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INTERIM Magazine
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Back issues of *Interim* are available from the editor upon request.

All issues of, and articles published in, *Word Ways, the Journal of Recreational Linguistics*, may be read and downloaded free of charge at the website Digital Commons @ Butler University: digitalcommons.butler.edu/wordways/

COLLOQUY

In the August 2014 issue of *Word Ways* I published an article asserting that three connected articles published in three 1979 – 80 issues of *Word Ways*, each of them ostensibly written by **Dmitri Borgmann**, were not in fact the work of Borgmann. So certain was I that such was the case that I made this claim despite the fact that I'd been unable to find any actual proof that this was so. In the years since then, the search for such proof has continued, and now, at last, it has, against all odds, been found. In this issue of *Interim*, Part One of a two-part article, "The Great Brain Robbery," recounts the fortuitous series of events which led to its discovery.

Elsewhere in this issue, **Richard Lederer** leads off with an engaging (not to mention educational) story of an episode he recalls from his teaching days involving a grammar-based game he invented for his 10th-grade students to play, only to find himself promptly taken to school. The game he describes is sheer wordplay, and wordplay at a sophisticated level at that.

In the February *Interim* I wrote that it seemed doubtful that a crossword network of the current roster of U.S. presidents' surnames could be fitted into any smaller rectangle than the 450-cell grid unveiled in that issue. The crossword's composer was more circumspect, saying that he suspected that a further size reduction was possible. Guess which one of us was right. Among his offerings in his article "Some New Presidential Crossword Grids" in this issue, **Mike Keith** improves upon the 450-cell grid with one that is a remarkable 40 cells smaller. In addition, he posits a plausible theory as to why, when the object is to construct a minimal grid for a given set of crosswords, flattened grids may enjoy a small inherent advantage over more squarish ones.

Like most readers of these pages, I more or less mastered my ABCs some time ago, but I will confess to still being a bit weak in my JQXZs, as I suppose some others may be too. In his article "Three Awkward Letters from JQXZ" in this issue, **Darryl Francis** helps to better acquaint us with these alphabetical benchwarmers by exhibiting many entirely respectable words which do not hesitate to rely on no fewer than three of them for their very existence. Scrabble players take note.

Kudos to new U.S. President **Joe Biden**! In office for less than three months, he has already set the record for U.S. presidents for the most published palindromes incorporating his name, courtesy of the article "Four Score and Seven Biden Palindromes" in this *Interim*. No thanks needed; this is exactly the sort of proficient logological public service *Interim* takes pride in providing.

For a different kind of presidential grid-packing, one could try a sardine-style packing in which the names do not overlap. In the article "State and Presidential Square Sets II" in this issue this kind of packing of presidential surnames is explored for the special case in which the grids are square, and similar statename packings are also investigated. Several questions about such packings remain to be answered.

Transpositions of the U.S. presidents' full names are exploited in the refurbished space-filler article "Unsuspected Presidential Vanities." In both its current and previous incarnations, the list of the presidents had to be cut off at "Reagan" due to lack of space for its continuation. Anyone desiring to complete the list by finding appropriate transpositions of the remaining five names may

find it useful to consult **Mike and Evan Morton's** collection of several dozens of transpositions of "George Herbert Walker Bush" in their article "Berserk Rebel Grew Tough! Ha!" in the February 1989 *Word Ways*.

Louis Phillips makes his first appearance *Interim* in this issue with his article "Crossword Puzzle Clues," which is mainly concerned with cryptic crossword clues. One of these that he'd meant to include in his article but forgot to do so was this one from a cryptic puzzle by **Joshua Kosman** and **Henri Piciotto** which was published in the December 5, 2011 issue of *The Nation.* (He was reminded of it by a recent mention of Afghanistan in the news.) It reads:

"Between a rock and a hard place in Afghanistan." (8 letters)

At first I supposed that "a rock" might be intended to be read as "Iraq," and that the solution was some 8-letter thing located or caught between that country and "a hard place in Afghanistan." But no, the solution is far more ingenious than that. Don't overthink this clue; when you look at it, you are literally looking at the solution.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Also making its debut in this issue is *Interim's* first-ever "Kickshaws" department, thanks to Darryl Francis, who volunteered to guest-host this issue's installment of the feature. Judging by the quantity of reader contributions he received, there appears to be ample support among *Interim* readers for a Kickshaws department (which incidentally does not need to be a dozen or more pages long every time; three or four pages will suffice). A new guest host is now needed to compile the November Kickshaws — for the time being, until there is a regular host, Kickshaws will be a semiannual *Interim* feature. Would anyone care to volunteer to be either a one-time or a regular host of this department?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Another new department making its first appearance in this issue is a community bulletin board, a place for Interim readers to post personal announcements. These must be wordplay-related, or at least language-related, and will run once. In this issue, **Mark Saltveit** posts a potpourri of announcements having to do with a variety of events.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The staff of *Interim* hope everyone's enjoyed the magazine so far. Please feel free to disseminate copies of both of its issues to anyone else you may know of who who might also enjoy it, as we'd like to increase *Interim's* readership as much and as quickly as possible.

The deadline to submit articles for publication in the August *Interim* is July 22. The same deadline applies to Colloquy and Bulletin Board items submitted for the August *Interim.*

BUILDING A SUPERSENTENCE

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I have long been convinced that the study of grammar need not be an arcane, hermetically sealed exercise. Each year at St. Paul's School, in Concord, New Hampshire, where I taught for almost three decades, my students and I explored the structure of English, from the parts of speech to phrases and clauses, applying our knowledge to usage, punctuation, and sentence creation.

"Every self-respecting mechanic," said John Dewey, "will call the parts of an automobile by their right names because that is the way to distinguish them." Thus it is with the writer. If Alexander Pope is correct in asserting that "true ease in writing comes from art, not chance," a naming of the grammatical parts will reduce the chance and enhance the art, even if those names are one day forgotten.

Ultimately, though, I believe that, in the words of structuralist Paul Roberts, "The best reason for studying grammar is that grammar is interesting." Grammar may not be glamorous in any glittery, Hollywood sense, but grammar can indeed be very interesting, even enchanting.

That enchantment can even include having fun—yes, fun!—with grammar and usage. Take the study of subject-verb combinations that we term clauses. What do you call a clause that comes every Christmas? A re-noun clause named Santa Clause. What do you call Santa Clause's wife? A relative clause. What do you call his elves? Subordinate clauses.

After my St. Paul's School scholars completed their study of descriptive English grammar, I often assigned them the writing of a "supersentence"—a single sentence containing one example of each of the four phrases and three subordinate clauses that are identified in English grammar. These are: prepositional phrase, participial phrase, gerund phrase, and infinitive phrase and adverb clause, adjective clause, and noun clause. These units may occur in any order in the assigned sentence.

One afternoon, while grading a batch of supersentences, I decided to try writing one myself, using the fewest words possible. (If you, dear reader, are a grammar jock, I invite you to try this feat before reading this narrative any further.) An hour of intense industry produced the following:

[1]*When people* [2]*who swing want* [3]*to see* [4]*what's happening, they try* [5]*attending parties* [6]*given* [7]*by hipsters.* (sixteen words)

The numbers indicate the beginning of each phrase and subordinate clause— (1) adverb clause: *When people who swing want to see what's happening* modifies the verb *try* in the main clause; (2) adjective clause: *who swing* modifies the noun *people;* (3) infinitive phrase: *to see what's happening* acts as the direct object of the verb *want;* (4) noun clause: *what's happening* acts as the object of the infinitive *to see;* (5) gerund phrase: *attending parties given by hipsters*

acts as the direct object of the verb *try;* (6) participial phrase: *given by hipsters* modifies the noun *parties;* (7) prepositional phrase: *by hipsters* modifies the passive participial *given.* In subsequent sentences I shall provide numbers but leave the reader to identify the structures, which will appear in varying orders, so as to avoid cluttering these pages with labyrinthine explanations like this one.

I proudly presented my sixteen-word concoction to my departmental colleagues and to my students, who saw and were amazed. A few days later, I was summoned by an emissary from another tenth-grade English class that met a few rooms down the hall from my section, and there on the chalkboard was inscribed:

Fred, [1]*wanting* [2]*to win* [3]*by* [4]*playing hard, practiced more* [5]*than I,* [6]*who knew* [7]*he stank.* (fifteen words)

Among the triumphantly glowing faces in that alien classroom was that of Bruce Monrad, the finest young linguist in our school at that time. Bruce, it turned out, was the author of the fifteen-word supersentence, a creation that contains not only an elliptical adverb clause of comparison, *than I* [*practiced*], and a hidden noun clause, [*that*] *he stank,* but compacts the four phrases into the subordinate part of the sentence and the three clauses into the main part.

Not to be outdone, I labored mightily for the next few days and came up with:

[1]*Stung* [2]*by* [3]*what happened, Lederer began* [4]*trying* [5]*to write better* [6]*than Monrad,* [7]*who fainted.* (fourteen words)

The next morning, I marched into the rival classroom and confidently wrote my new sentence on the blackboard, only to be instantly one-upped by young Monrad, who stepped forward and inscribed:

[1]*Helping* [2]*win* [3]*by* [4]*scoring more* [5]*than I,* [6]*who thought* [7]*he stank, Fred overcame.* (thirteen words)

Here Bruce's brilliant excision of one word is accomplished in his second phrase, the infinitive, in which he lifts out the *to: Helping [to] win by scoring. . . .*

Now I was growing desperate. Word of the contest had spread throughout the school community. How could I ever again face my colleagues and my students if I were to be defeated by a mere stripling? The whole affair was beginning to give lie to William Cobbett's crabbed pronouncement: "The study of grammar is dry. It engages not the passions." Resolving not to give up, in, or out, I closeted myself for the entire weekend. Finally, "Eureka!" flew from my lips as I emerged with this compacted supersentence:

[1]*Helping* [2]*win* [3]*by* [4]*overcoming* [5]*what threatened, Lederer,* [6]*who persisted*[7]*when challenged, triumphed.* (twelve words)

In addition to being eminently readable, my fabrication is characterized by two clever strokes: a clause within a phrase within a phrase within a phrase within a phrase in the first five words, and the distillation of the adverb clause into a two-word cluster, *when [he was] challenged,* one word shorter than its predecessor, *more than I.* Not only are all the structures as concise as they can possibly be, but, with the exception of the subject, *Lederer,* all nouns, adjectives, and adverbs are now replaced by phrases and clauses. O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!, I chortled in my joy. This sentence was traveling at the speed of light. It could become no smaller. Or so I thought.

On Monday morning, I strutted into Bruce's classroom and hubristically engraved my "ultimate" concatenation on the enemy's board, delivering a learned lecture proving that we had reached the end of the road supersentencewise. As I wheeled to leave, Bruce giggled, "Not so fast, Mr. Lederer." He explained that he too had discovered the formula for the two-word adverb clause and that, moreover, he had been able to replace *all* nouns, adjectives, and adverbs with phrases and clauses. He then chalked up:

[1]*Whoever rebels,* [2]*daring* [3]*oppose* [4]*by* [5]*fighting* [6]*when opposed,* [7]*which overcomes, conquers.*
(eleven words!)

While reaching the theoretical limit for supersentences, Bruce's creation is rather clunky, with the adjective clause *which overcomes* flapping loosely as a dangling modifier. Still, I have never been able to improve on the lad's effort, and I invite readers to submit more graceful and coherent supersentences of eleven words.

Like two kids choosing sides for a baseball game, Bruce and I ran our hands up the bat until there wasn't any wood left. Actually, though, we both won because when the game of grammar is played with a sense of humor and enjoyment, everyone can be a winner.

Some New Presidential Crossword Grids

Mike Keith
Beaverton, Oregon

In the February 2021 *Interim*, Darryl Francis presented a survey of past results on the "presidential rectangle" problem, in which one attempts to put the surnames of the US presidents into an interlocking crossword grid that fits into the smallest rectangle possible. He also unveiled the first grid using the new (as of 2021) current list of 40 surnames, fitting them inside a 25 x 18 rectangle with area 450. In this article I offer some new, improved grids, including one with an area of 410.

Before presenting our new results, some notes on "the Van Buren problem" are in order. The original version of this challenge, as put forth in the February 1976 *Word Ways* by Ross Eckler, required that Van and Buren appear in the grid 'as two separate words', but without any further explanation. What does this mean, exactly? By examining the presidential rectangles which have appeared in print so far, we can codify what have been, up until now, unstated rules.

Here, for instance, is the relevant portion of Darryl Francis' rectangle from the May 1993 issue of *Word Ways*:

```
    T   E  V
    A   L  E
    F O R D  L
  H T      A
V A N  B U R E N
  R  U     D
  D  C        P
  I  H A R R I S O N
  N  A        L
  G R A N T   K
```

From this we can infer these rules:

(1) VAN and BUREN must be linked into the crossword network as separate words. This implies that neither one can sit alone in the rectangle as an isolated, unconnected word, since each is required to be connected to *some* word in the network of words.

(2) VAN and BUREN must be next to each other in the same row or column, with exactly one space separating them, so they can be read as "VAN BUREN".

