

## COLLOQUY

**Solomon W. Golomb** comments on Scot Morris's claim that strengths (9 letters) is the longest one-syllable word. Sol disagrees. "There is a verb to squirrel away, and its past tense, squirreled (pronounced to rhyme with world, hurled, etc. by most Americans) has 10 letters and its British preferred spelling, squirrelled has 11 letters!"

**Alex Beard** submits the double acrostic lyric poem "BLUES: John Colb" that has an acrostic on the left and right ends.

Baby I was once your loven' man, your loven' man John Colb.  
Laid me down, softest touch, touching my tough old soul.  
Us been apart too long for love, for loves about me and you.  
Ever sense you got gone I'm drawn to sing it blue, yeah I sing it blue.  
See when sorrow's sung in the softest song my tough old soul just cools.

**Ross Eckler** answers Jim Puder's acrostic:

It's the Governor, not the Devil, to answer Jim Puder's query in the May 2010 Word Ways.

Fletcher Pratt's *Secret and Urgent: The Story of Codes and Ciphers* (1942) demonstrates how unusual this acrostic is: Table V lists the probabilities of finding lines in running text that commence with I,F,U,C,K,Y,O,U. Multiplying them, one notes 13 zeros after the decimal point to keep in mind:  $(.059)(.042)(.014)(.047)(.002)(.008)(.071)(.014) = 0.00000000000003$ .

Yearning for a coincidence in the face of this probability is fatuous. Mike Keith was able to find only four F,U,C,K acrostics in 60 million lines in Project Gutenberg texts, including *A Prefect's Uncle* by P.G. Wodehouse. This compares well with an expected number of 3.3 such acrostics.