A puzzle: What
is the next year that will not have at least one palindromic date? There are potentially eight answers, two each (US+Oz) for the four different ciphering styles: a. with century (today=6/4/2012 or 4/6/2012), b. with unnecessary or ‘decimal’ 0’s (06/04/12 or 04/06/12), c. with both (06/04/2012 or 04/06/2012) and d. with neither (6/4/12 or 4/6/12).

~ POLITICAL WORD SQUARES

Anil sent the word squares below, which use 3-letter political abbreviations, including REP for Republican and DEM for Democrat. Liberal use of 3-letter forms enabled the conservative form of word squares to express quite a bit of political meaning.

1-8 = separate parties, single squares:

1. GOP old PDQ.

G.O.P.
OLD
PDQ

2. G.O.P. owe pew.

GOP
OWE
PEW


GOP
OUI
PIG

4. G.O.P.—"Eeel" per.

GOP
EEE
PER

5. Dem.: ego mob.

DEM
EGO
MOB

6. D.N.C. nil clu.
7. D.N.C.—neo-con.

DNC
NIL
CLU

8. Dem. ERA map.

DEM
ERA
MAP

9-10 = separate parties, double squares

9. GOP out "dry" God, our Pty.

GOP
OUT
DRY


DEM
ERA
WOW

11-14 = combined parties, single squares

11. R. 'n' D.: "nun DNA"

RND
NUN
DNA

12. (two readings:) "rad" a la dad / R.A.D. a la D.A.D.

RAD
ALA
DAD

13. (two readings run together:) R.A.P. a la P.A.D. rap a la pad.
14. The D.P.A. par the A.R.P.

DPA
PAR
ARP

15-17. combined parties, double squares

15. The G.O.P. owe the D.N.P. God's own pep.

GOP
OWE
DNP


DEM
ERA
REP


DNC
OER
GOP

18. combined parties, double 4-square

18, Repu. earn a sad Demo. read, ease pram undo.

REPU
EARN
ASAD
DEMO

~ ANAGRAM BONDING

At last here's a practical value for anagrams! Anil tells all about it! 'A tool to abet lovers' or friends' bonding. Take the first names or initials of the couple or friends and find a word containing both, apt if possible. The best solution might become "their word". Eg, Anil + Li Na is a real easy one with innumerable solutions, eg, add Ma to reveal our aniMAI natures! A tougher one, Jo + Joe, only yielded one
solution in the OAD, jejunoileal. It’s a surgical term that might aptly be defined as
the joining of two guts, a good omen for the couple. If names are too long, allow
phrases (standard or made up) that contain both, like “on a jumbo jet”, apt
perhaps if they met at an airport. If there are too many rare letters (like two J’s),
allow a single one (J) to count for both. (After all, the couple are
‘fusing’.) Perhaps ease the rules entirely by using lipograms and seeking only
one copy of any letter in the names. Then Jo + Joe can have dozens of solutions
containing at least one J, O, and E. The most apt I found in the OAD J’s
are: joined, juxtaposed, (co-)journeying, (over)joyed, jolliest; plus these negative
or ominous ones which might be chosen by a rival or enemy opposing the
partner(s): joyless, jokers, jealousy, jousted, jettison, jeopardy or jailhouse.

“This can also be used as a party game, attempting to bond three or more
people. With or without allowing the use of dictionaries. More challenging
without but more fun with, an excuse for perusing the dictionary, perhaps
enlarging one’s vocabulary.”

~ WORD WAYS’ ILLITERATE PUNCTUATION

Jim Puder discusses “the curiously choleric letter received by you in 1998,
alleging illiteracy in Word Ways’ punctuation, one suspects that its estimable
author may not be quite the erudite authority on punctuational propriety that he
evidently assumes himself to be, as he is wrong in each one of his four specific
criticisms of Word Ways’ punctuational style. To wit: (1) yes, commas and
periods that come at the end of quoted material are properly placed within the
quotation marks, even though it may at times seem illogical to put them there; (2)
yes, commas are properly placed between coordinate adjectives; (3) yes, dashes
are properly indicated by double hyphens in typewritten copy (how else, when
before the coming of type balls and printwheels, typewriters had no dash keys?);
and (4) no, spaces are not preferably inserted between dashes and the words
they separate. (The Merriam-Webster Concise Handbook for Writers has this to
say on the matter: ‘Style varies... Some publications insert a space before and
after the dash, others do not. Our evidence indicates that the majority of
publishers style the dash without spaces.’)”

~ IN NAME ONLY ANIMAL WORDS

Bill Brandt notes that “Many words and phrases incorporate the names of
animals. Some of these words utilize the characteristics of those animals. For
example, ‘beeline’ which means ‘a straight course’, comes from the path bees
take when returning to the hive. ‘Crocodile tears’ which means ‘hypocritical
sorrow’ refers to the liquid coming from a crocodile’s eyes when consuming its
prey. ‘Turkey shoot’ which means ‘a marksmanship contest’ comes from the time
when turkeys were plentiful and people used to compete when shooting them.
However, some of these animal-words do not utilize any of the characteristics of
those animals. For example, ‘copy cat’ has nothing to do with cats, ‘bug out’ has
nothing to do with bugs, and 'pig Latin' has nothing to do with pigs. Some more examples are shown below. Has anyone come up with a name for this type of word?"