As Francis points out in his *Interim* article, modern crossword puzzles do not usually incorporate multi-word names or phrases in this way – in both US and UK crosswords, this president's surname would appear as VANBUREN. So it is much more natural, in our humble opinion, to use VANBUREN when attempting the presidential rectangle-packing challenge. But regardless of one's preferences, there are clearly two distinct puzzles here – the original challenge as proposed by Eckler, and the "modern" version using VANBUREN. We propose to borrow a term from computer science and call Eckler's original puzzle the "legacy" version. We'll refer to the other version as "modern", unless obvious from the context.

If one has a solution for the modern puzzle (VANBUREN) where VAN or BUREN is free to slide to the left or right by one space, this does *not* produce a solution to the legacy version, because then either VAN or BUREN will be isolated and not connected to the crossword mesh, which violates the rules. In other words, a modern solution cannot easily be modified to make a legacy solution, and vice versa.

Since the latest rectangle by Francis, with area 450, is a modern solution, I tackled that version first. Here is a grid using VANBUREN having an area of 410 (= 41 x 10):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
1			T					M	O	N	R	O	E		L	I	N	C	O	L	N		J	E	F	F	E	R	S	O	N		G	A	R	F	I	E	L	D	
2	H	A	R	D	I	N	G				O		I					L			I		A					E								I				K
3	A		U				R		H		O		S		T	Y	L	E	R		X		C					A			M	C	K	I	N	L	E	Y		E
4	Y		M		O		A	D	A	M	S		E		A			V		P	O	L	K			W		G							L			M		N
5	E		P		B		N		R		E		N		F			E			N		S			I		A		H					M			A		N
6	S			C	A	R	T	E	R		V		H		T	A	Y	L	O	R			O		C	L	I	N	T	O	N			C	O	O	L	I	D	G	E
7			B		M				I		E		O					A			F		N			S				O					R			I		D
8	T	R	U	M	A	N			S		L		W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N				O			V	A	N	B	U	R	E	N		S		Y
9			S						O		T		E					D			R					N			E								O			
10	J	O	H	N	S	O	N		N			A	R	T	H	U	R		B	I	D	E	N				P	I	E	R	C	E		B	U	C	H	A	N	A	N

The extra constraints of the legacy version imply the need for a little more space, though in theory it could be possible to solve both versions in the same size rectangle. For the legacy version of the puzzle my best solution has area 420 (= 42 x 10):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
1		M	C	K	I	N	L	E	Y		T	R	U	M	P			H				C				M					G		T		W			E		
2	G		L										A				A				J	A	C	K	S	O	N				R	E	A	G	A	N		I		K
3	A		E		J		H				C		D		A		Y		B		R				N			F			A		F		S		B		S		E
4	R		V		O		A				O		P	I	E	R	C	E		U		T	Y	L	E	R		B	I	D	E	N		T		H		U		E		N
5	F		E		H	A	R	R	I	S	O	N		S		T		S		C		E				O			L			T			W	I	L	S	O	N		N
6	I		L		N		D				L			O		H				H		R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T			P			N		H		H		E
7	E		A		S		I			N	I	X	O	N		U				A			B					M				O			G			F	O	R	D
8	L	I	N	C	O	L	N				D				T	R	U	M	A	N			A			T	A	Y	L	O	R		C	L	I	N	T	O	N		W		Y
9	D		D		N		G				G									A	D	A	M	S				R				K			O			E			
10										J	E	F	F	E	R	S	O	N		N			A			H	O	O	V	E	R			V	A	N		B	U	R	E	N

As a bonus, VAN BUREN is in a prominent place at the bottom right, and is connected to the only two 10-letter presidents, WASHINGTON and EISENHOWER.

These rectangles are quite slim – only 10 squares tall. At first glance it might appear that this is a handicap, and that solutions closer to a square in shape should be easier to construct. There is at least one reason, however, why that is not the case (see diagram).

C C C C C C C C
O A A A A A A A A O
C C C C C C C C

Here, AAAAAAAA represents an 8-letter word being added to the board (say, near the center, and for simplicity imagine that it's the first word "played"). This word uses up not just the 8 squares of the board in which it lies, but the square preceding and following it (denoted O) *plus* the squares next to the word on the two adjacent rows (the C's). The O squares are forced to be Open (unoccupied) forever,

while the C squares can either remain open *or* be occupied by a letter from a crossing word in the perpendicular direction. So not all of the C's are forced to remain empty, but typically many are.

Now notice what happens when a word is placed on the edge of the board: half of its C's lie outside the board *and therefore do not use up any board area*. And a thin rectangle of the same area as a square has more edge squares, and therefore more opportunity to take advantage of this trick. For example, a rectangle of size 40 x 10 and area 400 has 96 edge squares, compared to 78 edge squares for a 20 x 20 square (also area 400). So, at least in this one way, thin rectangles have an advantage. This reasoning also implies that having many words on the edges of the rectangle, parallel to the edge, is a good strategy since it takes greater advantage of these "no-cost" squares outside the puzzle area.

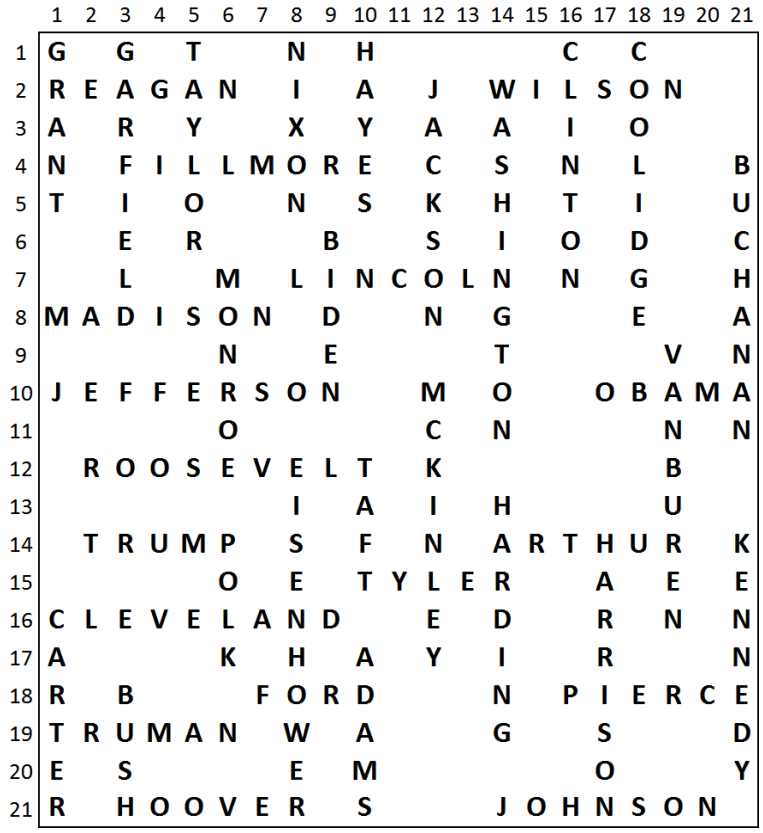
What's the thinnest rectangle that allows a solution? First, note that if the height of the rectangle is *h*, all names with more than *h* letters must be placed horizontally in the grid. Those words with *h* or fewer letters are the only short words available to use as connectors to attach the longer words to each other.

Now consider *h*=5. In the 40 presidential surnames there are only 12 short words to go with the 28 long words (those with 6 or more letters). Although we don't have a concrete proof of this, it seems clear that the 12 small words will not be enough to connect the 28 long words in an N x 5 rectangle. When *h*=6, however, the number of short words
(6 letters or less) and long words are evenly split (20 of each), so it seems possible that
N x 6 solutions could exist – and indeed they do. Here's a reasonably compact six-row solution, a 74 x 6 rectangle with an area of 444. It is shown in two parts for easier fit on the page:

```
E I S E N H O W E R   L I N C O L N   T       M C K I N L E Y
        O       E         A         R       O                 T       J
F I L L M O R E   A R T H U R       B U C H A N A N       P I E R C E
O       V       G         T A F T   M       R           O       U
R     C L E V E L A N D     E         A     R O O S E V E L T   M A D I S
D       R       N     H A R R I S O N       E           K       P
```

```
T           C O O L I D G E     B                       T       W
A C K S O N               R   H   U     B   K E N N E D Y     C L I N T O N
Y       B                 A D A M S     I       I     L       L
L     W A S H I N G T O N   Y   H A R D I N G   X   J E F F E R S O N
O N     M                 T   E         E       O     R       O
R     G A R F I E L D       S     V A N B U R E N         J O H N S O N
```

What about the other extreme – a square? We are not aware of any published solutions for this case, so to address that omission here's the smallest presidential square we could produce, a 21 x 21 with area 441. Can a 20 x 20 = 400 be constructed? We conjecture no (feel free to prove us wrong!), in which case 21 x 21 is the smallest square possible.



The table below summarizes the statistics for the past and present presidential rectangles that have been published. (Near-miss solutions have not been included.) We define the *density* of a solution as the number of letters in the word list (column 4 in the table) divided by the area of the rectangle (column 7), a measure of how well-packed a solution is. Note especially the quality of Leonard Gordon's rectangle, which is near the top end of the density range achieved in these solutions.

Type	Author	#Names	#Letters	H	V	Area	Density
Legacy	Sam Harlan, 1976	33	224	31	17	527	42.5%
Legacy	Darryl Francis, 1993	37	247	29	17	493	50.1%
Legacy	Leonard Gordon, 1994	37	247	22	18	396	62.374%
Legacy	Mike Keith, 2021	40	262	42	10	420	62.381%
Modern	Darryl Francis, 2021	40	262	25	18	450	58.2%
Modern	Mike Keith, 2021	40	262	41	10	410	63.9%
Modern	Mike Keith (square), 2021	40	262	21	21	441	59.4%
Modern	Mike Keith (thinnest), 2021	40	262	74	6	444	59.0%

As always, the challenge remains to find even better (smaller area) grids.

THREE AWKWARD LETTERS FROM JQXZ

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I'm fascinated with words and names that have distinctive combinations of letters – for example, words using only the vowel A, words whose only letters are from the first half of the alphabet, words with two sets of doubled letters, words beginning with every combination of two letters, and so on. These and many others have been explored throughout the 50+ years of *Word Ways*.

Here's a piece of exploration which fills in some gaps in one of those previous *Word Ways* articles. Way back in August 1972 (volume 5, number 3), Leslie Card and Ross Eckler wrote an article entitled Words Having Three Rare Letters. They arranged the most uncommon letters into four groups of three apiece – JQX, FKZ, BVW and HMY. Further, the letters JQX were each given a value of 1, FKZ values of 2, BVW values of 3, and HMY values of 4. Any combination of these letters in a word was assigned a score equal to the sum of the values – for example, JQZ and JJF both have scores of 4, but HKX has a score of 7. Card and Eckler commented that "the difficulty of finding a word with three rare letters decreases (on average) as the word's score increases". They then presented a list of words with various combinations of these uncommon letters.

In this article, I will concentrate on just four of those letters – J, Q, X and Z. These four letters are generally regarded as the least frequently used in the English language. They certainly have the highest point values in Scrabble (J=8, Q=10, X=8 and Z=10). Finding words and names containing all of these four letters has proved extremely difficult in the past. My coinage of **Arjuzanxesque** (in the style or manner of the French commune Arjuzanx) was first noted in a Dmitri Borgmann item in the May 1968 *Word Ways* (volume 1, number 2). Later, in the May 1970 *Word Ways* (volume 3, number 2), my find of **Ziq-Xhafej** was noted – the name of a small village found in an Albanian gazetteer. I don't recall other JQXZ examples, but I am sure there may have been a few unearthed over the years.

But how about tracking down words which contain three of these four most awkward letters? Words containing three of JQXZ were the ones that Card and

Eckler had most difficulty finding for their 1972 article – they found some examples, but they also had some gaps. In this article, I'll update some of Card and Eckler's work.

If the awkward letters have to be different, there are only four combinations – JQX, JQZ, JXZ and QXZ. But if repeats of the letters are allowed (for example, JJJ, QQX, XZZ), then there are 20 possible combinations, making the search for a full set of words with all of these combinations an interesting project. My finds for these 20 combinations are discussed in this article. Note that when I refer to a JQX word, for example, I am not distinguishing between the six different orderings of those letters – JQX, JXQ, QJX, QXJ, XJQ and XQJ. There are 64 different sequences, so perhaps that's a difficult project for another day, building on my finds here.

JJJ

An excellent JJJ (and even JJJJ) word is **jejunojejunostomy***, which appears in the OED, and is defined as the operation of joining, and creating a passage between, two parts of the jejunum so that the intervening part is bypassed. I'm sure this word has appeared in several issues of *Word Ways*. (Words marked with an asterisk appeared in Card and Eckler's 1972 article.)

However, I think the only JJJ word in the OED (as opposed to a JJJJ word) is **jijjiboo**, a variant of 'jigaboo', a depreciative and offensive word for a Black person and an African-American. According to the OED and a Google search, this JJJ spelling seems to appear only in the words of a 1909 song *I've Got Rings on my Fingers*.

