KICKSHAWS

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Forest Hills, New York

Kickshaws is currently being assembled by a series of guest editors. All contributions should be sent to the editor in Morristown, New Jersey.

Language Blocks

In the chapter on geometric forms in Language on Vacation, Dmitri Borgmann presented an example of a nine-by-nine word square in French, apparently the only language besides English at that time to have a square this large.

Now, Romanian and Serbo-Croatian have joined this exclusive group. The first Romanian nine-square appeared in Rebus magazine on July 5, 1968. It was constructed by Dr. Nicolae Andrei, who also constructed the second and third nine-squares in 1973. The latter appears below.

The nine-square in Yugoslavia is also new, although an attempt is recorded as early as 1940. The example below is by a prolific 43-year-old puzzler, Zivko Dokić, and appeared in Krizaljka magazine in 1984.

Romanian

INSECA TIL That which cannot be dried up
NEACU SATI Those who are not accused
SALAMALEC Moslem greeting
ECURISARI Wood cuttings
GUMINICAT Having taken communion
ASASINATA Murdered
BALACARIT Playing in water
ITERATIVI Repeated
LICITATIE Auction

Serbo-Croatian

PODGLAVAK Head pillow
OPERATIVA Organ of an institution or organization
DENIKOTIN Way to clean smokers' teeth
GRIFONIJA Bloody tension
LAKONICAR Man who uses short, simple sentences
ATONIRATI Completely lose one's voice
VITICANIN Inhabitant of the Vitica region, in Fojnice prov.
AVIJATIKA Aviation
RANARINAC Canary
German Word-Building

While on the subject of foreign wordplay, here’s a mammoth nineteen-letter word pyramid in German – the largest example I’ve seen in any language. Each word has all the letters of the previous word plus one. It is taken from the Buch der Rätsel by Karl Heinz Paraquin (1972).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>BAR</th>
<th>RAUB</th>
<th>BRAUER</th>
<th>ERSBRAUER</th>
<th>SAUTREIBER</th>
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<td>Pub</td>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>Eyebrow</td>
<td>Brewer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It’s Completely Oxymoronic

Here’s a two-part puzzle by a former crossword magazine editor, David Lindsey. The 32 listed words can be combined into pairs to form 16 oxymorons, or self contradictory phrases (like "pretty ugly" or "little giant"). All of the answers are expressions in actual use; most should be familiar. To begin, see if you can combine all the words into their proper pairs. Then, as a bonus, see if you can determine the logical order in which the words are listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subway</th>
<th>Waste</th>
<th>Assistant</th>
<th>Misleading</th>
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<td>Forgotten</td>
<td>Principal</td>
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<td>Down</td>
<td>Escalator</td>
<td>Grand</td>
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<td>Victimless</td>
<td>Melted</td>
<td>Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Elevated</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>Manuscript</td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Memories</td>
<td>Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex</td>
<td>Clue</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Ice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consonyms

A consonym is a word that has the same consonants in the same order as another word. For example, truncate (with consonants t-r-n-c-t) is a consonym for turncoat. The word thence (t-h-n-c) is a consonym for ethnic. The letter Y, as a semi-vowel/semi-consonant, is avoided in all examples here. How many of the words
below can you find cononymns for?

aforsaid quorum pastiche chosen
interact torch maneuvres fecund

An Amazing Reversal

The most amazing sentence reversal I can remember seeing appeared in Our Young Folks magazine back in March 1866, and was brought to my attention by wordsmith David Shulman. It reads forward in English and backward in Latin, not only making sense both ways but having the same meaning in each direction!

Anger? 'Tis safe never. Bar it! Use love!
Evoles ut ira breve nefas sit; regna!

Freely translated, the Latin means

Rise up, in order that your anger may be but a brief madness; control it!

A Mysterious Pattern

Words like flipflop, ding-dong, and fiddle-faddle are known to linguists as reduplicative words of the third order. While compiling a list of these for a puzzle in Games magazine, another editor and I noticed a curious pattern. First, the initial vowel always seems to be a short I, and second, the second vowel always seems to be a short A or O. In all our search we found only two exceptions to the rule. Here is our list:

Chitchat Jingle-jangle Singsong
Clip-clop King Kong Ticktock
Crisscross Knickknack Tiptop
Dillydally Mishmash Whimwham
Ding-dong Ping-pong Wiggle-waggle
Fiddle-faddle Pishposh Wishywashy
Flimflam Pitter-patter Zigzag
Flip-flop Riffraff
Hippity-hoppity Shilly-shally

The two exceptions: teeter-totter (long E as first vowel), and shipshape (long A as second vowel). Can you find any other exceptions, or suggest a reason for this rule?

Are These Cryptograms Solvable?

The National Puzzlers' League has a set of standards for the construction of cryptograms to ensure that the puzzles are fair to solvers. These rules state, among other things, that the answer must contain at least 75 letters, that at least 18 different letters of the alphabet must be used, and that no more than 6 of the letters can be unkeyed (i.e., appear only once).