Bullpen – place where pitchers warm up for a ballgame
Bug Out - to depart in a hurry
Catbird Seat - a position of advantage
Catgut - item made with sheep gut
Cat’s Cradle - game with string looped on fingers
Cat’s Pajamas - something superlative
Catsuit - close fitting one piece garment
Clothes Horse - a conspicuously dressy person
Cold Turkey - stopping a habit abruptly
Copycat - something that imitates or duplicates
Dogleg - something having an abrupt angle
Dogtooth - an architectural ornament
Dogtrot – a type of dance
Dog Watch - two hour watch on a ship
Foxfire - an eerie phosphorescent light
Foxhole - a pit used to avoid enemy fire
Foxtrot - a dance
Goose Bumps – roughness of the skin
Henpecked - subject to persistent nagging
Hogshead - a large cask or barrel
Hogtie - to tie two feet together
Hogwash - nonsense
Horseplay - rough or boisterous play
Horseradish - a herb
Kangaroo Court - a mock court
Lame Duck - an non-reelected official from the election to the inauguration
Monkey Bars - playground equipment
Monkey Wrench - a wrench with one fixed jaw
Piggy Back - to carry on the shoulders
Pig Headed - obstinate
Pig Latin - jargon created by systematically altering words
Pig Iron - crude iron
Pigeon English – a combination of languages
Skunk Works - facility for research and development
Stool Pigeon - an informer
Swan Song - farewell appearance or performance
Talk Turkey - speak candidly
Turkey Trot - a dance
Wolf Whistle - two tone whistle

~ WHY IS THE ALPHABET IN THAT ORDER?  
   IS IT BECAUSE OF THAT SONG?
Good question. Let's skip it for now. Instead, let's try a different way of ordering. Instead of the traditional a-z, let's consider the ease with which we can pronounce each letter—each letter's name, that is. For instance, consider which parts of your mouth are necessary in order to say A, and B. To me, A is easier to say. There's very little movement involved; mainly the vowel sound does almost all the work. B, on the other hand, needs you to close your lips and use a vocalized sound to differentiate it from P, which starts with bursting out a soft sound (plosive)and ends with a louder sounds.

It is probably possible for scientist to measure the amount of movement (Perhaps they already have) that the parts of your mouth, lips, chin, nose, etc., make in order to generate the movement that leads to the letters that lead to the spoken words.

So, here is a challenge for readers. Rearrange all twenty-six letters of the alphabet, starting with the letter that seems to you to be the simplest to say, and ending with the most difficult. My answer appears in Answers & Solutions. How close did your answer come to mine. Please email your results to my email address. To evaluate yours with someone else's, write your alphasonic order neatly on a wide sheet of paper. Then, under it, write someone else's version. Figure out how far away both of you were from each other. The top row is yours and the bottom is hers. Let's examine these few letters. The top row is 1, the bottom 2. (A normal game would be played with each player writing out 26 letters that go from simple to complex pronunciation. But let's start with 7 letters to show how it goes. And bear in mind that we are doing it as if we were player 1. Player 2 would achieve different results because she would be view the letters in her row as the best arrangement.

1 A E D R M T Q
2 E A R N T D Q

You are the top row. Start with your A. Look in player 2's letters for A. It's one over to the right from you. You score 1 for A. Then go to the E in your row, 1. Where is the E in 2's string. It comes 1 before the E in your string. You score a 1 in that, too. Then player 1 goes to D. 1 looks in 2's line and find's D is 6th in line. Since D in player 1's row is 3rd, then 2's is 3 away. At this point, the score is 1 = 4, 2 = 0. The only way that a zero could be scored is if the letters in each row were exactly the same. There are other ways of playing this game, and other ways of grading it.

Let's see how 2 did when she regarded her answers as the right ones.

2 E A R N T D Q
I have listed my sonic alphabet in Answers * Solutions for the reader to puzzle over. I spent about a half hour at it. The complete pattern if fairly interesting. It often groups letters that are close to each other in the alphabet normally position However, that may be a tendency on my part to read them with placement in mind. It's your turn.

~ MATCHBOOK MAGAZINE: ONE-WORD POEMS

Word Ways readers would be interested in knowing about Matchbook Magazine and the words created by its readers, who were part of the poetry scene instead of the wordplay scene.

This is an anthology of all the material that appeared in Matchbook Magazine, the littelest little mag to ever light up the poetry world. Each issue published nine one-word poems on one-inch square pieces of paper stapled in a matchbook. Matchbook flourished from 1972-1973, the first two years of the Actualist Poetry Movement in Iowa City. Joyce Holland, the legendary editor of the magazine, disappeared from Iowa City under mysterious circumstances many years ago. I am fortunate to have a complete collection of her Matchbooks.

Each issue was produced by typing the cover page, the preliminary pages, and the poetry pages on a single mimeograph stencil. The stencil was run through one of the late stone age mimeo machines at the Iowa Memorial Union. The print run was 100 copies for the first issue. The cost of mimeographing the run was about 80 cents, which was less than a penny an issue. The cover price was 5 cents per issue. The pages were stapled inside matchbooks donated by local business.

Matchbook Magazine Anthology is a collection of all the one-word poems that appeared between Matchbook Magazine's covers for its complete print-run of fourteen issues. Contributors included poet Allen Ginsberg, comedian Pat Paulsen, and others. These issues would've remained in a box like baseball cards except that the avant-garde writer Richard Kostelanetz asked whether there was an anthology of Matchbook's contents available. I replied that I had a full set of the mags and could probably do an anthology in one evening—and that is exactly what I did.