Outside of the major dictionaries, several other JJJ examples can be found, usually geographic names. It wasn't that long ago that **Eyjafjallajökull** was in the news pretty much every day. This is the name of the volcano in Iceland which erupted in April 2010, and which caused enormous disruption to air travel across western and northern Europe for a week. The volcano name has an article to itself in Wikipedia.

Some other non-dictionary names include these: **Jhajjar** is a city and district in the Indian state of Haryana – check it out on Wikipedia; **Jijjin** is a place in Jordan,

listed in *The Times Index Gazetteer of the World*; and **Pitjantjatjara** is an Aboriginal people of the Central Australian desert - another name with an article to itself in Wikipedia.

JJQ

Just a couple of geographic placenames here for JJQ. According to Wikipedia, **Aqjawajat** is a small city in the African country of Mauritania. It can also be spelled ‘Akjoujt’. **Tijiqjah**, an alternative spelling of ‘Tidjikja’, is a town in central Mauritania with a population of around 11,000. Wikipedia notes that the town is notable for its vernacular architecture.

JJX

The OED has **jejunatrix** appearing in a 1440 quote at the entry 'faster', one who fasts. The quote contains both 'jejunator' and **jejunatrix**, so presumably the JJX word is simply a female faster. Strange that the OED has a main entry for 'jejunator', with a quote dated as recently (!) as 1858, but no main entry for **jejunatrix**. The same is true for *Webster's Second* - only the male form is listed as a main entry.

And here are a couple of JJX geographic names from Wikipedia: *Jujurieux* is a commune in eastern France; and *Xiejiaji is a district in China.*

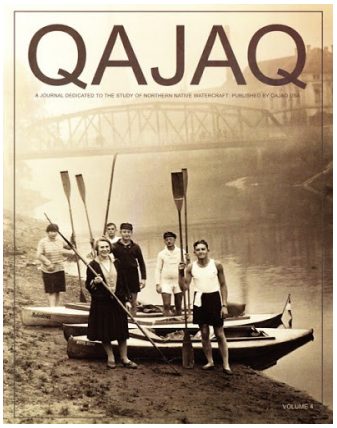
JJZ

At its main entry for 'ju'jitsu', the OED has a 1942 quote with the spelling **jujitzu**. The quote reads: "There are omens of promise—in much that Mr. Roosevelt has done, or in the splendid massive jujitzu of the Russians."

On the penultimate page of *Webster's Second Edition* is **Zulhijjah**, a month of the Mohammedan calendar. In the W2 table of months elsewhere in the dictionary, the word is spelled with an apostrophe-like character, **Zu'lhijjah**.

JQQ

The Inuit spelling of ‘kayak’ is **QAJAQ**, and this can be found in the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. The word can also be found in the more recent editions of both *Collins Official Scrabble Words* and *The Scrabble Players Dictionary*. While there’s only one Q in a regular Scrabble set, one of the blanks could be used as the second Q in order to play the word. Alternatively, in the game of Superscrabble (with its 21x21 board and 200 tiles) there are two Qs.



Probably the only main entry in the OED containing JQQ is **quinquejugous***, an obsolete and rare term from botany meaning having five pairs of leaflets (small leaves). The word also appears in *Webster's Second Edition* in a list of undefined words at 'quinque-'.

At its main entry for 'carnap' the OED has a 1983 quote from a work by the Filipino writer Nick Joaquin entitled **Joaquinesquerie**. For what it’s worth, the quote reads "Poor Doy! When his jeep was carnapped he was left only with his guitar." Nick Joaquin is renowned, apparently, for writing using hyper-complex sentence structures. A Google search for Joaquin and **Joaquinesquerie** will throw up hundreds of hits.

JQX

The only JQX word in the OED is the French word **quadrijumeaux**, which appears in the etymology of 'quadrigeminal'. The only reason I am listing it here is because there don't seem to be any genuine English words with JQX.

Although not listed in mainstream dictionaries, it's probably worth noting the name of **Joaquin Phoenix**, the well-known American actor, and also environmentalist, animal rights activist, and producer. He has an extensive article in Wikipedia, and additional information about his film and television appearances can be found on a variety of websites.

JQZ

The OED lists **janizaresque**, in the style of a janizary, a Turkish infantryman. This is the only JQZ word I could find in the regular unabridged dictionaries.

JXX

In the OED I could only find a single example of a word containing JXX. The OED's entry at 'fanny' has a quote from 2014 from a Twitter user by the name of **@Jemboxox**. She (he? they?) wrote "Girls can't sleep around otherwise they're slags boys can cheat yet still be 'lads' for getting some fanny. No just no." Obviously not a real word, and I guess Twitter users can make up any name they want, containing any combinations of letters, but at least this name appears in the OED.

However, a genuine JXX word is listed in both *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* and *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*: **juxtallocortex**. It's another name for the mesocortex, which is a specific area of the human brain.

Although not a single word/name, it may be worth drawing attention to **Jamie Foxx**, the American actor, singer-songwriter, comedian, television presenter, and record producer. His real name is Eric Marlon Bishop.

JXZ

No dictionary words here, so I've had to resort to a geographic name. The French commune of **Arjuzanx** has featured before in Word Ways, when I used it to form the coined word Arjuzanxesque, with all four of JQXZ. Wikipedia says that in 2019 the commune was merged into a new commune Morcenx-la-Nouvelle. Another placename from Wikipedia is **Jizzax** (also spelled Jizzakh), a city in Uzbekistan – this is also a JZZ and XZZ name.

Another name of interest is **Zirankexuejijin**, one of the many thousands of minor planets in the Solar System. It's numbered 8425 in a list of minor planets that can be found on Wikipedia. It seems it was discovered by a Chinese team, which accounts for the exotic spelling. This is also a JJX and JJZ name.

JZZ

Familiar words with the JZZ combo are **jazz***, and **Jacuzzi**. The former has many derivatives, such as **jazzer**, **jazzify**, **jazzman** and **jazzy**; less familiar words include **jazzaphonic**, **jazzbow, jazzetry** and **jazzophile**. Another JZZ word is **jizz**, which the OED defines as the characteristic impression given by an animal or plant (whatever that may mean!). This is a very different meaning to that given to **jizz** by slang dictionaries.

An interesting JZZ word from the OED which doesn't have its two Zs together is **zizannije**, a Middle English spelling of 'zizany', an injurious weed growing among corn; *Webster's Second* shows 'zizany' beneath the line, defining it simply as 'tares, cockle', both weeds.

There's a clutch of interesting JZZ words in two other reference sources. *The English Dialect Dictionary* has **jizzen** (childbirth), **jizzock** (a donkey), **jizzup** (juice, syrup) and **jizzy** (a wig); and *The American Thesaurus of Slang* has **jizzie** (an unattractive girl).

QQQ

Qaraqalpaq* is the only QQQ word in *Webster's Third*, and is a variant spelling of 'Karakalpak', a Turkic people of central Asia, a member of this people, or their Turkic language.

I couldn't find a main entry in the OED for a QQQ word. The OED's only QQQ word appears in an 1874 quote at 'bushman'. It is **qinqininyq**. Here's the quote: "Then he sent another bird, the tinktinki, or tintinyane, - **qinqininyq** in Bushman." The OED defines Bushman as the language of the aboriginal San, or Bushman, people of South Africa.

I wondered about the possibility of QQQ words outside of the OED. There's a Wikipedia article listing the names of various towns and geographic features in Greenland, which includes these: **Qaqortoq**, **Qeqertaq**, **Qeqertarssuaq,** and **Saqqaq**. I suspect there are dozens more in Greenland.

Another QQQ name is **Habaqquq**, a variant spelling of Habakkuk, a prophet who was active around 612 BC, whose oracles and prayer are recorded in the Book of Habakkuk, in the Hebrew Bible. The QQQ spelling appears in the Wikipedia article about Habakkuk.

QQX

It looks like the only QQX word in the OED is **superquinquesextan**, which appears in a 1916 quote at the prefix 'super-'. It seems to be a mathematical term - here's the quote where the word appears: "The progression as regards terminology may be as follows, superbitertian, supertriquartan, superquadriquintan, **superquinquesextan** and similarly in the ease of the rest."



Outside of the OED, there are a few geographical names containing QQX. I was pretty surprised to find that the first one I discovered was in Scotland, rather than somewhere obviously more foreign. The *Ordnance Survey Gazeteer of Great Britain* lists **Quilquox**, a place in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Just to prove it's not the only strange placename in the area, there are nearby places called Drumwhindle and Skilmafilly.

Here are two other geographic names containing QQX, both from slightly more exotic places than Scotland. There's **Tequixquiac** (a municipality in Mexico) and the hyphenated **Xique-Xique** (a municipality in Brazil), both appearing in Wikipedia.

QQZ

Webster's Third has the short, neat and palindromic word **Qazaq***, another name for 'Turki', any of various central Asian languages and the peoples speaking them.

Probably my favorite word in this article is the OED's **quomodocunquizing**, which it lists as an obsolete adjective meaning 'that makes money in any possible way'. The OED says it's an apparently isolated use, and gives just a single quote for the word. Writing in 1652, the Scottish writer Thomas Urquhart penned "Those **quomodocunquizing** clusterfists and rapacious varlets." I remember coming across this word in *Reading the Oxford English Dictionary: One Man, One Year* by Ammon Shea, published in 2008, where the author lists some of the more interesting words he came across while reading all 21,000-plus pages of the OED. Shea's book is well worth a read!

A shorter QQZ word is *Webster's Second*'s **zaqqum**, an infernal tree with exceedingly bitter fruit, apparently mentioned in the Koran. I'm not quite sure what an infernal tree is. Ever helpful, Wikipedia says that **zaqqum** is a tree that "springs out of the bottom of Hell".

QXX

There are very few examples of dictionary-listed words containing QXX. At its entry for 'rufigallic', the OED refers to 'rufigallic acid', a weakly acidic red crystalline substance obtained by heating gallic acid with acids. The entry goes on to provide the systematic chemical name for this acid: **1,2,3,5,6,7-hexahydroxyanthraquinone**. I don't like the use of the six digits, five commas and a hyphen, but it's better than nothing at all. I suspect a search of the chemical literature would reveal several other QXX words.

Because QXX items are so rare, I thought it worth mentioning the two-word term **Xerox queen**, listed in *Green's Dictionary of Slang*.

But for a non-dictionary word, spelled solidly, with no hyphens, commas or digits, there's **Exquitxagos**, which according to Wikipedia is a white Spanish wine grape.

QXZ

Webster's Second, *Webster's Third* and the OED all have **quixotize***, to make quixotic, idealistic, utterly impractical. In its list of words beginning 'extra-', *Webster's Second* offers **extraquiz**, but there is no definition.

The OED has **sesquioxidized**, converted into a sesquioxide, an oxide containing three equivalents of oxygen to two of another element or radical.

Also in the pages of the OED is **squeezebox**, an accordion. The OED's main entry is the hyphenated **squeeze-box**, but there is a 1963 quotation spelling the word solidly, without the hyphen: "They imagine everyone spends their time dancing to **squeezebox** music and living on Knackwurst and Apfelstrudel." The only recent dictionary which I could find listing **squeezebox** as a solid word is the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. Most other dictionaries either hyphenate the word or spell it as two separate words.

QZZ

There are plenty of QZZ words, among them **quizzed**, **quizzee**, **quizzer**, **quizzical***, **quizzify** and **quizzatorial**. I particularly like **quizzacious**. All of these can be found in the OED, and most are in familiar collegiate dictionaries.

A dictionary word containing QZZ and not beginning with quizz- is *Webster's Second*'s **Belshazzaresque**, in the manner of Belshazzar, the last crown prince of Babylon.

And then there's **quazzy**, a dialect word from south-west England meaning unwell. The word appears in *Collins English Dictionary*. This is obviously related to 'queasy'. In fact, the OED lists about thirty obsolete spellings of 'queasy', most containing a single Z, but doesn't include the two-Z **quazzy**.

Collins English Dictionary and the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged,* which both include many proper names, have **Velázquez** as a main entry, the 17th century Spanish painter.

XXX

A genuine XXX word is **hexahydroxycyclohexane***, the chemical name for inositol, a simple carbohydrate which occurs in animal and plant tissue and is a vitamin of the B group. The word appears in the *Random House Dictionary*, as well as on various online dictionary websites. This word has appeared multiple times previously in the pages of *Word Ways*.

It's probably worth noting that XXX appears in the names of various numbers, such as **six hundred and sixty-six, sixteen sixty-six**, and all sorts of combinations of number names using six, sixteen and sixty. None of these is dictionary-listed, though.

XXZ

There are a couple of XXZ words in the OED. As a main entry, there is **hexahydroxybenzene**, not clearly defined by the OED, but I suppose it's a molecule of benzene with six attached hydroxy radicals. Appearing in a 1973 quote at 'mellite', the OED has **benzenehexacarboxylic**; the quote helpfully explains "Mellite is a hydrous salt of **benzenehexacarboxylic** acid; it occurs associated with brown coal and lignite."

