Webster's Dictionary defines colloquy as mutual discourse. Readers are encouraged to submit additions, corrections, and comments about earlier articles appearing in Word Ways. Comments received up to a month prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

Frank Rubin recently ran a contest entitled "Fours Field" which asked participants to list the maximum possible number of non-crashing four-letter entries found in boldface in Webster's Pocket Dictionary. The winner found 23, considerably better than the 17 mentioned in passing in "Non-Crashing Word Sets" in the May issue: AGAR, BKGD, CYME, DELI, EXCH, FORK, GLIB, HDKF, IFFY, JAZZ, KNOW, LTJG, MCFQ, NMEX, OVUM, PPTN, RSWC, SUBJ, TBSF, URDU, WHYS, XINT, YWHA. Obviously, many of these are abbreviations and not ordinarily regarded as words. (For those interested in such contests, write Contest Center, 59 DeGarmo Hills Road, Wappingers Falls NY 12590.) I wonder if it would be possible to generate a 26-list of non-crashing words using abbreviations from Webster's Unabridged?

Tom Pulliam accepted Darryl Francis's challenge to find a more trans-addable set of letters than AGINST in the May Kickshaws. AEINRT can take 22 different letters of the alphabet to form words in Webster's Second or Third Editions. He strongly feels that there is a six-letter combination somewhere which is even better.

Surveying "Undominated Alphabetic Sequences" in the May issue, Jeremy Morse observed that QueRiST is a shorter QRST word than QuaRter-maSter, and ReSTitUtiVe is a shorter RSTUV word than inteRdeSTriVe. Similarly, the reverse-letter-order list can be improved with pYX and paxWax, both in Webster's. If hyphenated words are allowed, one can infer from the OED the existence of unDEr-FreiGHtIng and CoDEiFying. Philip Cohen noted that the sequence IJKLMNO is present in scrambled form in KILiMiNJarO -- alas, not in the main section of Webster's Second or Third.

Louis Phillips throws in another letter-stutter for "Falalalala-Lala-La-La" in February: "I have a chrysanthemum, Mum," mumbled the maid.
Did readers of the May Word Ways note that Margot Pyrc (source for a new cryptogram book) is CRYPTOGRAM written backwards? I thought that Pyrc was a very plausible-sounding Slavic or Polish surname, but a search of telephone directories revealed nothing closer than Pyrce, Pyrch and Pyrcz!

In the May 1981 Word Ways, the editor cited only one example in which a residential telephone user had an easy-to-remember number: JOHN-SON. Recently, a friend interested in cave exploration changed his telephone number to 549-CAVE. How did he ascertain the number he wanted was unused? By calling it up and finding that no one answered. Harry Partridge recently saw a Los Angeles signboard saying "Keep your kids from getting stabbed and killed -- call 626-GANG".

Jeremy Morse, Alan Frank, Ed Wolpaw and Frank Rubin all proposed improvements to Darryl Francis's transaddition lists of months, zodiac signs and planets in the May Kickshaws:

- PISCES spices
- AQUARIUS subequatorial*
- SCORPIO prosodic*
- TAURUS arbutus, sauteur
- JANUARY journalary (OED)
- JULY joyful
- VENUS nevus
- JUPITER prejudice
- SATURN unars

Starred examples exhibit words with different roots than the original.

George Levenbach (a native Dutchman) takes issue with Richard Lederer's choice of RIJSTTAFEL for a silent J. He notes that the IJ is a vowel-sound in Dutch, always pronounced with a long I sound as in 'rice'; leaving out the J changes the pronunciation to the short I sound as in 'risk'. Although the J does not sound like a J in this word, it is not totally silent: it alters the quality of the vowel I.

David Shulman wonders why Dana Richards did not try to include the name Holmes in two of the "Sherlockian Anagrams" in the February issue:

- SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE / Holmes cabled scoop?
- A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA / ad: ban Holmesian C.I.A.

Alas, it is impossible to anagram the word Sherlock in any of the listed stories. Martin Hucklesby of Eastleigh, Hampshire, England suggests the antigram TRASH -- NO ORDINARY CLUE for SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE. He wonders why nearly half the Canon was left unanagrammed.
Ed Wolpow suggested a few improvements in Webster's Unabridged for Alan Frank's "Long Digrammatic Strings" in the May issue: iw IIWI, mo hOMOMOrph, ry pYRRYI, and uz pUZZUolana. Philip Cohen says that several more can be improved if capitalized words are allowed: aq QarAAalpaq, bh DuBBHe, bn SoNNBlick, dj OuDJDa, dt PlaTTDeutsch, dw Aran MaWfWy, gv Olaf TryGGVeson, hk KhalakHKHa, jn PaNI Nad, kt H. WuTTKe, kv SoKKVabekk, lv CeLLVibrio, uw NUWkmiut, oq UQQQOQO, ry FaVRVRa, and jx VaXJo. Common non-Websterian words in the OED are fx buZZFLy and nz buZZNack. To these, Jeremy Morse adds bu hUBBUBBed and ow WOW-WOW.

Harry Partridge finds odd internal plurals interesting, but most really odd ones are not English, or depend upon the vagaries of transliteration (particularly Hebrew). If you go to foreign languages you can get plurals like Welsh PLANT 'children', plural of PLENTYN 'child'. He adds "Arabic broken plurals would make your hair stand on end".