Joyce Holland was a writer, editor, and performer. I remember her dynamic readings of poems of all sorts, for Joyce was not just a minimalist poet. She explored many of the possibilities of experimental verse, from verbal to visual to vocal. She created her own poetry, and poetry created its own her. She was an actress of charm and magic: She knew how to write the unwriteable and read the unreadable. She made language melt in her mouth and in her hands.
A  MATCHBOOK NO. A

astrophobia        Darrell Gray
creation            Liz Zima
emboosued         Cinda Wormley
feltit             George Mattingly
grap              Bruce Andrews & Michael Lally
john              John Sjoberg
markle          Allan Kornblum
twords             Ira Steingruber
unvelope         Steve Toth

B  MATCHBOOK NO. B

de-lighted        Morty Sklar
echoology        Neil Ruddy
fornicile         Joe Ziegler
fornification      Charles Osenbaugh
GASOLINE         Andrei Codrescu
pobble            Ron Silliman
Riga            Sotére Torregian
scumbosis        Pat Dooley (found in Hoot Gibson)
zombie           Sheila Heldenbrand

C  MATCHBOOK NO. C

fungers           Dave Morice
goo              Barbara Baracks
moink            Maria Gitin
puppylust        Pat Casteel
shirty          Peter Schjeldahl

four onewords

alien
smoke
bust
deporatee        Anselm Hollo

D  MATCHBOOK NO. D

cumt             Tom Veitch
electrelocation  Scott Wright
flitch            Chuck Miller
grapenuts        Al Buck
<table>
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<td>NO. H (right side)</td>
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<td>apocastasis</td>
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<td>fages</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>immaculation</td>
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<td>Joyce</td>
<td>JEEPERS</td>
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<td>puppy?</td>
<td>lungng</td>
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<td>razzmattazz</td>
<td>nubble</td>
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<td>s t a r d</td>
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<td>sturd</td>
<td>sixamtoninepm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kit Robinson</td>
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<td>lyn lifshin</td>
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<tr>
<td>drooplots</td>
<td>Cinda Wormley</td>
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<tr>
<td>grisaille</td>
<td>Diane Kruchkow</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mary Beyer</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Anne Waldman</td>
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<tr>
<td>meness</td>
<td>Joyce Schaubnacher</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sheila Heldenbrand</td>
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<tr>
<td>shellfishness</td>
<td>Josephine Clare</td>
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<tr>
<td>waisted</td>
<td>Maria Gitin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aberystwyth</td>
<td>George Hitchcock</td>
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<tr>
<td>“bed”</td>
<td>Barry Watten</td>
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<th>dictionary epic</th>
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<td>Ga</td>
<td>Tony Towle</td>
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<td>Ga.</td>
<td>Peter Kostakis</td>
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<td>Ibid</td>
<td>John Giorno</td>
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<td>[Mideastern word?]</td>
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</table>
I MATCHBOOK NO. I  (do-it-yourself issue)

__________

This issue had 9 blanks, one per page. It was distributed at the Second Actualist Convention at Wesley House in Iowa City. Each recipient could write one word in each of the blanks. Nine words were chosen and printed in a special Actualist Issue of Matchbook. That issue, No. J, appears next.

__________

j MATCHBOOK NO. j  (actualist convention issue)

acty'all Richard Friedman
cowpoke Lloyd Abell
fatso Bob Perelman
gritosis Cinda Wormley
KRONG Karina Hollo
lawst Scott Wright
mumsh Tamsin Hollo
owie Neil Hackman
relaxual Bob Rosenthal

J MATCHBOOK NO. J  (contest winners issue)

ANAGRAMARAMA Darrell Gray * 1st prize
CEREALISM Fletcher Copp * 2nd prize

honorable
mentions

cosmicpolitan Morty Sklar
(for anselm) Tom Clark
hairanoia Gerard Malanga
Monther Tom Veitch
psychasm

tictactile
Whirrrrrrd
whahavyagotthasgudtareedare (fold out) Trudi Katchmar
bloat                Jim Bateman
    coughy             Pat Nolan
    DO-DA              Rochelle Kraut
       Heeelp          Allan Appel
       insex            Juliet Clarke
       Manna            Tom Disch
       Nathaniel        Bernadette Mayer
       pudster          Michael-Sean Lazarchuk
       smutch           Ken Mikolowski

L  MATCHBOOK NO. L

    armadillo          Bill Zavatsky
    bumpershoot        Darlene Pearlstein
    electrizzzzzz      g.p. skratz
    flabergassed       Dick Paterson
    gulp               Pat Paulsen
    metaphoria         Rosemarie Waldrop

________

oneword
   trilogy

________

    shy
    boy
    sex                 Kenward Elmslie

M  MATCHBOOK NO. M (wide issue)

    acetylcholinesterase John Batki
    cowork              Clark Coolidge
    EVE                 James Meachem
    injest              Audrey Teeter
    lups                Michael Lally
    mmmm                Bruce Andrews
    nevermore           Charlie Walsh
    somnombularium      Dave Morice
    zerosis             P.J. Casteel