The old New York Herald Tribune ran a popular cryptogram for many years that followed a different set of rules. There was no minimum length, and no requirement on the number of different letters. Unkeyed letters, though, were forbidden.
seeing ap­6, and was
nt reads for­aking sense

madness;
're known to
ile compil­other editor
vel always
always seems

t or excep-
egle

, and ship-
exceptions,

rds for the
es are fair
the answer
rent letters
of the let-
ptogram for
ere was no

tematics, but nonetheless actual examples from the
paper - which strike me as virtually unsolvable. I say "virtually"
because I'm not sure they can't be solved without some experts
trying. Here are the crypts:

1. RTE S RTRNU UNREST GNU ZG RNUZ
2. CRYP TED YDT EPRC DEW TPCW
3. W A R TOY TOWARD YARD

Answers will not appear until the next issue. Let us know how
you do.

And Now a Word from ...

Each year the advertising industry gives awards for the best
print, radio, and television commercials. Here are three categories
they missed:

Most Redundant Slogan. The runner-up prize in this hotly-con­
tested category goes to Raid for its slogan "Kills bugs dead." First
prize goes to D-Con for its doubly-redundant "Kills fleas dead -
forever."

Best Oxymoron. The runner-up in this category is an unidenti­
fied sleeping aid (this came to me second-hand) that touts itself
as "the solution to the nightmare of insomnia." First prize goes
to the Star, the supermarket tabloid, which last July ran the head­
line "Unbelieveable Proof: Life After Death."

Most Inappropriate Product Name (International Division). The
winner, in a class all by itself, is the Italian nasal decongestant
called Smog.

Rock It

In a Kickshaw last November, Benjamin Zimmer gave two examples
of wordplay in rock music and invited readers to send others. My
contributions:

The band Electric Light Orchestra released an album in 1976
palindromically titled OLE-ELO
The Swedish pop group with the palindromic name ABBA had
a hit in 1975 with a palindromic title, SOS.

Next!

Ex-Terminations

The letters EX form a common prefix meaning "out of" or "from."
For some unknown reason they also form a common suffix in coined
product names, like Kleenex facial tissues and Comtrex multi-symptom
cold reliever. How many of the following EX products can you
identify from their brief descriptions?
1. Foot powder
2. Glass cleaner
3. Sleeping tablets
4. Nasal decongestant
5. Lady’s undergarments
6. Watch (two possible answers)
7. Portable address-card file
8. Laundry bleach
9. Cereal
10. Heat-resistant glassware
11. Audio tape
12. Jock itch powder
13. Shampoo
14. Feminine napkins
15. Acne medication (three possible answers)

Movie Quiz

A popular movie last summer was called Weird Science. What is doubly unusual about its name?

Names in the News

About half of the newspapers in the country seem to have names that reflect mergers of earlier papers. For example: the Chicago Sun-Times, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Newark Star-Ledger. Here are some suggested names for other combinations of papers:

- Washington World-Leader
- Los Angeles World-Record (in honor of the 1984 Olympics)
- Nashville Record-Press
- Honolulu Sun-Light
- Fort Bragg Mail-Call

Other examples are invited.

A Perfect 32-Letter Pangram

For pangram fanciers, here’s an exotic example from Polish. It uses each of the 32 letters of the Polish alphabet exactly once:

Pójdź, kćże tę chmurność wgłab flaszy

The sentence is supposed to cheer up someone who is morose from drinking. It means "Come, throw the gloom in the bottle."

Rebuses

Letter rebuses have been popular in America for more than one hundred years. An example from Merry’s Magazine of the 1860s went:

1 YY 1 OWN & it.

This is translated as "Too wise in one’s own conceit."

Here is a pretty example in verse by H.C. Dodge, from the July 1903 Woman’s Home Companion.
The farmer leads no EZ life,
The CD sows will rot;
And when at EV rests from strife
His bones all AK lot.
In DD has to struggle hard
To EK living out;
If IC frosts do not retard
His crops, there'll BA drought.
The hired LP has to pay
Are awful AZ, too;
They CK rest when he’s away,
Nor NE work will do.
Both NZ cannot make to meet,
And then for AD takes
Some boarders, who so RT eat,
& E no money makes.
Of little UC finds this life;
Sick in old AG lies;
The debts he OZ leaves his wife,
And then in PC dies.

Dinner Music
A musical wit sent the following dinner invitation to a friend:

It specifies both the time and the main course of the meal. Can you explain?

THE DIABOLICAL DICTIONARY OF MODERN ENGLISH
This is the title of a book by R.W. Jackson, published by Delacorte Press for $12.95. Modeled after Bierce’s classic, The Devil’s Dictionary, it consists of approximately one thousand sardonic definitions, such as

NE’ER DO WELL a taxpayer
SELF-ESTEEM belief in the irrational
THE WAGES OF SIN about two hundred dollars an hour
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT antitrust
LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN Las Vegas

Some definitions strain too hard for laughs, as CHRISTMAS PRESENT an afterthought-less blob of recycled refuse for half the value expected and a fifth of the cost allocated. However, one can also find clever wordplay, as in

PHARMACIST a piller of the community
SALOME an upwardly mobile show biz type whose skill at dancing got her ahead