COLLOQUY

This May Dr. Steve Bloom will retire from the College of Education of Butler University after 26 years. He has for about the last 10 years taught two Butler Honor's courses that are of special interest to readers of *Word Ways*. In spring semesters the course was on "Alice in Wonderland" and in the fall semesters it was about Martin Gardner. Jeremiah Farrell, Lacey Echols and Shannon Lieb were Butler professors who co-taught with Steve.

Word Ways has reprinted student projects from these courses and do so in this issue.

JEFF GRANT writes:

Usually I don't like to find fault with anything in WW, but feel I must comment on '0.1479 Percent Redundancy'. Who is Alex J. Quiz? It looks like a pseudonym designed to contain the letters JQXZ.

As you may be aware, lots of work has been done previously on this subject. The reference Alex makes near the end of the article should be to 'Initial Bigrams' (not 'Terminal Bigrams'), by Philip Cohen, with help from Darryl Francis and Dmitri Borgmann, which was published in *Word Ways* in May 1975 (not 1985).

On examining the first 10 letters of Alex's article (A-I), I note 29 place names supposedly listed in TIG (*Times Index-Gazetteer*) that do not appear in that reference. These names range from Bmaryam, Bqusta, Cfir, Cjadri...through to Jgor, Jkhi Khoshi Khure, Jrifat, and Jzhidka. They can however probably all be found in the GeoNames online database (geonames.usgs.gov).

Some other discrepancies:
Bbih/Bpih source lost? Not really acceptable
Bgug-Panir an Armenian cheese (not Indian)
dzo a yak/cow hybrid, found in the Himalayas, not northern Africa (MW3, not MW1)
iechyd da (must include the 'da') *Collins English Dictionary* (not in MW1, 2 or 3)
iuu not in MW3 (OED notes as a 13th century spelling of 'Jew'). There are better iu-examples
Jmoud variant of 'Zhmud', a Lithuanian lowlander (MW2) No reference to 'iomud', a horse breed

The unpublished collection '*From Aasvogel to Zzyzx, a Dictionary of Initial Bigrams*' contains examples for all 676 combinations. Two-letter terms such as Zx, letter substitutions (bxg, fxr, hxw, Jxhn, etc), and dubious contrived terms such as Btsfplk, fprintf, and jquiz have been excluded, as have initialisms, foreign and apostrophised words, brand names and symbols. The entry for the 'missing' VQ bigram is as follows:

Vquever   a former Orkney Islands land-holding, on which a penny halfpenny tax was levied annually.
'Ane penny half d. (penny) land callit Vquever.' [*Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, penny-land, 1614 quot.]

DARRYL FRANCIS comments:

I greatly enjoyed the article on Reinhold Aman in the latest Word Ways. I have 12 of the 13 volumes of Maledicta, and have been inspired to get hold of the 13th one to complete the set. I sent a note to Tristan Miller saying how much I enjoyed his article, especially as it filled in a lot of what I didn't know about Aman.

MARK J. WOLF has just published *101 Enigmatic Puzzles: Fractal Mazes, Quantum Chess, Anagram Sudoku, and More* (available at https://store.bookbaby.com/book/101-enigmatic-puzzles and Amazon.com). This book is filled with carefully constructed puzzles to provide a challenge to the serious puzzlers and some for the casual puzzlers to explore. Most of the puzzles provide new twists on older puzzle forms, and some new puzzle forms are also introduced.

In the Foreword Scott Kim remarks: "Mark calls his works gourmet puzzles, and indeed these are puzzles to be savored for their imagination and craft. Come to these puzzles prepared with paper and pencil, and perhaps a bit of computational horsepower or friends to consult, for some of these puzzles may take hours or even days to crack. Fortunately, he provides ample warm-up puzzles and hints to get you started."

The range of puzzles includes logic puzzles, chess puzzles, chess variant puzzles, jumping bug puzzles, tanagram puzzles, fractal mazes, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, number puzzles, trivia puzzles, and word puzzles. Some of the puzzles even combine existing puzzle forms (e.g. the Anagram Sudoku puzzles, which combine Sudoku with anagramming).