~ ALPHABET ANTHOLOGY: ONE-LETTER POEMS

Joyce Holland also edited an anthology of one-letter poems. She sent a postcard out to potential contributors. The postcard had lowercase letters of the alphabet printed on it. She asked the recipient to circle a letter and return it to her to be included in the anthology. When she had gotten 104 contributors, she published Alphabet Anthology, a tall, slim book. Each of its 26 pages had 4 contributions per page. Each contribution had its contributor listed below it.
Word Ways readers might find it interesting to see the alphabetic index that gave a count of all the letters. Here it is:

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<th># of times</th>
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<td>o</td>
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<td>a/z</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ö</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>þ (Old English “thorn”)</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Total: 104

~ THE JOYCE HOLLAND HOAX

Alas, Joyce Holland didn’t exist. At least not in the conventional sense. She was a literary hoax. I wrote the poems and edited Matchbook and Alphabet Anthology, and my girlfriend P.J. Casteel played the physical embodiment of Joyce. She was an actress who gave Joyce a personality. The hoax lasted for three years. Iowa City poets were in on it: When a poet came from out of town to give a reading, local writers called P.J. by the hoax name.
The poems were non-traditional, ranging from minimal works (such as the “Invisible Sonnet” series) to concrete poems (such as a typewriter image made with a typewriter) to performance pieces (such as a poem titled “What is the sound of 100 hands clapping?” made in front of an audience of about 50 people).

Joyce sent out poems and received some very interesting correspondence in return. Most editors were friendly and courteous, and some were flirtatious. Most of the women were enthusiastic about this new voice on the poetry scene. The letter that accompanied her poems consisted of a single symbol, a question mark, on a one-inch square piece of paper.

One man wrote a two-page, heart-felt letter stating that he was depressed about his girlfriend breaking up with him; he was even feeling suicidal, and Joyce’s submission cheered him up and gave him hope. We didn’t continue the correspondence with him.

Another man, in response to the poems she’d sent him, wrote “I don’t want to use these poems, but keep your fucking panties on! If you send me some more, I may use one.” He wound up letting Joyce edit two issues of his little magazine. He asked her to describe herself, so P.J. and I composed a full-alphabet description and sent it to him.

Letter to James Mechem,
Editor, Out of Sight

Dear James,

Height: A
Weight: B
Belt: C
Blouse: D
Bra: E
Coat: F
Dress: G
Gloves: H
Hat: I
Hosiery: J
Negligee: K
Nightie: L
Pajamas: M
Panties: N
Robe: O
Shoes: P
Shirt: Q
Shorts: R
Slacks: S  
Slip: T  
Skirt: U  
Sweater: V  
Swim Suit: W

Get the picture?*

XYZ,

Joyce Holland

*The picture was a postcard with a close-up photo of a woman's breasts with a fly standing on one of them. Mechem then asked if he could call Joyce, but that's another story.

The highlight of the hoax was a trip to Tom Snyder's *Tomorrow* show on NBC-TV. I wrote a poem on the dress Joyce was wearing. Before the poetry telethon, she gave a fantastic reading in which she led the audience in a high energy performance piece.

"Imagine we're at a football game," she said, "but instead of a football, there's a poem in the middle of the field. I'm the cheerleader, and I'm going to lead you in the Poetry Cheer. Give me a P!" "P!" the audience shouted back. "Give me an O!" "O!" And so on, until ending it with "I can't hear you!" "Poetry!..." "Louder!..." "Poetry!..." "One more time!..." "POETRY!!!"

After the show, as we walked across the parking lot to the limo, Snyder came out the door. I can see the image of that night in my mind as clearly as if it were occurring again. He laughed, raised his fist in the air in triumph, and yelled, "Hey, Joyce! Give me a P!"

I saved all of the letters, news articles, publications, and other documentation of the hoax, which took many twists and turns. At one point, P.J. and I had a Ouija Board conversation with Joyce, and we wrote the dialog down as it unfolded under the planchette skimming across the letters, spelling a strange story indeed.

In 1984 I sold all of the Joyce Holland material to the University of Iowa Libraries where it sits tonight in Special Collections waiting for someone to find out how fascinating it was to create an experimental poet who for awhile existed in the heart of poetry.

~ PERSONAL NAME PALINDROMES

Jim's intricate, fascinating presentation dealt with the longest word and the longest geographical name that can be fit into palindromes. Several decades ago, GAMES Magazine had a "Palindromes with Personality" contest. The rule
was pure simplicity: Write a palindrome with the name of a celebrity in it. The celebrity could be alive or dead, real or not. The names could come from any field of endeavor, but the individual had to be well-enough known for most of GAMES readers to recognize.

This contest blew me away. I immediately started typing on computer the names of famous people going down the left-hand margin. When I typed a bunch of them. I started with A, then went I went back and tried to figure out how to put their names into perfect palindromes that had real words, real names (referring to a real celebrity).

