In "Occupational Hazards" in the February 1981 Word Ways, Richard E. Douglass suggests that various jobholders can be gotten rid of in ways more euphemistically ambiguous than simply being fired, canned, or sacked. For the most part, he plays upon the semantic properties of absorbed roots conjoined with the negative prefixes de- and dis- and shows how a nobleman would be discounted, distributed or subject to delivery and a tennis player disadvantaged or defaulted (or, we add, deserved or deduced).

In a more optimistic vein, let us ask ourselves how, using the prefix re- and the suffix -ed, we can describe the reinstatement to their jobs (or roles) of the following people:

- dog catcher - recurred
- shoe-shine boy - rebuffed
- poet - reversed
- lawyer - retorted
- mortician - rehearsed
- fisherman - rebated
- cowboy - rebutted
- carpenter - replied
- doctor - repulsed
- soldier - retrenched
- ropemaker - recoiled
- auto maker - retired
- teacher - remarked
- fast food chef - reheashed
- herpetologist - recoiled
- politician - relied
- butcher - revealed
- orphan - rewarded
- genius - reminded
- knight - requested
- chorister - required
- stevedore - reported
- farmer - receded
- masher - refreshed
- musician - rescaled
- minister - respired
- musician - rescaled
- baseball catcher - remitted
- gardener - repeated
- carillonner - rebelled, repealed
- tailor - repressed, resurged
- ophthalmologist - recited
- meteorologist - regaled
- detective - resolved, retailed
- lion tamer - remained
- sewer worker - recessed
- seductress - revamped
- English lit professor - rejoiced
- lacrosse player - relaxed
- orchardist - repaired
- banker - recounted, recollected
- chemist - reviled
- baby food manufacturer - restrained
- contest entrant - reprised
- chicken farmer - recouped
- bridge player - redoubled
- exorcist - repossessed
- football tackle - realigned
- prisoner - regarded, repented
- hematologist - retyped
- pessimist - refitted
- forester - relieved, repined
- electrician - refused, revolted
- engineer - retracted, retrained
model - reposed, renewed
ambassador - relegated
thespien - reacted
mailman - resorted
highway worker - retarded
policeman - reinforced
perfumer - resented
surveyor - rebounded
telephone operator - recalled
tennis player - reserved, reduced
prostitute - relayed, rescinded
grammairian - renowned, reverberated
track star - relapsed, resumed
Halloween reveler - retreated
judge - redeemed, refined
sculptor - reformed

TWO-LETTER POSITIONAL DICTIONARIES

In recent years, two books designed for the crossword puzzle solver but of interest to the logologist as well have appeared on the market: Edmund I. Schwartz and Leon F. Landovitz's Crossword Puzzle Finder (Funk & Wagnalls 1974, $8.95; paperback, Stonesong Press 1979, $6.95) and John Griffiths' The Crossword Finisher (St. Martin's Press 1975, $8.95; paperback, Warner 1980, $7.95). The former book takes approximately 27,000 words of two through six letters (including plurals) from the Funk & Wagnalls Standard Collegiate Dictionary and indexes them by every possible pair of letters; thus, EBB is listed with EBN and EBS under the header EB, with EDB and EIB under the header E. B, and with OBB under the header BB. The latter book performs the same classification on some 21,000 words of three through seven letters, but does not index them by every possible pair: four out of the six possible pairs for four-letter words (omitting xx and . xx.), five out of the ten possible pairs for five-letter words, six out of fifteen for six-letter words, and seven out of twenty-one for seven-letter words. (The reason for these omissions lies in the special structure of British crosswords; in general, even-numbered letters of words in their puzzles are left unchecked.)

It would be nice if the same indexing could be performed for longer words as well, but a brief calculation demonstrates the economic impossibility of this: if all words in the Funk Wagnalls Collegiate were included, the pages would rise from 754 to approximately 15,000, and the price would be at least $180 (probably far more, as the press run would be much smaller). By virtue of its complete set of patterns and its somewhat larger vocabulary, the Funk & Wagnalls is the better buy.