A name that may be familiar to many is **Exxon Valdez**, an oil tanker noted for its large oil spill in Alaska in 1989. Wikipedia provides a lot more detail about the spill.

XZZ

The OED has **fuzzbox** as a main entry, a device which imparts a buzzing quality to the sound of an electric guitar or other instrument by introducing a controlled form of distortion into the sound signal.

The OED lists the hyphenated **puzzle-text**, defining it as a person who makes a puzzle of a scripture text. The unhyphenated form **puzzletext** appears in this 1837 quote: "The petticoat **puzzletext** curtsied to her young master and retired."

The names of various chemical compounds contain the XZZ group. There's *Webster's Second*'s **azoxazole***, which is cross-referenced to 'oxadiazole', any of several organic chemical compounds.

Webster's Second has a main entry for **azoxybenzene**, a yellow crystalline compound. The OED has the same word appearing in a 1964 quote at 'azoxy'.

Webster's Second also has **azoxybenzoic**, undefined, in a short list of words beginning 'azoxy-', merely referring the reader to 'benzoic'.

The OED includes **diazobenzyloxymethyl** in a 1981 quote at 'northern' referring to a biochemical process called blotting, of which there are two types, southern and northern. Here's the 1981 quote: "An adaptation of the 'Southern' blot is the covalent attachment of fractionated RNA (or DNA) to **diazobenzyloxymethyl** paper .. in order to probe for complementary DNA sequences ('Northern' blotting)."

The OED includes **zoxazolamine** in a 1961 quote at 'sulphinpyrazone', thus: "Aspirin .. could within a few days overcome the effects for which probenecid, sulfinpyrazone, or **zoxazolamine** had been prescribed." More helpfully, Wikipedia explains that **zoxazolamine** is a muscle relaxant that is no longer marketed, having being first synthesized in 1953, introduced clinically in 1955 but subsequently withdrawn due to hepatotoxicity.

ZZZ

And so to ZZZ. There are lots of words containing ZZZ. At its main entry for the four-Z 'pizzazz' (an attractive combination of vitality and glamour; sparkle, effervescence, flashiness, showiness), the OED shows a host of variant spellings, all with just three Zs, including **bezazz**, **bzazz**, **pazazz**, **pezazz**, **pizazz**, **pizzaz** and **pzazz**.

The OED also has **zazzy** (flashy, colourful, vivid; stylish, striking), **zizz** (to make a whizzing or buzzing sound), **zizzy** (showy, spectacular, lively, uninhibited), and **Zyzzyva**, a genus of South American weevils.

Webster's Second and *Webster's Third* both have **Zyzzogeton**, a genus of South American leafhoppers.

And for my final ZZZ offering, there is this strange-looking word from the OED. In a 1980 quote at the entry 'agglutinative' is **notlazohtiachcauhtzitzihuane**. According to the quote from *National Geographic* journal: "Nahuatl at first can be as fearsome as Aztec gods; consider the agglutinative word

notlazohtiachcauhtzitzihuane, which means ‘O my beloved brothers’". While obviously not an English word, it does appear in this English language quote.

One final caveat for ZZZ: as there are plenty of ZZZ words, I have deliberately excluded those which have four or more Zs.

And a final caveat for all the combinations in this article: many more examples can be found in lists of geographic and personal names, as well as from a thorough search of Frederick Hodge’s *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, well-known for its many exotic spellings.

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(Editor’s note: As for terms containing all four of the difficult letters JQXZ, Darryl has mentioned ARJUZANXESQUE, which he coined, and the hyphenated village name ZIQ-XHAFEJ, which he discovered. In a third category, multi-word terms which are boldface terms in dictionaries, I recently noticed XINJIANG UIGUR ZIZHIQU, which the American Heritage Dictionary *translates as “Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region.” Darryl tells me that he’s collected a number of other JQXZ multi-word terms.)*

FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN "BIDEN" PALINDROMES

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In his article "Joe Biden and Wordplay" in the February 2021 issue of *Interim* (1), Darryl Francis subjected the name of the newly-inaugurated 46th U.S. president to various sorts of wordplay, including different kinds of transposals. One familiar sub-category of the transposal with which he did *not* deal was the sentence palindrome, and to remedy that omission this article presents an eminently presidential number — four score and seven — of palindromic passages which incorporate either "Biden" or "Joe Biden."

Fortunately, as the surnames of U.S. presidents go, "Biden" is unusually amenable to palindromization, due to its relative shortness and its favorable alternation of vowels and consonants. Among presidential surnames, probably only "Adams" is more readily palindromized, although Carter, who supposedly retracted a lot, is doubtless the palindromically better-known president.

Like many another successful politician and statesman, Joe Biden relies heavily upon one or more key subordinates. In Biden's case it is his faithful factotum Ned, who, as the following two-part agglomeration of "Biden" palindromes shows, is seldom found far from his chief's side. A disclaimer: Many of the situations suggested by these palindromes are patent absurdities, and are in no way intended to reflect reality; their semantical gist has usually been dictated mainly by the logic of grammar and various palindromical exigencies. (Unless, of course, one of them should happen, by some mischance, to suggest some day an actual situation, in which case it was clearly the product of perceptive palindromical prognostication!)

Alphabetical order seems as good a sequence as any in which to present the following hodgepodge of palindromic passages:

Part One: "Biden" Palindromes

…And *Edna*, Ned! I bow to two: Biden and *Edna*!

"Burned?" I banana Biden. "Rub!" (Jungle first aid?)

"Burned?" I bay. "A papaya, Biden — rub!"

"Dias? Ned?" I bang. "A salad nab! And a lasagna, Biden said!"

"Dias. Ned, I —" "Bogota coca *to go*, Biden said!" (From an NSA signals intercept transcript.)

Did, Ned, I bees see? Biden did.

"A hoot! Did, Ned, I Benin tape?" "Yep, at nine — Biden did, too." "Ha!"

“Did, Ned, I betony note?” “Biden did.”

“Did, Ned, *I* bond a Lao to a lad?” “No, Biden did.”

“Did, Ned, *I* Bonneville, urceolate yet aloe-cruel, liven?” No, Biden did.”

“Did, Ned, *I* Bonn opals slap on?” “No…Biden did.”

“Did, Ned, *I* brae brogans snag, or—“ “’Bear’ Biden did.”

“Did, Ned, *I* bray ‘O boy, a boyar!’? Biden did.”

Did, Ned, *I* brew SnazzyFizz? Answer: *Biden* did!

Did, Ned, *I* brew Snare Drum Lime Lager? I *did* — tubs! But did *I* regal Emil murder? Answer: *Biden* did!

“Did, Ned, I Brisbane’s order, eh…the ‘Red Rose,’ nab?” Sir, Biden did.”

Did, Ned, *I* “Bristle-Pan” Anan (an anana!) pelt? Sir, Biden did. (Ananas—e.g., pineapples—have a bristly appearance.)

Did, Ned, I Bristol lad Eben a cane bed allot? Sir, Biden did.

Did, Ned, *I* Bristol assess a lot? Sir, Biden did. (That would be Bristol, Connecticut, not England.)

Did, Ned, *I* Bristol blot? Sir, Biden did.

Did, Ned, *I* Bristol call a “clot”? Sir, Biden did.

Did, Ned, *I* Bristol panic in a plot? Sir, Biden did.

“Did, Ned, I bungle?” “No! Loco ‘Colonel Gnu,’ Biden, did!”

“Did, Ned, *I* burden an inane Dru?” “Biden did...”

“Dog, I’m *on*! Ned! ‘I bosses’ bosses’ bosses’ bosses’ Boston knots obsess, obsess, obsess, obsess—‘“ “O, Biden, *no!* Migod...“

“Em, no taps! *Ned!* I bailed, at <penitent.net>, inept *Adelia*!” Biden spat. On me.

“Kramer! Ned!” I blare. “Flag Ellis’s illegal ‘feral Biden’ remark!”

“Loofah” defined, I, bereaved, Ella called “Eva” ere Biden I fed. Ha, fool…

“Ned, Bismarck *cram*!” “Si, Biden.” (That would be N. Dakota’s capital—not the Iron Chancellor.)

“Ned, I banded Edna!” “*I* banded Edna, Biden!” (I.e., with engagement rings.)

Ned. I bearded Rae, Biden.

Ned? I beg a motorboat, Tao bro… To manage Biden!

Ned, I beg a motor pro to manage Biden.

Ned, I beg a motto — hot! — to manage Biden.

"Ned," I began, "a motto: 'Got to *manage* Biden!'"

Ned, I beg an ample hot tub… Wonk, I *know*! But to help manage *Biden*?...

Ned? I beheld "idol" *Claude* (eh, thee dual clod!) idle, Biden!

Ned I bemired in snide rime, Biden!

Ned I "bemuse"? Ridicule of a foe! Lucid, I resume, Biden.

Ned, I bet ades'll sedate Biden.

Ned, I bet ads for polo profs date Biden.

Ned, I bet Al ibis in Inini sibilate "Biden!"

Ned, I bet a note'd *detonate* Biden!

Ned? I blame *Kemal*, Biden.

Ned, I bet a timid, reedy deer'd imitate Biden.

Ned, I bet upsides! Ira, Stella, Cal — let's *arise*! Dispute Biden!

"Ned, I blossom!" "Sit; 'tis moss, ol' Biden."

"Ned, I *bobbed!* A man in a mad ebb! —" "O, Biden..."

"Ned!" I boom; "Never — on a manor, even — 'moo' Biden!"

Ned, I bore home Demo hero Biden!

"Ned, I boo 'Timon' ever — I do! O! *Dire* venom!" "I too, Biden."

"Ned, I Bhopal *slap*!" "Oh, Biden…"

"Ned, I Bondi did?" "No, Biden."

"Ned! I Bosnia *pay*? A pain!" "So, Biden?"

"Ned, I Boston *deified*!" "Not so, Biden."

"Ned, I Brenner banter, or Etna." "*Brenner*, Biden?" (Brenner is an Alpine pass, not a peak.)

Ned, *I* brokered ere Derek or Biden!

Ned, I broom; moor Biden.

"Ned, I Butte *deified*!" "Et tu, Biden?"

"Not *new*, Ned! Ibadan, as is, is a *nada*," Biden went on.

"Not new? Ned, I began an *age*!" Biden went on.

"Now *I*, spacer Ned, *I* began a new era," Biden recaps; "I won!"

O, "GOP Ned" I bladed—maimed. As a Dem, I *am* dedal, Biden. Pogo? (Peter Lorre part?)

"O, Ned? If a 'nob,' Ned, I Bede rede!" "*Bede* rede, Biden? Bona fide?" "…No."

"O, Nel! 'Biden' 'in' is till it's not *new*!" Bob went on. "Still, it's 'in' 'inedible,' no?

O, Nel! Biden *is* "inedible," no? (Always a conservative troglodyte in the script…)

Otto, you buoy Ned! I buoy you, Biden — you buoy Otto!

Selim's new "odes" pallae donned, I brag, "Defiant I sit, naïf Edgar!" "Biden? No deal — lapsed!" Owen smiles.

(A palla was a draped square of cloth worn by women in ancient Rome, that much I know; as for the rest...)

Sore, not stunned, I beg Agnes, "*Engage* Biden! Nuts to 'Neros'!"

"*Spins*, Ned! I 'bared a bad era!'" Biden snips.

"*Spins*, Ned! I, 'benign,' enabled a 'rad' Elban engine!" Biden snips.

"*Spins*, Ned! I 'bet a reneger,' nacred-navel Evander, can '*regenerate*'!" Biden snips.

Stunned, I began a motto: "Gewgaws — swag we got to manage Biden..." Nuts.

Part Two: "Joe Biden" Palindromes

Not only is "Biden" one of the more palindromizable presidential surnames, but Joe Biden's first and last names are probably the only ones to date among U.S. presidents that can be acceptably palindromized standing together. The palindromist's problem with duplex personal names lies not in finding any that can be acceptably palindromized — there are many such — but in finding any that belong to well-known persons. (For further discussion of the inclusion of the full names of well-known persons in palindromic passages, see the two *Word Ways* articles cited at the end of this article.) In Joe Biden's case, his first and last names together are only barely palindromizable, and only with the aid of the name of the small Ventura County, California, city of Ojai and some other helper word — one that ends in "–sia."

Ned, I be Ojai's "amor from Asia," Joe Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's e'er! Fete "Freesia Joe" Biden! (Freesia is a genus of plants.)

Ned, I be Ojai's (e.g., Lana's) analgesia — Joe Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's "en masse nippiness" amnesia, Joe Biden! ("Nippiness" is in Web3.)

Ned, I be Ojai's *orb*, man — "Ambrosia Joe" Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's pep, Sydney's yen: "Dyspepsia Joe" Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's replaced "Not nil – Clinton!" decal, "Persia Joe" Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's "reprise," yes! Eye, sir, "Persia Joe" Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's sac o' cassia, Joe Biden! (Cassia is a coarse variety of cinnamon bark.)

Ned, I be Ojai's surefire fink: devil-lived, knife-rife "Russia Joe" Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's, surely — tsar-era-style "Russia Joe" Biden!