I wrote one thousand palindromes before the contest was over. I pared them down to one hundred palindromes, which helped me get rid of a lot palindromes that weren’t worth the symmetry they were printed on. However, it gave me a greater respect for the form. In the 100 that I used, I chose for variety and quality. One of them received an honorable mention, but the authors weren’t credited for those poems. All the authors should’ve been credited. Then I remembered that I had some personal name palindromes that might qualify as having the longest single name or the longest first-and-last names in a palindrome. I found two that were the longest I’d written, or so I thought:

The longest single-name palindrome seemed to be this one.
   O, Geronimo, no minor ego! (8 letters)

An also-ran tied for length, but the palindrome uses less-than-desirable apostrophized words:
   Rod o’ revel! Casanova’s Avon ‘as a clever odor. (8 letters)

This longest first-and-last-name in a palindrome seemed to be unbeatable.
   I call a fan: “Air on Oriana Fallaci.” [an Italian journalist] (13 letters)

Well, shows over, games one, prizes given. Or is that just a like spread to keep from the eager eyes of wordplay people the fact that there are ever higher and higher achievements to make. The masterpiece so far and in more way that one—ladies, genlement, and logologists of all ages, let me entertain you with beauty of this palinerome:
   Stradivari’s music: “I sum, sir, avid arts.” (10 letters)

I wondered if I could add Stradivari’s first name to make it a long double-name entry. It makes perfect sense the way it stands. But, for better or for words, I want to put in his full name. Let’s see what happens.

   To care poem, Antonio Stradivari’s music: “I sum, sir, avid art. So I
   not name op era cot.” (17 letters)

I was pleased with the Oriana Fallaci long-name-drome of 13 letters,
but time marches on, and Stradivari plays the music for that march. Now feast your eyes on the next Kickshaw item...

~ A VISIT TO PALINDROME PLACE

Jim Puder wrote this wonderful item about palindromes. Hop in your wordmobile and ride like the wind. Follow Jim’s map as we conclude this Kickshaws...

Well, now you’ve done it. Driving down Wordplay City’s Alphabet Avenue, taking in all the colorful letter shops, you’ve made a wrong turn onto Palindrome Place, a famously two-way street to the happy house. Nothing for it now but to keep on driving until you hit a cross street. You turn on the radio...

Too Hot to Trot

...welcome back to NPR, National Palindromic Radio; I’m Aimée Miami. “Too hot to hoot” has long been one of our more popular palindrome “chestnuts,” being cited in print almost as often as the well-known “Panama” and “Able/Elba” palindromes. It’s served as the title for two books and been cited in one or more of its variations in many others. O.V. Michaelson has traced its publication history back as far as 1911, and in its unpublished existence it probably goes back much further. Basically, any palindromic sentence or short passage that begins with the word “Too” can be considered a member of “Too Hot to Hoot’s” variation set. Various palindromists have composed many such variations over the years, most recently Jeff Grant in the Nov 2011 issue of Word Ways. Jeff’s article inspired these recent listeners’ additions to our ever-growing “Too hot to hoot” collection:

“Too cool,” Gina mixed Dex, “in an igloo, coot!”

Too cerise, Dot, to desire coot?

“Too cerise-dotted a cadet to desire coot?” [Asked amid a West Point measles siege]

Too fanatical! Lida can idle—“Hebe Beheld”—in a Cadillac; I tan afoot! [Overheard in SoCal]

Too “hot-tonsiled,” new Lwow owl Wendel is, not to hoot? [Lwow is now Lvov, love]

“Too hot to hoot?” Too hot to hoot, too-hot tot, or to trot?”
“Or to ‘trot,’ Otto? Hoot! Too hot to hoot—too hot to hoot!”

Too loth to gall Etienne, I tell a Goth to loot. [Conscience-stricken Vandal in France]

Too “lotto-sad” a sot to loot?

Too rotten, O rococo coronet, to root? [Hamlet, attempting to use his uncle’s crown as a shovel]

Too rotten, O rabid awl lord, O droll wadi baronet, to root?

Too soffish to be fast—on Del’s sled, not safe!—both sit to soot.

Too totaled, Adela, to toot?

The 3rd century B.C.E. Greek poet Sotades the Obscene is often asserted to be the originator of palindromes, although there seems to be no clear evidence that he ever wrote anything more in that line than some word-unit reversal sentences. Webster’s Third offers two adjectivations of his name, Sotadean and Sotadic; the latter seems more popular with modern palindromists, possibly because it is easier to palindromize, as in the following mini-story which is related by its three main characters—Eli, Eb and religious salvation fanatic Ida, who often seems to be on another page:

   Eli: “Too Sotadic?” I mock. “Rats! Eb ’d be stark comic, Ida, to soot!”
   Eb: “Too Sotadic?” I tarred Eli, ere I led erratic Ida to soot!”
   Ida: “Too soteriological, nided in lac I go, Loire, to soot...”

   * * *

Enough of that. Hoping for music, you punch the radio’s station selector button, only to hear...

Nationality Name Palindromes

...this is WWWW, home of the Word Ways Worldwide Wireless Broadcasting Network. I’m Niven Nevin, sitting in today for Nevin Niven on “Palindrome Pointers.” Our topic today is nationality names. We are accustomed to encountering country names in palindromes, but how often do we see nationality
names? Take, for instance, the nationalities of WWWBWN’s listenership, which includes, to my knowledge, Americans, Britons, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders. How often does one see those names, prominent though they may be, in palindromic print? Let us consider them individually:

In contrast to the terms “Briton” and “New Zealander,” which seem to be rather resolutely resistant to palindromic entanglements (something to do with the insular outlook?), “Canadian” and “Australian” are relatively easily involved in palindromes, e.g.:

Ogden, aid an Acadian! Aid a Canadian, Ed—go!

La! Can a Canadian aid an acana, Cal?

“Nail art,” suasively lied a “deily” Lev, is Australian!”

Nail Art, suasive Lem? A lamé-levis Australian?
[Nae! Do pit nary a fayr Antipodean!]