Tom Pulliam has discovered a twelve-letter Pocket Webster word that can be transdeleted down to a one-letter word within that dictionary: REACTIVATION-RATICINATE-RECITATION-INTRICATE-INTERACT-NITRATE-ATTIRE-RAT-AT-A. This betters by one letter William Sunners' EMANCIPATION in the February 1982 Colloquy.

The editor should have pointed out in his article "Compression of English Text" that the intent was to supply simple rules for compression that could be readily memorized by the user to recover the original. Much greater compression is, of course, possible with the aid of a code book, but the person reading the text must be supplied with one. A considerable amount of theoretical work has been done by computer experts such as Frank Rubin on an intermediate case: the replacement of words by coded versions of the common bigrams, trigrams, etc. they contain. Specifically, they attempt to minimize the ratio (encoded message length + coding rules)/(original message length); this prevents one from introducing ever-more-elaborate coding schemes which offer marginal gains.

Jack Grieshaber writes "Word Ways continues to amaze me! I just wonder when you will run out of subjects to write about. One language, one dictionary and you keep working these things over. I liken it to our church services: one Bible, but each week a minister gives a new message on the same old text".

Harry Partridge offers a belated update on George Scheetz's "Onomasticon II" in February 1979: GEORGICIDE is a perfectly legitimate word meaning the 'killing of a farmer' (Greek geōgos, 'husbandman, tiller of the soil') rather than a slaying of someone named George.
The August 1981 Kickshaws listed a handful of United States towns which combine with their state abbreviations to form a word, such as JACK AL or A VA IL. Tom Pulliam points out that many more can be unearthed from the depths of Webster's Unabridged. Some examples:

- KENT AL
- BEST AR
- OTT AR
- PRIM AR
- GRANT IA
- ADEL IA
- LEE KY
- LIMA IL
- MACON NE
- VICTOR IA
- LOGAN IN
- MAGDA LA
- MAYS IN
- MILTON IA

One of these uses an obsolete abbreviation; NE has been replaced by NB.

Harry Partridge notes that SHAHANSHAH is the Persian or Farsi word for 'king of kings' and can be traced directly back to the cuneiform KHSHAYATHIYA KHSHAYATHIY.

Tim Wheeler offers a couple of new contronyms: when an alarm clock goes off, the bell or buzzer goes on; to wind up your affairs is the same as to wind down your affairs.

In May 1981 Philip Cohen listed several real-life palindromic names in Kickshaws. In the spring of 1982, the New Yorker magazine ran a cartoon showing an office door with the title STEVEN NEVETS - PALINDROME. Alas, there does not appear to be anyone in the United States with this surname, although Nevett comes close. In the March 1954 issue of The Enigma, the official publication of the National Puzzlers' League, Leigh Mercer asked if any readers had encountered a real-life EDNA LALANDE.

Santa gorilla! Jeremy Morse called the editor's attention to a number of MNOP-tetragrams relating to sacred apes: Semnopithec, semnopithecine, semnopitheque, Semnopithecinae, and Semnopithecus (also, semnopithicoid in the OED). And what about collar-stud for an added RSTU-tetragram in Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary?

The November 1978 Word Ways discussed the dictionary collection given by Warren Cordell to Indiana State University. This collection has been augmented by more than 500 non-Merriam late 19th-century and 20th-century dictionaries, given by the Merriam-Webster company.

Jeremiah Farrell has found the source of the unhyphenated word SALPINGOOPHORECTOMY; it appears in William J. Robinson's Medical and Sex Dictionary published in 1933. Apparently Mrs. Byrne drew a number of her entries from this work.

Erratum: In "Naomi, I Moan" the fifth palindrome should have started -O- A-E.
Frank Rubin adds to Charlie Bostick's Stutter Starters in the February Kickshaws the recently-popular song "Ain't No Sunshine" which contains 'I know' repeated 25 times, and the Hebrew song "Dayenn" with a chorus of 13 'dayenn' or 'da-dayenn' (the word means 'it would have been enough for us').

Harry Partridge writes about "...Omancy Fancy": "How about AILUR-OMANCY, divining by the way the cat jumps, much practiced by pols, and in California notably by Dr. Moonbeam, our present governor and senatorial candidate?"

Kyle Corbin has found a longer beheadment ending in I for Ralph Beam's November 1973 article: H-Uitzilopochtli, in Webster's Second Edition.

How, asks Tom Pulliam, did Darryl Francis overlook SILVE (below the line in Webster's Second) in his list of transpositions of EILSV in the May Kickshaws?

Tim Wheeler quickly noted a subservient spear carrier in his local newspaper: the Indianapolis News for June 1, 1982 printed an interview with Dennis Firestone in which he said "My new goal is to be a front-runner. I'm tired of being a spear-carrier."

The line between abbreviations and clipped words is a bit fuzzy.

George H. Roberts notes that the sponsor of a TV program was Kraft Inc., pronounced /craft ink/. He wonders: is this the first enunciation of an abbreviation?

Richard Lederer replies: no, ex-President Ford is not rude in the sense of being discourteous, but in the sense of "being in a rough or unfinished state" (see May Colloquy). Ford was frequently ridiculed in the press for his inelegant speech and clumsy physical movements.

Maxey Brooke writes "Tucker's article ("Fallacia Consequentis" in the May issue) is based on the rhetorical device 'faulty ellipsis'. The Greeks are said to have catalogued more than two hundred rhetorical devices." I wonder how many others can be humorously exploited?

More Strange Paradoxes: Louis Phillips says that the British navy steaming toward the Falklands in April was a classic example of a SLOW FLEET. In Tarrytown, New York, he discovered the TARRY TRAVEL Agency.