Ned, I be Ojai's "Surf Fish," simoomish Siff "Russia Joe" Biden! ("Simoomish"–a blowhard?)

Ned! I be "Ojai's surprise," sir — "Prussia Joe" Biden!

"No Obama"— I? Ned, I be Ojai's Elisha — no, Jonah! "Silesia Joe" Biden I am — a boon!

Related Articles

1) Darryl Francis, "Joe Biden and Wordplay," *Interim Magazine* [1,1], Feb. 2021, p. 11
2) Jim Puder, "Duplex Name Palindromes," *Word Ways* [50, 4], Nov. 2017
3) Jeff Grant, "Full-Name Palindromes," *Word Ways* [23,2], May 1990, p. 88

Switching Party Allegiance

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In the US, switching allegiance between the Republican party, the Democratic party and any third party is straightforward using the grid below. The grid is a series of substitute-letter transpositions, beginning with REPUBLICAN or DEMOCRATIC or THIRD-PARTY, and then moving horizontally or vertically one cell at a time, dropping one letter and adding one new letter at each move.

UNPRELATIC	ULCERATION	CENTROIDAL	DORAMECTIN	DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLICAN				DICHROMATE
PARANUCLEI				RAMDOHRITE
CRAPAUDINE				HYDROMETRA
EPICARIDAN				TETRAHYDRO
IRRADIANCE	IRRADICATE	TRIRADIATE	DITERTIARY	TRIHYDRATE
				THIRD-PARTY

Apart from REPUBLICAN, DEMOCRATIC and THIRD-PARTY, the words are defined here:

CENTROIDAL	of or relating to a centroid; especially, passing through the centroid
CRAPAUDINE	an ulcer on the coronet of a horse
DICHROMATE	a salt of dichromic acid
DITERTIARY	doubly tertiary
DORAMECTIN	a veterinary drug for the treatment of parasites in cattle
EPICARIDAN	of the Epicaridea, a suborder of Isopoda, parasites living on crustaceans
HYDROMETRA	an accumulation of watery fluid in the uterus
IRRADIANCE	something that is emitted like rays of light
IRRADICATE	to root deeply
PARANUCLEI	additional nuclei or bodies resembling a nucleus in a cell
RAMDOHRITE	a mineral consisting of a rare compound of lead, silver, antimony, and sulfur
TETRAHYDRO	combined with four atoms of hydrogen
TRIHYDRATE	a chemical compound with three molecules of water
TRIRADIATE	having three radiating branches
ULCERATION	the process of forming an ulcer or of becoming ulcerated
UNPRELATIC	not befitting or suitable for a prelate

All the words can be found in at least one of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Webster's Second Edition*, and Wikipedia.

THE GREAT BRAIN ROBBERY

JIM PUDER

PART ONE: THE BREAKTHROUGH

Seven years ago I announced in an article in the August 2014 *Word Ways* (1) that three articles dealing with the history of palindromes which had been published in three issues of *Word Way*s in 1979 and 1980 (2), and which were attributed to Dmitri Borgmann, had not in fact been written by Borgmann. So certain was I of this conclusion, which was based upon my realization that these articles (which I'd read for the first time a few weeks before) could not possibly have been the product of Borgmann's mind, that I asserted it as a fact, not merely my opinion, even though I possessed not a single shred of physical evidence to support it. I further asserted that the articles were not just largely, but *entirely* written by someone other than Borgmann. On the basis of my considerable familiarity with Borgmann's published works, I was convinced that he had not written so much as a single sentence of any of the articles.

Having made these public allegations, I knew that I would never consider myself finished with this matter until the proof had been found which validated them. For this reason I've devoted much time over the past seven years to searching the Internet for clues to the identities of both the original document from which Borgmann must have copied the articles and of their true author, often in consultation with Tristan Miller, who joined me in searching. All that we were able to determine, however, is that the Internet held no such clues; any publication of the articles prior to their appearance in *Word Ways* had evidently never been archived to the Web.

Now, however, both of these mysteries have been unexpectedly resolved (although not by Tristan or myself). The source document of the three articles has been identified and recovered, and its author has been identified as well. He is, happily, still alive, and is, in fact much younger than had been expected, being still well under seventy. Also, inspection of the source document shows that indeed Borgmann made no changes at all to the three articles, apart from giving them false bylines, before passing them along to *Word Ways*. Thus, both of the two unproven assertions in my 2014 *Word Ways* article now stand proven. More importantly, the real author of the articles can now receive his long-denied public credit for those works, and the damage to *Word Ways'* integrity that the misrepresentation of their authorship on its pages constitutes can now be repaired.

In Part One of this article the details of the solving of this stubborn mystery, so far as they are known to me, will be reported. In Part Two, which will appear in the August *Interim*, the entire affair will be discussed with a view toward arriving at a plausible explanation of how it could ever have come about. It will not do, after all, simply to snort "Plagiarism!" and to leave matters at that. There are simply too many compelling reasons to scoff at any notion that Borgmann would have been any more likely than any other writer to try to steal authorial credit for another writer's work, especially given the hideous risk to his much-prized high reputation as the "Father of Logology" that such a mad act would have entailed — and especially not for these particular writings, which scarcely reflected his own generally disdainful views of pre-modern wordplay, which he was wont to regard as the inchoate bumblings of rank amateurs. What, then, *was*

Borgmann's motive in doing what he did? That is the principal question that Part Two will explore, if perhaps not settle to everyone's total satisfaction.

We had not, Tristan Miller and I, been searching totally in the dark for our hypothesized "true author" of the challenged *Word Ways* articles, inasmuch as the articles themselves seemingly offered a number of likely clues to his or her identity. One was that their author used the spelling "behaviour" frequently in the articles, but never "behavior." That we took to mean that he or she resided in a country that used British spellings. Furthermore, our author wrote that among prominent palindromists of the present era, "the most important British practitioners are Leigh Mercer and J. A. Lindon," suggesting that he or she was most likely a Briton, rather than, say, a Canadian or Australian. The considerable historical and cultural erudition of the articles suggested a professional scholar, probably a more senior one, and the multilingual nature of the articles' highly esoteric bibliographies further reinforced that impression, as well as suggesting a professional scholar with ease of access to a major academic research library — Oxford or Cambridge, say, or perhaps the British Library — who published papers regularly in minor academic journals. Sherlock Holmes himself, I thought, could not have improved upon this tidy profile of our mystery author that we (or rather, I— Tristan was more circumspect) had so astutely deduced from such slight clues.

Unfortunately, both Holmes and his infallible powers of deduction are only figments of someone's imagination, and neither could exist outside of the tidy but detail-poor realm of fiction, into which no influences except those which serve the purposes of the writer are permitted to intrude. The real world is much messier and detail-dense, and the clues available to the detective are usually affected in unknown ways, and to an unknown extent, by unknown and often unknowable exogenous factors. The effect of exogenous factors is to render Holmesian-style armchair deductions inherently unreliable, and indeed they conspired to invalidate my logically-deduced profile of the articles' true author in almost all of its conclusions.

To begin with, the true author, whose name is Gary Coen, is an American, not a Briton. The British spellings in the articles were caused by a fancy electric typewriter mistakenly set to correct spellings to British usage, and the "British practitioners" comment was likewise inserted into his manuscript by someone other than Coen — in this instance by *Word Ways* editor A. Ross Eckler, for reasons which will be explained later. Exogenous factors 2, deductive detective 0. Nor was Coen a seasoned scholar when he wrote these essays; rather, he was a young graduate student, and his master's thesis was the source of the three palindrome articles that Borgmann submitted to *Word Ways*. Coen's linguistic skills are accounted for by the fact that he was, in fact, a student of languages, and his ready access to arcane and uncommon reference works is explained by the fact that he became adept at utilizing inter-library loan services.

Fortunately, as things turned out my deductive acumen was not needed to resolve the mystery of the missing author; for the most part, that happy outcome must be attributed to sheer dumb luck.

Gary Coen was born in central Iowa, and when he was 12 moved with his parents to Texas, where he was to remain for the next 25 years. Graduating from high school in 1971 and from a local university in 1975, he entered graduate school at The University of Texas at Dallas, earning a Master of Arts degree in 1978. He continued his education in languages and linguis-

tics at The University of Texas at Austin, where he eventually earned a Ph.D. in Foreign Language Studies. Following a career as a computational linguist, Coen is now retired and living in Seattle.

It was while he was in graduate school at work on his master's thesis, which was entitled *The Poetics of the Palindrome*, that Coen became acquainted with Dmitri Borgmann. In August of 1977 he'd written to Martin Gardner at *Scientific American* seeking help in locating two elusive references, and Gardner had referred him to Borgmann, which initiated a correspondence between Coen and Borgmann which lasted for several months. Here is how Coen describes his postal relationship with Borgmann:

"Initially, Borgmann sent me copies of two *Word Ways* articles. Thereafter, our interaction repeated a pattern: I would pose a question (likely topics: archaeology, language, history) and Borgmann would reply with information about resources (often palindrome collections) with putatively similar interests that he offered to produce for a fee. I declined Borgmann's offers, insisting that I sought only historical and archaeological data. As a young researcher in the humanities, I spent most of my time in the university library, where I used interlibrary loan services to borrow books and journal articles from the greatest libraries in the world. With due diligence, I was able to acquire and translate the writings of French and German archaeologists and philologists as well as Greek and Latin transcriptions and commentaries. All the while, my interests were historical and philosophical, so they excluded wordplay, which was Borgmann's focus. Borgmann, never dissuaded, continued to correspond until April 1978, when I sent him a copy of my thesis along with my thanks to memorialize our communication. He replied with fiery outrage that I had ignored the materials he offered and that my thesis did not mention him at all. After this final letter, I never heard from Borgmann again."

After being awarded his MA, Coen further writes, "It is fair to say that I did not spend much time thinking about palindromes for the next forty years." Nor did he ever develop any interest in *Word Ways,* and so missed out on experiencing whatever emotions he might have felt upon seeing his master's thesis appear in print when that journal began publishing portions of it under Dmitri Borgmann's name a year and a half later. But before fading out of the picture for a number of decades, Coen did something which was to set in motion a train of events thirty-odd years later: he sent a copy of *The Poetics of the Palindrome* to Martin Gardner. Gardner replied, thanking Coen for his gift, and suggesting that he send another copy of his thesis to Ross Eckler, who would very likely want to publish portions of it in *Word Ways*. For better or worse, Coen declined to do so, and the world of logology subsequently became a more interesting place.

And here is where the "sheer dumb luck" that I mentioned previously takes a hand in this affair. If Coen had not decided to present Gardner with a copy of his finished thesis — and there was no particular reason why he should have done so — there would have been no copy of *The Poetics of the Palindrome* among the papers that Gardner donated to the Stanford University Library in 2002, and thus no copy of Coen's thesis available for finding anywhere where any researcher who would be apt to be aware of the peculiar significance of its contents would have been likely to stumble upon it. (Coen notes that his thesis has been available to the general public at the Eugene McDermott Library at the University of Texas at Dallas since 1978, but this is not a repository apt to draw the attention of the sort of researcher that I specify.) In other words, *if* Coen had

not, on some whim, sent a copy of his thesis to Gardner, and *if* Gardner had not subsequently donated his papers, this thesis among them, to research library accessible to the public, and *if* I had not, years later, disputed Borgmann's authorship of those 1979-80 *Word Ways* articles and hypothesized that they had been previously published somewhere, and *if* a seeker after information on the history of palindromes had not happened, in 2012, to search in the one place where he would be likely to come across *The Poetics of the Palindrome*, and *if* he had not, thanks to having read my 2014 *Word Ways* article, subsequently become aware of the significance of this document, it would probably never have come to light as the source of the disputed articles. Given everything that had to happen for this to occur, it seems a small miracle that it did. We have uncommon good luck to thank for this, as well as the percipience of one key individual.

Mark Saltveit, a writer whose name will be familiar to many readers, has long nurtured an interest in the history of palindromes. It is an interest, in fact, which had originally been sparked, in part, by his having discovered and read, in the early 1990s, those very same three 1979-1980 *Word Ways* "Palindromes" articles whose hypothetical prior publication was later to become the object of an intensive search. It would fall to Saltveit, through a combination of luck, alertness and familiarity with the articles, to finally discover that prior publication, although the first time he saw it he had no reason to suspect it of being anything out of the ordinary.

It was in 2012 that Saltveit first visited the Stanford Libraries' Department of Special Collections and Archives to examine its Martin Gardner Collection in search of materials relevant to his particular interest, historical accounts of palindromes and palindromists. In Box 63, Folder 22 he found numerous palindromes, articles on palindromes, articles about people who specialized in palindromes, correspondence with Leigh Mercer and J.A. Lindon, and a monograph, *The Poetics of the Palindrome*, by Gary Coen, 1977, 44p (typescript). Saltveit glanced at the monograph, made a note of its particulars, and moved on. It had been nearly twenty years since he'd read the three *Word Ways* articles cribbed from Coen's thesis, and he didn't remember them well enough to associate them with the monograph, which he'd only briefly skimmed.