“American” falls somewhere between the two camps, being barely palindromizable, but only, it seems, in association with at least two of the following: (1) Saranac Lake, New York; (2) an ara, or screw pine; (3) an arastra, a crude drag-stone mill for crushing ore; (4) an almanac; (5) an amla or emblic, an East Indian tree used in tanning; (6) the fruit of this tree, often called Indian gooseberry:

Drat! Sad!...Alas, Bob, an almanac I remade, Mañana, named American amla nabob Sal a “dastard”!

Yah! Albatrossless at “Art Saranac,” I remade red American arastra tassels...
“Sorta blah,” ay!

* * *

Holy cats... In mild agony, you jab at the station selector again, but it only toggles back to the NPR station. You jab again, and this time nothing at all happens—the radio has stopped responding to you, and now you can’t turn it off, turn it down, or change the station. Great! If you could only stop the car, you could find a way to yank the thing’s power, but, contrary to what you’d suppose, Palindrome Place seems to have no “stop spots.” So you grit your teeth and drive on, accompanied by the dulcet, droning tones of National Palindromic Radio...
The Longest Word Ever Used in a Palindrome (As Logologists See It: the Orthodox Class)

...and for the next two hours on NPR’s “Gab Bag” I’ll be discussing the longest words ever used in palindromes. Well, what is the longest word that anyone has ever used in a palindrome? I tell students, only slightly facetiously, that the answer to that question depends on whether you’re asking a logologist or a wordplayer. For there is no consensus of opinion on this question, one difficulty being that the question requires the asker to decide not just one, but two issues of acceptability or eligibility. The first issue is that of the long word itself; is it a “real” word, or a made-up one? The traditional wordplay standard limits eligible vocabulary to boldface entries in recognized general dictionaries, plus their “inferred” inflections. (An inferred inflection would be one that is in some way inherent in the nature of the word, such as the addition of an -s to a noun to form a plural, or the addition of -ly to an adjective to create an adverb.) Coinages, plausible or not, which have been formed by appending some unrelated affix to such a word are considered ineligible. So if we decide to adopt this traditional standard of word eligibility, then this first issue, at least, becomes a fairly cut and dried matter.

The second issue is the quality of the language of the palindrome, and here there are no generally recognized rules, with the result that we encounter palindromizations containing rampant abbreviations, initials, unusual contractions, dialect words and spellings, unfamiliar names and so on, not to mention substandard grammar, syntax and/or sensibility. To many, such laxity of language seems to lose sight of the spirit of the enterprise, and consequently there exists the point of view that to be considered “acceptable,” the language of a palindrome should conform to the strictures of everyday written English usage, and should include only dictionary words and reasonably familiar capitalized terms. This standard for palindrome language, together with the standard for word eligibility mentioned above, constitute what I think of as the “orthodox” or “logological” criterion of palindrome acceptability.

So to return to my original question, what is, by the “orthodox” standard of acceptability, the longest English word ever used in a palindrome? Historically, the standard answer has been the 18-letter undenominationally, which is listed in its entirety in Webster’s Third and which was used by J. A. Lindon in the 1950’s in this logologically acceptable palindrome: Named undenominationally rebel, I rile Beryl? La, no! I tan. I’m, O Ned, nude, man! (Lindon’s scenario is unimportant, as the sense is clear enough that anyone can supply their own.)

More recently, however, palindromizations of longer words have been put forward. In a search of the sources available to me, I have found mention of
honorificabilitudinitatibus (27) (WW Feb 95), antiparasymphathomimetically (27) (WW May 98), immunoelectrophoretically (25) (WW Feb 92) and antiparasymphathomimetical (25) (WW May 98), all of which I would exclude from the orthodox class, either because they are coinages or because I consider their palindromizations linguistically flawed. That brings us to the 23-letter word parasymphathomimetically, a reasonably-inferred inflection of the dictionary word parasymphathomimetic. In the May 1998 Word Ways, Dave Morice palindromized it thusly: Rise, parasymphathomimetically dim idyll! A cit, Em! I’m—oh, tap my sarape, sir. Though its unspecified meaning seems somewhat opaque, this palindrome is wholly grammatical and all of its words—apart from the familiar name Em—are in the dictionary, so it seems to me to merit recognition as the orthodox class longest-word-in-a-palindrome record holder since its publication in 1998. Ta da!

But progress marches on, and with a tip of the hat to the reigning champ I’d like to offer a new record candidate. Formaldehydesulphoxylates is a 25-letter reasonably-inferred plural of a 24-letter Web 3 word denoting a chemical whose salts are used as reducing agents. In its palindromization here, the scenario is that some foreigners working in Dubai are discussing the imminent departure of a colleague who was unable to cope with elements of the local cuisine, such as braised palm (rofia) buds and curries spiced with the salts of formaldehydesulphoxyllic acids:

Said Sal, “Ay! Tim, in all, is upset, Alyx...Oh, plus, Edy, he’d ‘lam’! Rofia buds Tim dazed, I’d say—as did, Ez admits, Dubai formaldehydesulphoxylates! Pusillanimity, alas, Dias...”

Can any listener come up with any longer orthodox-class longest-word-in-a-palindrome candidate?

* * *

After a while, you find that you can pretty much mentally tune out the radio, and so you begin to relax a bit. Palindrome Place, you notice, has really got quite a few interesting-looking shops—But wait! That group of shops up ahead, on the left—didn’t you pass that same group of shops a ways back, on the right? Suddenly you begin to feel a tingling sensation somewhere in the vicinity of your liver...

