TRANSPOSALS and TRANSADDITIONS

DARRYL FRANCIS
Thursby, Cumbria, England

For the uninitiated, searching for Ross Eckler may be simply a matter of using Wikipedia, the free internet encyclopedia. Go to Wikipedia, type in Ross Eckler, and you will be directed to a short item on Ross Eckler (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ross_Eckler). Perhaps now that he’s stepped down as editor of Word Ways, Ross may have plenty of spare time on his hands and might wish to expand the Wikipedia article bearing his name. It certainly needs considerable expansion to do justice to Ross’ sterling work with Word Ways over the last four decades.

But there are other ways of searching for Ross Eckler. The logologist can simply take the constituent letters of Ross Eckler and seek transposals and transadditions. Let’s look at some of the results of transposing Ross Eckler and adding one or more letters to Ross Eckler.

The commonest transposal of Ross Eckler appears to be ROCKERLESS. The Oxford English Dictionary has this as a hyphenated term, ROCKER-LESS. The OED’s illustrative quotation for this word is from D H Lawrence’s novel Aaron’s Rod: “A baby was cooing in a rocker­less wicker cradle.” A Google search for ROCKERLESS reveals approximately 70 hits, with the word invariably spelled solidly (without the hyphen) and meaning “without a rocker” in several of its technical senses.

Another transposal of Ross Eckler is CORKERLESS, with just one Google hit. CORKER seems to be a term for a kind of life-jacket used at sea. The following piece of narrative is on the internet:

However, when I went to where they (the life-jackets) were stowed, there were two or three of the gun's crew standing there, "corkerless", and one of them said "They've all gone kid, someone needed them more than us!". It wasn't too reassuring but I was a strong swimmer and we all had our personal "Shirley Temples" (as we called the woolen covered inflatable rubber tubes that fitted around our chests).

How about transadditions of Ross Eckler? Adding the single letter T to Ross Eckler leads us to STORE CLERKS. While STORE CLERK is a relatively common term (with over a million Google hits), it doesn’t seem to appear in any dictionary.

Ross Eckler plus the two letters AP results in CLOAK PRESSER, an undefined term from Webster’s Second Edition. While this is obviously a person or machine for pressing cloaks, it’s not obvious which it is! Ross Eckler plus three letters gives us PROGRESS CLERK, a Webster’s Third entry, defined as a clerk who progresses work in a manufacturing operation. Ross Eckler with four added letters gives us GREEK-CROSS PLAN, another Webster’s Third entry, a plan of a building in the shape of a Greek cross.

There are several ways of adding five letters to Ross Eckler:

ALPINE ROCK CRESS (a type of European cress; Webster’s Second)
CLEAR LAKE SHORES (a city in Galveston county, Texas; Rand McNally Marketing Guide)
KERATOSCLERITIS (inflammation of the cornea and sclera; Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary)
SCLEROKERATITIS (same as KERATOSCLERITIS, as well as being a transposal of it; Webster’s Second)
Adding more than five letters to Ross Eckler, we find these:

SILK-SCREEN PROCESS (a color printing process; Webster's Third)
SCLEROKERATOiritis (inflammation of the sclera, cornea and iris; Webster's Second)
BIRKELAND-FYDE PROCESS (an industrial process for turning atmospheric nitrogen into fertilizers and explosives; Webster's Second)

Although it involves the transaddition of 15 letters to Ross Eckler, we particularly like this one:

**SUBTERRANEAN HOMESICK BLUES** (a Bob Dylan song from 1965; Wikipedia)

Through his various articles penned over the name of Robert Cass Keller, we know that Ross's full name is Albert Ross Eckler. While there don't appear to be any transposals of his full name, there is a transaddition involving a mere six extra letters:

CAMPBELL-STOKES RECORDER (a meteorological device for measuring the duration of sunshine, also called a sunshine recorder; Chambers's Science and Technology Dictionary)

Can we repeat the transposal-transaddition exercise for Faith Eckler? Seems so.

There are several transposals of Faith Eckler, all of which can be found on various websites. First off, there's FICKLE EARTH, a phrase occurring many times on the internet. For example:

The stranger had given a blithesome promise, and anchored it with oaths, but oaths and anchors equally will drag; naught else abides on fickle earth but unkept promises of joy. (**The Enchantadas**, by Herman Melville)

And then there's FICKLE HEART, the name of a CD album by the group Sniff 'n' the Tears.

And **HEAT FLICKER**, taken from H G Wells' **Men Like Gods**: 

Before him was a sort of heat flicker in the air and two or three little dust whirls spinning along the road.

Then there's **CHIEF TALKER** – here's an internet example:

He serves as Founder and Chief Talker of VSC Consulting, a multi-million dollar public relations and digital marketing boutique.

