

## COLLOQUY

**JEFF GRANT** emailed:

In 'Isopangrams' in the last Word Ways, Darryl Francis examines the pangram, a set of words using all 26 letters of the alphabet. A 'perfect pangram', or isopangram, uses all 26 letters once only. Darryl lists many 7-word, 6-word and even 5-word solutions. The ultimate challenge is to find 4-word isopangrams using words found in widely recognised reference sources, printed or online.

With help from Allan Simmons, Darryl eventually discovered the following 4-word solution:

**backjumping      sqwyr      vozhd      flex**

Here are 2 variant isopangrams. Thanks to Darryl for some source confirmations.

**backjumping      qwylt      vozhds      frex**

**backjumping      sqwyr      vozhd      flext**

**backjumping**      (see Darryl's article)

**flext**      variant of 'flexed', bent (early and more recent use)  
    'Richt sair scho hes me flext' (OED, 1575 quot.)  
    (Right sore she has me flexed)  
    'flext or bent condition' (Dictionary of Aviation, R M  
    Pierce, 1914, under 'flexure')

**frex**      an ex who you're still friends with (friend + ex).  
    'We're not getting back together - he's just my frex'  
    (Urban Dictionary, online)  
    Compare frenemy, which is listed in modern dictionaries.  
    The online Wiktionary has frex as an adverb, being an informal  
    shortening of 'for example'.

**qwylt**      Middle English variant of the noun 'quilt' (OED)

**sqwyr**      Middle English form of the noun 'square' (OED)

**vozhd/s**      (see Darryl's article)

**RON SINGER** writes:

Here's an expression and a suggested etymology. Perhaps you'd like to invite contributors to make other suggestions.

Whenever someone would praise her little darling (me), my mother would say, "Don't give him any canaries!" Recently, I wondered where that expression came from. My wife suggested it might have been derived from, "*Kain ein ha-RAH*," a Yiddish expression used to ward off the evil eye. That sounds far-fetched, but I can't find any other suggestions.

(Several sources suggest this etymology. See, for example, Miryma Ehrlich Williamson, "Don't Give Him a Canary," <http://www.ruralvotes.com/thebackforty/?p=499>