The Longest Word Ever Used in a Palindrome (As Wordplayers See It: the Open Class)
Emblematic of the difference between logologists and wordplayers, I think, is that the latter feel no self-consciousness about the “play” part of their appellation; they know that they’re in it for the fun. Whereas logologists are students of nature (i.e., the English language) and seekers after truth whose serious goal is to extend human knowledge (and who are inclined to view with suspicion any frivolities creeping into that pursuit), word-players do not greatly care about extending some esoteric science, and are happy just to derive some honest amusement from wordplay. Of course, these characterizations are to some extent caricatures, as few of us are one or the other of them all of the time, and in fact most of us probably slip easily from one role to the other at a moment’s notice. Which is exactly what I intend to do now as I take up what I call the “wordplayer’s version,” or “unorthodox” or “open” class, of the longest-word-ever-used-in-a-palindromic record. So excuse me, please, while I just doff my logologist’s white lab coat and sober dark tie…and put on my wordplayer’s red-and-yellow-striped sports jacket, red bow tie and straw boater.

The main rule to remember with the wordplayers’ version (i.e., open class) of the longest-word-in-a-palindromic-sentence record is that there are no rules, beyond the natural hope that there will be some amusement involved. Coined words, newly-invented contractions, contorted syntax—anything that anyone cares to sign their name to goes (though of course, better words and better language earn you more style points). So how does one find a decently long word to exercise one’s palindromizing skills upon? One way, obviously, is to comb dictionaries, or better yet specialized lexicons of medicine or chemistry, for something suitably sesquipedalian. Another path to lengthiness is to take some easily palindromized medium-long word and to pad its length with one or more affixes (such coinages being perfectly acceptable in the open class). Here’s an example: circa 1996, John Connett took the medium-long word psychoanalytically and added an anti-prefix to it, creating the 22-letter coinage antipsychoanalytically. Some copycat subsequently substituted a retro- for Connett’s anti- to create a plausible 23-letter coinage, palindromizing it thusly:

“But,” a red, nude Kramer said retropsychoanalytically, “Dion still is ill!...It’s no idyll, a city, Lana!”

“Oh?” Cy’s porter Dias remarked, under a tub.

(No, I don’t know why Kramer is nude in this episode, nor do I know what Cy and his sarcastic porter are doing with the tub.)

Dr. Frankendrome’s Monsters

But playing about with mere 23-letter words gets us nowhere in this class; recall that palindromi-zations of the 27-letter brobdignags honorrificabilittudinitatibus
and anti-parasympathomimetically (both by Morice) are already on record. (And indeed, a slight modification of the second one produces a one-letter improvement, retroparasympatho-mimetically.) We’re unlikely to find any longer palindromizable words than these by browsing in a dictionary, so if we want to improve upon that number, we’re just going to have to manufacture some longer word with affixes.

Let’s start with the unassuming 20-letter Web 3 word hemangioendothelioma, which is the name of a blood vessel disease. To puff this 20-letter weakling up to record stature is going to take at least two affixes, so to be safe let’s use three. Appending the reasonable affixes pseudo-, semi- and -less gives us the 34-letter pseudosemihemangioendothelioma-less, a term that might denote a state of being, seemingly, somewhat free of the disease. Its palindromization scenario involves a certain demented Dr. Frankendrome, who has cloned his loyal henchman Igor in order to provide some much-needed additional help around the lab. The university funds only one henchman position per senior researcher, however, and so the Doc has been carrying “Neo-Ig,” as he calls the clone, on the lab’s books as a “special project” code-named “E.” Meanwhile, the treas-urer of the Union of Disturbed Scientists, Lo Hwang, has been pressing the Doc for payment of his back dues.

In the following palindrome, we hear the Doc speaking on his cell phone, first talking to a chemicals supply house and then to the lab’s bookkeeper, Tod. When the latter suggests putting off Lo Hwang with some impractical ploy, however, the Doc irrationally explodes in anger, unsubtly reminding Tod that he owes his seemingly somewhat-improved blood vessel health to the Doc’s free (if unlicensed) medical treatments:

“Niter? Consign a whole passel!...A moil, eh, Tod?...Neo-Ig? Name him “E”...So dues pay, ya pseudosemihemangioendotheliomaleless ape! Lo Hwang is no cretin!”

But is a 34-letter word really long enough for our purposes? Maybe not. Although the notorious P-45 word is probably not a record threat, as it is not very amenable to palin-dromization, there does lurk in one of the Oxford English Dictionary’s citations a string of 43 z’s which someone once used to denote the sound of snoring. Based upon its mere appearance in the dictionary, there will be those who will insist that it must therefore be a valid “word.” A palindrome itself, the z-string is trivially easy to use in a palindromic sentence (“Zz...zz,” Deron’s dad snored, “zz...zz.”) and as such would surely consti-tute an unworthy ultimate in this record class. What we need, then, is a reversible word of at least 44 letters with which to render the z-string irrelevant in this regard. Thus we find ourselves paying a return visit to the mountaintop laboratory of Dr. Frankendrome, where
we encounter, strapped to four trestle tables in the palindromization room, the 44-letter Frankendromean beauty \textit{ultrasuperpseudosemihemangioendotheliomaless}, which may possibly mean something like “very exceedingly seemingly somewhat”—oh, never mind, let’s just get on with this before the electrical storm passes and we lose the light-ning.