And there's FICKLE-HATER, which occurs in this rap lyric taken from a website:

Don't need a lie detector to prove that this whiny bitch is a fickle-hater

She steps up like crazy-sick-autistic-kids runnin' up the down escalator

There are probably even more straned examples, too, like FERTILE HACK, THICKER LEAF and the like.

As for transadditions, how does Faith Eckler fare? There's a couple of nice transadditions with each requiring only two extra letters: FICKLEHEARTED (Webster's Second) and SICKLE FEATHER (Webster's Third). Requiring five additional letters is HARBECK-FRUITDALE (a place in Oregon; Wikipedia). Moving up to nine and ten letters, there are these specimens, three of them placenames:

**FELDKIRCHEN-WESTERHAM** (a municipality in Bavaria; Wikipedia)
**RATCLIFFE-ON-THE-WREAKE** (a village in Leicester, England; Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles)
**BIRCH-LEAF SKELETONIZER** (a small moth which attacks birch leaves; Webster's Second)
**ILLKIRCH-GRAFFENSTADEN** (a place in France; Times Index Gazetteer)
A couple of nice transadditions each requiring over a dozen extra letters are:

**RICHARD BUCKMINSTER FULLER** (the full name of the American inventor and visionary; Wikipedia)

**THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN** (Mark Twain’s novel; Wikipedia)

Since the late 1960s, all the issues of Word Ways and correspondence from Ross have borne the postmark of the Eckler’s home town Morristown. From afar in England, the name Morristown is synonymous with Ross and Faith Eckler and Word Ways. There doesn’t appear to be a valid transposal of Morristown – I had hoped there might be something bearing the name SORROWMINT, but wasn’t able to find it anywhere! As for transadditions, here are a dozen involving up to seven extra letters:

- **BRIMSTONENWORT** (Webster’s Second)
- **WORST-INFORMED** (Webster’s Second)
- **FRONTIERSWOMAN** (New Oxford Dictionary of English)
- **FRONTIERSWOMEN** (New Oxford Dictionary of English)
- **WORM-DESTROYING** (Webster’s Second)
- **SORROW-STREAMING** (Webster’s Second)
- **WARMINSTER BROOM** (Webster’s Third)
- **WORDSWORTHIANISM** (Webster’s Third)
- **CUSTOMER OWNERSHIP** (Webster’s Third)
- **RESURRECTION WOMAN** (Webster’s Third)
- **SMOOTH WINTERBERRY** (Webster’s Third)
- **TRANSMISSION TOWER** (Webster’s Second)

And finally, what of Word Ways itself? Although there doesn’t seem to be a valid single-word transposal of Word Ways, I note that the term “sword way” is often used in defining the Japanese sport of kendo. The following appears on the BBC’s H2G2 website (which is similar to Wikipedia):

Kendo (the sword way), a modern sport which developed from a more philosophical offshoot of kenjutsu, awards points for the emotional intensity of an attack, as well as the skill in its execution.

There are plenty of transadditions of Word Ways. Here are a dozen:

- **HOWARDS’ WAY** (A British TV drama series of the 1980s; Wikipedia)
- **WOOD SAWYER** (Webster’s Second)
- **WAYNE’S WORLD** (a 1992 comedy film, based on a series of sketches, also called Wayne’s World, from the NBC television series “Saturday Night Live”; Wikipedia)
- **GRUNDY-SWALLOW** (Webster’s Third)
- **WOOD STRAWBERRY** (Webster’s Third)
- **YELLOW BEDSTRAW** (Webster’s Third)
- **NORTHWESTWARDLY** (Webster’s Third)
- **SOUTHWESTWARDLY** (Webster’s Third)
- **WINDOWPANE OYSTER** (Webster’s Third)
- **WOOLFARDSWORTHY** (the name of two different villages in Devon, England; Bartholomew’s Gazetteer of the British Isles)
- **WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOM** (Webster’s Third)
- **YELLOW BEDSTRAW** (Webster’s Third)
And to finish with, take the full title of Word Ways (Word Ways The Journal of Recreational Linguistics), and transpose the letters to spell out four words. Here are a few examples:

Jauntiest swearword chronologically infuriates
Contrariwise ejaculator wastefully dishonouring
Worthily eradicating ejaculation sorrowfulness
Sorrowfully eradicating ejaculation worthiness
Is a three-word transposal possible?

THE CEO OF WORD WAYS

DARRYL FRANCIS
Thursby, Cumbria, England

Who playeth
The boss?
Was it Fayeth
Or Ross?

Now Faith
May saith
The boss
Was Ross,

And Ross
May saith
The boss
Was Faith

It's a toss!
I quoth,
"The boss
Was both."

The boss
I prayeth
Was Ross
And Fayeth.