Two years later in 2014, however, my *Word Ways* article denying that Borgmann could have written the three 1979-80 *Word Ways* "Palindromes" articles appeared, and at least partly because of it Saltveit read the articles again, this time with a critical eye. As he read, one thing nagged at his attention, perhaps subconsciously at first: the author of the articles used the word "poetics," a somewhat uncommon word, a *lot*, and in one place even the phrase "the poetics of the palindrome." Now where had he, not too long ago, encountered *that* word, *that* phrase … *of course!* The 44-page typescript in the Gardner Collection! I'd like to imagine Saltveit smiling to himself when he remembered this, perhaps realizing that he was having a Feynman moment, one of those storied times when it dawns on one that one knows something of significance that no one else in the world yet knows. In Saltveit's case, this was the knowledge of what the source of Borgmann's cribbed *Word Ways* articles had almost certainly been.

Saltveit himself doesn't recall experiencing any such "Aha!" moment, but his "hunch" that the paper in the Gardner Collection was indeed the sought-for document nonetheless grew stronger as time passed. It was not until 2018, however, that he had an opportunity to journey to Stanford again, where he was able to confirm his suspicion that the disputed *Word Ways* articles and *The Poetics of the Palindrome* typescript were indeed one and the same work. Correspondence

between Coen and Gardner in the same box gave him Coen's 1978 address, and from that information Saltveit was eventually able to trace Coen to his present address in Seattle.

Upon meeting with Coen shortly thereafter, the first words spoken by Saltveit might well have been, "Dr. Coen, I presume?" but they weren't. As Coen recalls, "When Saltveit and I met, his first question was 'Are you the Gary Coen who wrote The Poetics of the Palindrome?' That moment was awkward for me, since I believed then that I was the only person remaining who was familiar with that turn of phrase." According to Coen, their ensuing discussion was wide-ranging, with many things discussed, including my 2014 *Word Ways* article, which he later read "with surprise." "I did not react immediately," he recalls. "Instead, I spent months thinking about what had transpired. During that time…I encountered so many WWW (World Wide Web) pages that displayed my work with Dmitri Borgmann as the author that I resolved to set the record straight." The method by which he determined to do so was to write a book which both related his experiences with Borgmann and further developed the twin topics of his master's thesis, the history and the poetics of the palindrome. He and Saltveit agreed, apparently, that while this work was in progress neither of them would speak publicly of the Borgmann matter.

Thus it was that the rest of 2018 and most of 2019 passed and still neither Tristan Miller nor I had heard anything of Saltveit's and Coen's mutual discovery of each other. Then, in November of 2019, there arrived from out of the blue the first confirmation that either of us had ever received that we were on the right track. *Word Ways* editor Jeremiah Farrell received and forwarded to me an email which began, "Dear Jeremiah, I am writing you regarding an article by Jim Puder about the origin of Borgmann's "Palindromes" articles in 1979 and 1980. Mr. Puder concluded that this series of articles was not actually written by Borgmann. This conclusion is correct; I know the true author. I would like to contact Mr. Puder since I think he may find this interesting, as well as satisfying…"

That last may qualify as the understatement of 2019, and I lost scant time in replying to the email's sender, whom I'll call Eric. Eric is, indeed, a friend and confidant of Gary Coen, and, sensible of my situation, had out of charity decided to let me know that my claims in my 2014 *Word Ways* article were correct and in time would be vindicated. Constrained by his friend's wishes, however, he could tell me nothing more at that time. This state of affairs persisted until June of 2020, when Coen relented to the extent of offering to tell me about himself and his relations with Borgmann if I would promise to hold this information in absolute confidence until such time as he released me from my promise. I agreed to these terms, and somewhat later Coen agreed to extend his confidence to Tristan Miller on the same conditions. Finally, about a month ago, Coen concurred that the time had come to release Saltveit, Miller and myself from our confidentiality agreements, and so now this previously unreportable breakthrough in *Word Ways*' "Great Brain Robbery" scandal may at last be publicly disclosed. *[To be continued.]*

(1) Jim Puder, "Borgmann's 'Palindromes' Articles: A Joke Gone Awry?' *Word Ways* [47,3], August 2014
(2) "Dmitri Borgmann" [i.e., Gary Coen], the three articles:
(a) "Palindromes: The Rotas Square" *Word Ways* [12,4], November 1979
(b) "Palindromes: The Rotas Prehistory" *Word Ways* [13,1], February 1980
(c) "Palindromes: The Ascending Tradition" *Word Ways* [13,2], May 1980

Two Remarkable Writings on Antique Palindromes

By Mark Saltveit

I read Jim Puder's article in Word Ways about Dmitri Borgmann's possible plagiarism a couple of years after it was published. It was very striking to me because those three articles about palindrome history were the main inspiration for all of the research I've been doing for more than 25 years at this point. They were enormously influential on me.

Not long thereafter, I drove up to Seattle to help Howard Bergerson's daughter Merlla sort through his papers, and beforehand I went through a lot of my files and notes in preparation. I came to suspect that these 3 Word Ways articles were taken from Gary Coen's thesis "The Poetics of the Palindrome." (That phrase occurs in one of them.)

I had visited the Martin Gardner archives back in 2012, and Coen's thesis was on my list of items that I didn't have time to get to, and wanted to follow up on during my next visit. So after I developed my hunch, I made a point to visit Stanford the next time I was in the Bay Area, and sure enough, the three WW articles published under Dmitri Borgmann's name were basically Gary Coen's thesis, word for word. I got in touch with Gary, had a great visit in Seattle, and we continue to correspond to this day.

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[Editor's note: In 2020, while still under the impression that the unknown real author of the misattributed articles was most likely a British scholar writing in the latter part of the 20th century, Tristan Miller submitted a query — which was accepted — to the British journal Notes & Queries, *in which he asked if any reader recognized or could throw any light upon this hypothetical savant. Upon learning about this from Tristan, Mark decided to send* N&Q *a reply to Tristan's query.]*

In June, Notes and Queries is scheduled to publish my formal reply to Tristan's query, which is also a thrill for me (and kind of a metaphorical palindrome) because Notes and Queries was the other great source of palindrome research leads for me, besides the chapters of Gary's thesis.

I was living in San Francisco at the time I started the Palindromist, in the early 1990s, so I had tremendous libraries at hand – both the San Francisco Public Library and Berkeley's many libraries. I believe that both carried Word Ways as well as Notes & Queries.

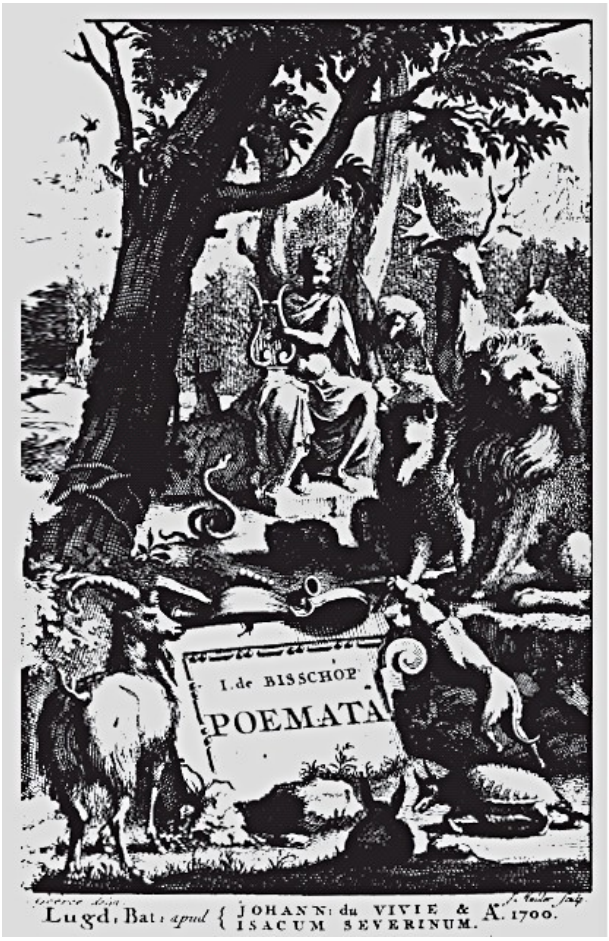
N&Q is now a scholarly journal of short, peer-reviewed scholarly notes, primarily on British literature, that's published by Oxford University Press. But its original incarnation was a sort of print-and-post version of the Internet where posh British lords dug gems out of their extensive private libraries to share, or asked and answered each others' esoteric questions on whatever random question they found interesting. It spawned

imitators in the U.S., France and Italy that I've seen, and probably in other countries as well.

There were dozens of entries about palindromes, many in Latin or Greek, including some of the earliest English-language discussions of the ROTAS / SATOR square. One from 1864 especially caught my eye; J.D. from Edinburgh described a rare book in his collection called "Chorus Musarum" by one Jani de Bisschop, published in the Netherlands in 1700.

One of the items described was a "*Melos Retrogradum* ἀγνώς϶", a Latin poem of sixty lines; each one was a separate palindrome. This became a decades-long obsession for me. After a dozen years, I was finally able to find a copy of "Chorus Musarum" at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and obtain permission to view and copy the then-305-year-old volume.

Over the years I've found seven other books that reprinted this poem and found a scholarly collaborator – retired classics professor William Berg – to translate it for me. We are now finalizing a 9,000-word academic paper about this poem and the mystery of who wrote it, which we will submit for peer review this spring.



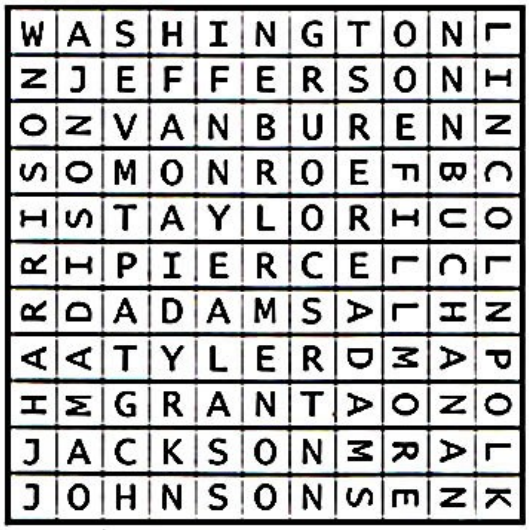


STATE AND PRESIDENTIAL SQUARE SETS II

JIM PUDER
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Amid the current efflorescence of interest in fitting presidential crosswords into smaller and smaller rectangles, a different method of packing the surnames of the U.S. presidents into one kind of rectangle — the square — may also provide some diversion. List the surnames of the presidents in chronological order, making sure that your list includes the names ADAMS, HARRISON, JOHNSON, CLEVELAND, ROOSEVELT and BUSH two times each. Keep a running count of the cumulative total number of letters in the names on your list, and note this total after each name as you add it to the list. After you've finished the list, check the cumulative totals to see if there are any square numbers among them. If you've counted and added correctly, you should find three of them: 49 after JACKSON, 121 after GRANT, and 289 after BUSH-43. An interesting geometrical question to ask is this: can the presidential names through JACKSON be packed into a 7-square, those through GRANT into an 11-square, or those through BUSH-43 into a 17-square without bending and withiut crossing one another? In the case of the 7-square, such a packing is obviously impossible, since several of the presidential names are more than seven letters long. But what about the other two squares?

I put this question to readers in my article "State and Presidential Square Sets" in the May 2004 *Word Ways* [37,2], intending to withhold the answer until someone else had found it for themselves and sent it in; no one ever has, though, and it seems pointless to wait any longer. So here is the answer and its demonstration. Yes, it is possible to pack Grant's 11-square, but only just barely; I had to puzzle over the problem for some time before finding a solution. Theoretically, it should be easier to pack larger presidential squares than smaller ones, and I found that to be true with BUSH-43's 17-square; it can be filled in simply by entering names horizontally until it becomes necessary to do some vertical name-fitting in the lower half of the grid. Here are examples of the two solutions (innumerable variations are possible):



Grant's 11-Square



Bush-43's 17-Square

Are there any interesting variations to be explored here? What if bending of the names were to be allowed? Actually, that would merely trivialize the exercise, as one could simply enter names one after another in a continuous string, making right-angle turns as necessary, in any pattern desired until the square was filled. Well, what about rectangles other than squares — anything of interest there? Possibly, but does anyone really care very much whether, say, the presidents' surnames through TYLER can or cannot be neatly packed into a 10 x 7 rectangle? Fairly or not, squares have always been considered to possess a charisma that non-square rectangles do not.

Commenting on my 2004 article, *Word Ways'* editor A. Ross Eckler wondered whether it would be possible to pack the Bush-43 17-square in an "ordered" fashion in which all adjacent names in the presidential succession sequence touch each other in the grid along the length of at least one cell. Both he and I attempted to do this, without success. I don't know how far Ross got in his attempt, but my chain ended at TRUMAN, as shown below. At that point, I'd filled in so much of the square that there was patently no way to accommodate the ten-letter name EISENHOWER in the space remaining. I greatly doubt that it's possible to fit an ordered sequence of *all* of the presidents' names into the Bush-43 17-square, but can anyone, by dint of a more clever packing than mine, extend the ordered sequence through EISENHOWER? I'd consider that a triumph.