As before, our palindrome is a Dr. Frankendrome monologue. This time, the Doc (1) wakes up from a nap, (2) is shocked to see a tech wearing a dangling earring in violation of lab rules, (3) chats with Tod, but breaks off when the subject of dues comes up, (4) tells an assistant to prepare him for the palindromization, and (5) chides an associate for feeling qualmish about the experimental procedure, advising her to emulate his own qualities of physical and emotional toughness:

“Yawn)...Eek! An illicit Siva tassel!...A moil, eh, Tod?...Neo-Ig?

Name him

“E,” so— Dues??...Prep us, Art!...Luisa, ebb! Be as I—ultrasuperpseudosemi-hemangioendotheliomaless! Atavistic! Ill (in a keen way)! ...”

Back in a moment.

* * *

There’s no longer any question about it—all the shops you’re passing now you’ve passed before, only—and this is the crazy part—you can’t have been driving in a circle, because now all those shops are on the other side of the street! It gets worse: quickly bearing down on you now in the oncoming lane to your left, you spot a blemished sky-blue Volare that’s a dead ringer for the one you’re driving. You keep your head turned to the right as it whizzes past you, desperately not wanting to see its driver...

**Half-Sentence Words (Orthodox Class)**

...back with “Gab Bag” on NPR, where we’re talking about very long words in palin-dromes. An often-mentioned sub-category of this multiform topic involves the question of what is the longest word that, together with its reversal and nothing else, can form a complete palindromic sentence or passage. It’s a category that seems to have existed since Dmitri Borgmann called attention to the fact that the 15-letter Web 3 word \textit{retro-peritoneal} acts in such capacity in his palindrome \textbf{Retroperitoneal : Lae? Not I, repor-ter!} Is this an valid record-length palindrome for the orthodox class in this category? Many have accepted it as such, but although it satisfies all vocabulary requirements, its use of a colon
evades the fulfillment of some grammatical requirements, and furthermore its two halves seem too divorced in meaning to constitute a logically-connected palindromic passage. Some would therefore prefer to reserve this easily-reversible long word for service in more conventional palindromes, e.g.:

Retroperitoneal, livid, awesome, carmined and evil, I was deified! Saw I—Liv-Edna!—denim? Racemose wadi villae? Not I, reporter!

(Villae is an alternative plural for villa in Web 3.)

Can we find a record word as long as retroperitoneal to replace it? Not easily, it seems. Scanning a list of words ending in -ation (which seemed a promising place to look), we note two 12-letter words, exaggeration and decapitation, whose reversals are somewhat comprehensible:

No, I tar—egg!—axe!! exaggeration!

Decapitation?? “NO!” I tat. I paced...

The longest promising record candidate we could find was 14-letter word preponder-a-tion, which Web 3 defines as a synonym for “preponderance.” Its palindromization below employs two slightly unfamiliar terms: to “tare” means to tally or count, and “perp” (listed in the Random House Unabridged) is familiar TV cop slang for “perpetrator.” The scenario: the city has hired a statistician to review the criminal records of the entire population of a particular city district to see whether the facts support the police department’s belief that the majority of the residents of that district must be criminals. The statistician’s succinct report:

“No, I tared no ‘perp’ preponderation.”

Can anyone come up with a longer word for this category?

To Flip a Coinage: Half-Sentence Words, Open Class

The less restrictive vocabulary constraints of the open class, as might be expected, conducive to longer record lengths. Consider, for example, minimifidian, an OED adjective of 19th century vintage (Coleridge used it) meaning having the least possible faith in some-thing—skepticism on steroids, as it were. It’s a fetching word, almost a banananame, but at 12 letters too short for record purposes. But summon some affixes and, Pepto-Bismol, it becomes the 21-lettered
demimimifidianative, which could denote a state of being halfway very skeptical. As for its half-and-half palindromization, well, thereby (as usual) hangs a tale...

...So there I was in the docket, waiting for the jury’s decision on whether I was to be set free, or to be imprisoned for one year for the crime of confusing Ruralia’s youth with my minimifidianist teachings. My one regret as I stood there was that if I were indeed to be incarcerated, my impecunious, half-persuaded follower Evi Tan would have nowhere to go. (My half-persuaded minimifidianism students, incidentally, were far and away my favorite ones; the fully-persuaded students, for some reason, never believed a thing I told them.) I would have liked to call to a friend in the gallery to look after Evi in that event, but to disturb the solemn silence of that courtroom would have resulted in my instant removal. Suddenly, remembering my nonpareil skill at the game of charades, I had an inspiration, and turned quickly toward my friend in the gallery:

“Demimimifidianative Evi Tan aid if I’m in,” I mimed.

No doubt longer records in this class can be manufactured.

The Longest Proper Nouns Used in Palindromic Passages—Orthodox Class

Let us now consider the fascinatingly complex topic of very long proper nouns used in palindromes. Is Dave Morice’s use of Constantinople in a palindrome the longest known geographical name—

*   *   *

Finally you come to a cross street—Doggerel Drive, if you’ve read the quaintly-lettered sign correctly. (Not that you greatly care what it’s called; right now you’d settle for Hellsflames Highway.) You quickly turn onto it, and as you do, the station playing on the radio abruptly changes, and suddenly you hear...