W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N	A	D	A	M	S	J
E	H	A	R	D	I	N	G	W	I	L	S	O	N	T	E
G					R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T	A	F
D	H	O	O	V	E	R						M	C	F	F
H	N	R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T		C	L	T	E
L	L		D	T	R	U	M	A	N			K	E	H	R
O	O		L									I	V	A	S
O	C		E	L	R							N	E	R	O
C	N		I	E	U							L	L	R	N
N	H	N	F	I	H							E	A	I	A
A	L	O	R	T								Y	N	S	D
N	E	S	A	R									D	O	A
H	C	N	G	A	C	L	E	V	E	L	A	N	D	N	M
C	R	H	H	A	Y	E	S	J	A	C	K	S	O	N	S
U	E	O	G	R	A	N	T	V	A	N	B	U	R	E	N
B	H	J	H	A	R	R	I	S	O	N	T	Y	L	E	R
	P	F	I	L	L	M	O	R	E	T	A	Y	L	O	R

E	I	S	E	N	H	O	W	E	R	K	E	N	N	E	D	Y
J	O	H	N	S	O	N	N	I	X	O	N	F	O	R	D	
C	A	R	T	E	R	R	E	A	G	A	N	B	U	S	H	
C	L	I	N	T	O	N	B	U	S	H						

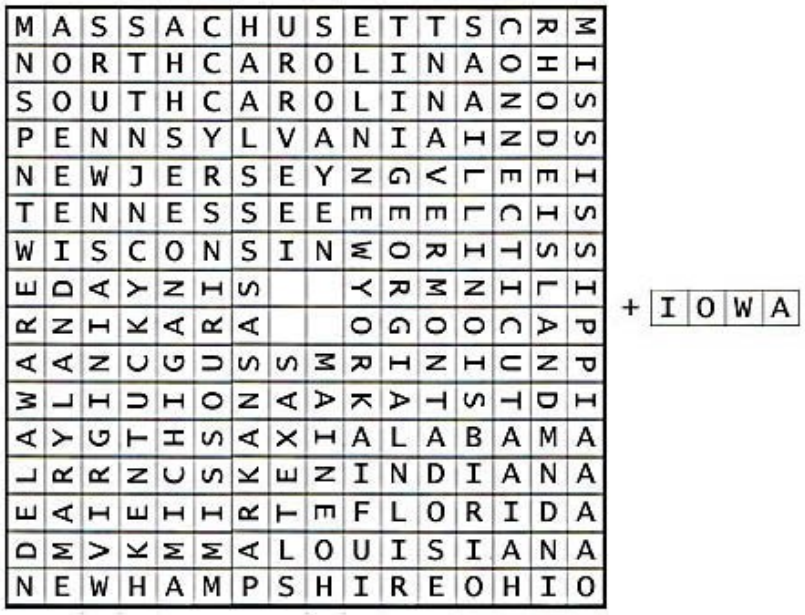
It's disappointing that it seems not quite possible to devise a complete ordered packing of presidential surnames in a 17-square, but there's hope for the future, as the task theoretically becomes easier the larger the squares get. After three consecutive 5-letter presidents since Bush-43, the cumulative letter total of the presidential sequence stands at 304. The next available square, the 18-square, will have 324 spaces in its grid, a difference of 20. Can we contrive to play our political cards in such a way that the cumulative letter total of the presidential surname succession lands exactly on 324 in, say, 2036? Onlt time will tell.

An analogous game can be played with the names of the 50 U.S. states. Like the presidents, the states can be given a chronological ordering based on their dates of admission into the Union. (For the original 13 states, the chronology is based on the dates of their ratification of the U.S.

constitution.) The accepted order of statehood of the first 30 states is: DELAWARE, PENNSYLVANIA, NEW JERSEY, GEORGIA, CONNECTICUT, MASSACHUSETTS, MARYLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, VIRGINIA, NEW YORK, NORTH CAROLINA, RHODE ISLAND, VERMONT, KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE, OHIO, LOUISIANA, INDIANA, MISSISSIPPI, ILLINOIS, ALABAMA, MAINE, MISSOURI, ARKANSAS, MICHIGAN, FLORIDA, TEXAS, IOWA, WISCONSIN.

As I mentioned in my 2004 article, historically there have been two occasions on which the total number of letters in the names of all the states in the Union was a square number. Between the admission of Louisiana as the 18th state in 1912 and Indiana's admission four years later, there was a total of 169 letters in the names of all the states, and between Wisconsin's admission as the 30th state in 1848 and California's admission two years later, there was a total of 256. In the article, I guessed that Louisiana's 13-square was probably not packable, owing to the lengthiness of many of the names in it, but thought that Wisconsin's 16-square might well be.

Recently, I decided to test these guesses. As expected, the 13-square is not packable, but I *nearly* succeeded in packing the 16-square, below. Is a complete packing of this square possible?



The number of letters in the names of the 50 present U.S. states is 411. The next available square number is 441. If the U.S. began converting its overseas territories to states, could the total statename letter-count land on 441? It *could*. If we ignore Puerto Rico and add VIRGIN ISLANDS, GUAM and AMERICAN SAMOA to the U.S. statename roster, the total number of letters in that roster will be 441. Just for fun, one might try to see how hard it is to pack a square of side 21 with the fifty real statenames plus those of these three fantasy future states. If past trends hold, it shouldn't be too difficult merely to pack the 21-square; but can it be packed, as was unsuccessfully tried with the presidential 17-square, in an historically-relevant *ordered* sequence based on the order of the states' admission to the Union? After WISCONSIN, that order is CALIFORNIA, MINNESOTA, OREGON, KANSAS, WEST VIRGINIA, NEVADA, NEBRASKA, COLORADO, NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, MONTANA, WASHINGTON, IDAHO, WYOMING, UTAH, OKLAHOMA, NEW MEXICO, ARIZONA, ALASKA,

HAWAII**.** Alternatively, an alphabetically-ordered packing might be just as meaningful, if not more so**.**

UNSUSPECTED PRESIDENTIAL VANITIES by Jim Puder (*Word Ways*, May, 2005)

"Mr. President, had you never served in public office, what would you be best known for today?"

George Washington: "My hit song, 'Waggoneer!'"
John Adams: "My jam-on-shad."
Thomas Jefferson: "My fame? Softer johns."
James Madison: "My joss-man I made."
James Monroe: "Me? My major nose."
John Quincy Adams: "My joy — *quad chins*, man!"
Andrew Jackson: "My 'Cajan Ken' sword."
Martin Van Buren: "My *Burnt Vermin* ana."
William Henry Harrison: "My hairy men's ill-worn hair."
John Tyler: "My 'Henry jolt.'" (I.e., his electrical shock; after electrical pioneer Joseph Henry.)
James Knox Polk: "My 'Polk's Manx joke.'"
Zachary Taylor: "My crazy 'royal' hat."
Millard Fillmore: "Me, I *am* my droll frill."
Franklin Pierce: "My pink fern 'Claire.'"
James Buchanan: "My Cuban 'hen' 'jamas."
Abraham Lincoln: "My 'banal lion' charm."
Andrew Johnson: "My shorn jaw, end-on."
Ulysses Simpson Grant: "My *Messy Sarongs Nip Lust*."
Rutherford Birchard Hayes: "My brother Ed's 'hard chair' fury."
James Abram Garfield: "My brief marmalade jags."
Chester Alan Arthur: "My *A Churl's Earthen Art*."
Grover Cleveland: "My clever 'Groveland.'"
Benjamin Harrison: "'Jasmine,' my rhino barn."
William McKinley: "My wily *Limekiln Mac*.'"
Theodore Roosevelt: "My *Shoe Tree Lover* to-do."
William Howard Taft: "O! My wild 'fat mail' wrath!"
Thomas Woodrow Wilson: "Oh, my *town!* Warm wood silos!"
Warren Gamaliel Harding: "Hard…My gaming warren, Leila?"
John Calvin Coolidge: "My jovial conch, 'Goldine.'"
Herbert Clark Hoover: "My *Herbal Rocker* throve…"
Franklin Delano Roosevelt: "My dark *Flint Loon* verse alone…"
Harry S Truman: "My marshy rat run."
Dwight David Eisenhower: "I? My overweight Wendish dad."
John Fitzgerald Kennedy: "Oh, my rank, dented, jingly fez!"
Lyndon Baines Johnson: "My old 'nanny' job shines on…"
Richard Milhous Nixon: "My rich, loud mini-saxhorn."
Gerald Rudolph Ford: "Ralph, my old furred dog."
James Earl Carter: "My jam-salter career."
Ronald Wilson Reagan: "My role in 'Law and Organs.'" *[See the Colloquy comment on this article.]*

KICKSHAWS

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Welcome to the first of *Interim*'s Kickshaws columns. The editor is looking for additional Kickshaws compilers, so get in touch if you want to want to compile a future Kickshaws. The first Kickshaws in *Word Ways* appeared in February 1970 (volume 3 number 1), edited by Dave Silverman. *Word Ways* had no Kickshaws sections during its first two years, 1968 and 1969, but they then appeared in every edition of the journal from February 1970 to November 2017, a total of 204 Kickshaws.

The word **kickshaws** derives from the French **quelque chose**, meaning 'something'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) has a variety of alternative spellings for **kickshaws** and lists various illustrative quotations. The earliest quotation is dated 1598, when it appears in the original French form **quelque chose**. A couple of years later in 1600, Shakespeare used the spelling **kick-shawes** in *Henry IV, Part 2*:

> "A ioynt of mutton, and any pretty little tinie Kick-shawes."

Two decades further on (1623), the Bard used the word in *Twelfth Night*, albeit with a different spelling:

> "Sir Andrew Aguecheek says: I delight in Maskes and Reuels sometimes altogether. Sir Toby Belch replies: Art thou good at these kicke-chawses Knight?"

The word has become imbued with a variety of slightly different meanings over the centuries - a fancy dish in cookery, a tidbit, a delicacy, a toy, a fantastic person, something dainty or elegant, but unsubstantial or comparatively valueless. I was wondering about the existence of derivative forms - the OED has **kickshawed**. I tried a Google search and found the surprisingly named **kickshawaii** website, but it turned out this was a site about how and where to get entertainment and shopping kicks in Hawaii!

One last comment on **kickshaws** before moving on – with the addition of a Y, it can be transposed to **whisky cask** and **cask whisky**, both of which be found on the internet with a Google search.

Back to the OED - the online version (www.oed.com) was updated in December 2020 with **Covid**, **Covid-19** and several variant forms. But the word **covid** has been in the OED since its first publication back in the 19th century. It's an obsolete Anglo-Indian word dating back to the 17th century. It was a lineal measure formerly used in India, its length varying, at different places and times, from 14 to 36 inches. As one of my friends commented, it's not surprising it became obsolete given such a variation in its length. The excellent volume *Hobson-Jobson*, snappily subtitled *A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases and of Kindred Terms*, was first published in 1903, but is still in print. Amazon has hardback, paperback and Kindle versions available. Anyway, it has a lengthy entry for **covid**, again pointing out the variation in its length, and different items it was used for measuring, such as silk, cloth and even the pillars of a

massive tomb. *Hobson-Jobson* has illustrative quotations, just like the OED, its earliest being dated 1612. The 1612 quotation, using the variant spelling **covad**, runs thus:

> "A long **covad** within 1 inch of our English yard, wherewith they measure cloth, the short **covad** is for silks …"

The reason I mention this is because the **long covad** (or **long covid**, if the regular spelling had been used) is eerily similar to the pandemic's **long Covid**, a term used for the long-term effects of coronavirus. The OED's March 2021 update is available online, but didn't get round to including **long Covid**. The term can be found, though, in various online dictionaries including the OED's sister website www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com.

From **Covid** to **pandemic** … I note that **pandemic** can be transdeleted down to one letter. Here's one transdeletion sequence, although there are many others:

pandemic pemican cinema manic main man an a

If you don't like the one-M spelling of **pemican** (although it's valid in *Webster's Third*), replace it with *Webster's Second*'s **diceman**, the dice equivalent of a card-sharp. But what about transadditions of **pandemic**? How many letters can be successively added and transposed to give valid words, names or terms? Here's one sequence I managed to build up to 16 letters long, all words in *Webster's Second* or *Webster's Third*:

pandemic companied incompared macropodine pomacentroid pomacentroids pseudoromantic pseudo narcotism pseudo narcotisms

If you don't like the last two multi-word terms, just ignore them. But maybe an S could be added to **pseudoromantic** to make the 15-letter **pseudoromantics**. Dictionaries both printed and online invariably show **pseudoromantic** as an adjective only, but good old *Webster's Second* simply shows the word without a part-of-speech label in a list of words beginning **pseudo**, a mixture of adjectives and nouns. And since **romantic** can be a noun, why can't **pseudoromantic** also be a noun, allowing for the plural form **pseudoromantics**?

I mentioned above the OED's March 2021 update. This added about 1400 new words to the online dictionary, as well as adding new definitions for existing words. Here are just a few of the new words along with definitions:

- **boxwork**: in geology, a lattice-like structure of thin blades of a mineral, typically calcite, deposited in cracks in limestone or other rock
- **chindogu**: an invention that, while innovative and perhaps ingenious, is of little or no use in the real world, typically created for fun
- **dingolay**: to dance in an exuberant or uninhibited way; also more generally, to twist or turn one's body
- **greeze**: a large, satisfying meal; also more generally, food
- **kirana**: groceries and household provisions; frequently as a modifier in kirana goods, kirana merchant, kirana store, etc
- **serveware**: items used for serving food and drink, regarded collectively
- **toyetic**: of a film, television programme, cartoon character, or the like, that lends itself to the marketing of related merchandise, such as toys and games
- **wrinch**: to reprimand, rebuke, scold

- **zinester**: a person who writes for or produces a zine

Over the years, *Word Ways* has featured a range of articles about supervocalic words, those using just one each of the vowels A, E, I, O and U. While there are hundreds of examples, here are just five: **jailhouse businesswoman discourages gregarious barrelhousing**. But intrepid hunters of supervocalic words, names and terms have set up a Facebook group dedicated to finding and highlighting new examples. Here are just a few which have been posted to the group earlier this year:

- **bluejoint grass**: a type of grass found in north America
- **Julia Letlow**: a US congresswoman
- **Paul Scofield**: an English actor who won an Oscar, Emmy and Tony
- **Simon & Garfunkel**
- **Sticky Ass Glue**: an adhesive product
- **The Fulbright Program**: the US government's educational and cultural exchange program, named after Senator William Fulbright

I recently added a couple of characters from Charles Dickens novels to the list:

- **Lucretia Tox:** an admirer of Mr Dombey in *Dombey and Son*
- **Montague Tigg**: a rogue in *Martin Chuzzlewit*

And here are three characters from Shakespeare plays:

- **Artemidorus**: a diviner in *Julius Caesar*
- **Duke of Milan**: Silvia's father in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*
- **Faulconbridge**: the surname of various characters in *King John*

Readers are encouraged to visit the supervocalics group on Facebook and maybe even make contributions to the ever-growing list of supervocalic names and terms.

Staying with supervocalics for a while, what about number names which only use one each of the vowels? Answers depend on whether the word **and** is used or not. For example, the number 123 could be written as **one hundred twenty three** or **one hundred and twenty three**, although neither is a supervocalic. Without making use of **and**, the lowest supervocalic number is **five thousand**. But once **and** is allowed to feature, the lowest supervocalic number is **two hundred and six**.

For even more on supervocalics, check out Eric Chaikin's great article *All Vowel All Stars – Supervocalics for Every Permutation* on the superb Beyond Wordplay website (beyondwordplay.com). There's plenty of other fascinating wordplay material on this very attractive website. Here are a couple more plugs, one for a book and one for a museum. The book is *Reading the OED: One Man, One Year, 21,730 Pages*, by Ammon Shea. It's an obsessive word lover's account of reading the entire *Oxford English Dictionary*. "I'm reading the *OED* so you don't have to", said Ammon Shea on his masochistic journey through the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In 26 chapters (one for each letter of the alphabet) filled with sharp wit, Shea shares his year inside the *OED*, delivering a hair-pulling, eye-crossing account of reading every word. Here are just a few of the words which Shea writes about as having caught his fancy:

- **cellarhood**: the state of being a cellar

- **elozable**: readily influenced by flattery
- **jettatore**: a person who is bad luck
- **obdormition**: the falling asleep of a limb
- **quisquilious**: of the nature of garbage or trash
- **zoilus**: an envious critic

The museum worthy of a plug here is Planet Word in Washington DC. The museum's mission statement says "Planet Word will inspire and renew a love of words, language, and reading in people of all ages. Through unique, immersive learning experiences, we provide a space to explore words and language that is grounded in a solid understanding of language arts and science." There's a whole lot more information at planetwordmuseum.org. The museum has been closed through the pandemic (there's that word again!), but reopened on April 1. I'm 3000 miles away from DC, so not much chance of visiting the museum in the near future, but I have joined in on a couple of web-based events which the museum hosted during the pandemic. Ben Zimmer also gave the museum great write-ups in Beyond Wordplay.

Below is a 4 x 4 grid of letters. Each column and row in the grid makes a valid four-letter word in Scrabble:

BEAN
ETNA
LUTE
TIES

If each letter in the grid is scored according to its point value as a Scrabble tile, then the total value of the grid is 18 points. What is the highest scoring 4 x 4 grid that can be made? UK Scrabble player Vince Boyle has come up with the following effort for 55 points:

WAQF
AJAR
KADI
FRIZ

Two of the words, **WAKF** and **WAQF**, appear in *Collins Official Scrabble Words*, but the others are all in Merriam-Webster's *Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (6th edition).* But both **wakf** and **waqf** are in *Webster's Third*. Any advance on the 55 point solution?

It was 50 years ago that *Word Ways* announced my discovery of the 14-letter pair isogram **Taeniodontidae**, the scientific name of a family of early mammals related to modern-day sloths, armadillos, anteaters and aardvarks. A pair isogram is a word in which each different letter occurs twice. **Scintillescent** is the only other known 14-letter pair isogram. I can now announce the discovery of a 16-letter pair isogram, but it needs some explanation first. *Webster's Second* lists the word **Micromastictora**, a now-disused zoological term for a division of sponges. Unfortunately for logologists, the word is shown as 'noun plural', meaning you can't just stick an S on it and claim it's the term's plural. However, you could add an apostrophe and an S to indicate the possessive form – thus: **Micromastictora's**. What can other dictionaries tell us about the word? Neither *Webster's Third* nor the OED lists the word, but *The Century Dictionary* does list it, and while it goes into more detail than *Webster's Second*, it still unfortunately shows the word as 'noun plural'. Same goes for my 1947 Funk & Wagnall's –

'noun plural'. But if you want to see the apostrophized word spelled out somewhere other than this edition of *Interim*, check out this webpage which lists rhymes for 'oras': rhymebox.com/rhyme/en/strict/end/oras/page/1/

Other 16-letter pair isograms do exist, but are invariably multi-word terms or phrases. One I particularly like is **Florence, California**, a community often considered as part of South Los Angeles. I'll hold the other long pair isograms over for a future *Interim* article.

One of my two dogs is called Alfie - that sequence of five letters only occurs in one common uncapitalized word. Can you figure it out? I used to live on a street called **The Sands** – what's the everyday word which is a transposal of that name?

Here are a couple of items about US vice-presidents. Which US president's name also contains the surname of one of his vice-presidents? The longest word which can be spelled out from the letters of new vice-president **Kamala Devi Harris** is **adversarial**, a particularly appropriate word given her previous roles of attorney general and district attorney in California.

Anil sent this kickshaw about what he calls 'happy typos'. **Typo** as a typo of **type** is a type of happy typo, one which resonates with if not means the same as the wronged word. There are many happy typos, especially single-letter substitutions or deletions where both are words. Anil's been collecting both and presented several definitive single-letter substitutions, which he calls "word stools" or single-step word ladders, in *Word Ways* (volume 35, number 4) – for example, **add**/**and**, **too**/**two**, **ban**/**bar**, **sip**/**nip**, **wear**/**gear**, **quelled**/**fuelled** (the last pair being antonyms), and several beheadments called "cheater's coincidental selfish synonyms" in *Word Ways* (volume 37, number 2) – for example, **brim**/**rim**, **chunk**/**hunk**, **crumple**/**rumple**, **factual**/**actual**, **hedge**/**edge**, **zax**/**ax.** For a longer one: **predetermination**/**redetermination**, or numerous other pre-/re- pairs. But what inspired this kickshaw was finding a typo where the misprint isn't a word but nonetheless is a credible coinage and a synonym, namely, **offsprig**. If it were a word, **offsprig** would mean offspring, the same as sprig, a family descendant. It arose as an actual typo and is used in his *Earwig and Pig* poem in his upcoming book *101 Animal Universes*. Sprig and spring are not related. Indeed, being unrelated is a requirement of a good happy typo. So his opening **typo**/**type** happy typo is not good, since **typo** and **type** are related, but all the other examples above are unrelated except the long **pre-/re-** one.

Louis Phillips sent a variety of wordplay items:

- "I am late because I twisted my ankle," said Tom, offering another lame excuse.
- "I hate H_2SO_4" Tom said. There was acid in his voice.
- "I'll never forget the time those college students mooned me," Tom said with hindsight.
- "Want to go out and drill holes?" "Naaah. Too boring."
- "Want to see the Billy Wider film *Fedora*?" "Naaah. It's old hat."
- **Laborawhig** – the opposite of **laboratory**.
- **DJ vu**: The feeling you've heard the same songs being played over and over again.

Louis also sent this:

Norman Rockwell
Could paint a summer frock well.
At least his women did not have three eyes
As in paintings by some other guys.

And another from Louis:

Those who seized Caesar's scissors
Were Caesar's scissors' seizers.
Various sizes were Caesar's scissors
And they who seized Caesar's scissors of various sizes
Live across the seas, near Suez, sez Caesar.

Don Nilsen wrote to remind us of the "original" meanings of a deck of playing cards:

- The 52 cards are for 52 weeks in the year.
- The 4 suits are for the 4 seasons.
- The 13 cards in each suit are for the 13 weeks in each season.
- The 12 court cards represent the 12 months.
- The 2 colors are for day and night.
- Adding each of the cards' numerical values (ace = 1, 2-10 = face values, jack = 11, queen = 12, king = 13) gives a total of 364; add a joker = 1 for an ordinary year of 365 days, and add two jokers =2 for a leap year of 366 days.

There are 118 elements in the periodic table. If you assign the usual letter values used in Scrabble to the letters of the element names, you can derive a total figure for each element. For example, HYDROGEN equals 4+4+2+1+1+2+1+1, for a total value of 16. Can you figure out the elements with the highest total? There are three of them with the equal highest value. Only one element out of the 118 has a total equal to its atomic number. Can you figure that out? You might need to call up the periodic table from the internet to check the atomic numbers. Also, to avoid any confusion over the spellings of the element names, use those approved by IUPAC, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry - this means aluminium, caesium and sulfur, and not their alternative spellings.

Answers to Kickshaws items:
Alfie is in **coalfield**
handsets is the transposal of **The Sands**
Abra**ham Lin**coln contains the surname of vice-president Hannibal **Hamlin**
Elements with the highest Scrabble total (22) are praseodymium, rutherfordium and zirconium
The element with a Scrabble total equal to its atomic number is aluminium (13)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CLUES

LOUIS PHILLIPS

Crossword puzzles entered the world in December 1913 when Arthur Wynne published a Word Cross Puzzle in the *New York World Sunday Magazine*. It was a simple enough puzzle but the puzzle was popular and evolved into nu-merous forms and variations. In fact, all authors who publish with Simon & Schuster and their attendant readers should be grateful to crossword puzzles, because the first book they put into the marketplace was the *Crossword Puzzle Book*, edited by Margaret Farrar. Published on April 10, 1924, the book includ-ed a Venus pencil and a Venus eraser contained in the edging slot and sold for $1.35. Much of this information can be found in Ms. Farrar's introduction *to Across and Down: Inside the Crossword Puzzle World*, by the ex-crossword puzzle editor of the New York Times, Eugene T. Maleska (NY: Simon & Schus-ter, 1984.)

Ms. Farrar tells us that that first crossword book went through ten printings: "It was still 1924, and it seemed right and proper to prepare what no one had expected, a Second Series. This one sold 110,000 copies. First printing of the Third Series was 40,000, in time for the 1924 Christmas market. On a single December day, over 150,000 books were sold.

The first puzzles in the 1924 books were not complex. According to Margaret Farrar, "The first puzzle in the first book of 1924 was supposed to be an easy problem, an 11 x 11 grid carrying fifty words, many of them very short. Two eleven-letter words crossing each other was a startling feat at the time."

Well, puzzles standard and cryptic have come a long way since that first Simon & Schuster collection. As many readers of Interim know, crossword puzzles are a frequent source of wordplay with a ? in a clue (usually at the end) indicating a pun is needed for the answer. Certainly the newer and more complicated crossword puzzles (especially cryptic crosswords, with anagrams, reversals, verbal rebuses, multi-word phrases and other wordplay) are a far cry from the earliest generations of puzzles. In addition,, there are new interests, and an entire new galaxy of popular culture, history, and scientific discoveries for puzzle constructors to draw upon.

For some time I've collected crossword puzzle clues that have tickled my fancy (whatever that is), and in this article would like to share a few of these with fellow wordplay enthusiasts. Here we go - eight clues with answers as well, to get you thinking about how the answers were arrived at:

Hearts that don't beat very much? (5) (by Timothy Polin) (answer: treys, another word for threes in a deck of cards, which can beat only deuces)

Home squatters? (4) (by Ross Trudeau) (answer: umps, short for umpires)

Group that's on the take? (6,4) (by Jaeh Pahk) (answer: camera crew, punning "take")

Most things on it might be taken as a matter of course? (4) (by Frank Lewis) (answer: menu, punning "course"

Hairstyle for a gunslinger? (5) (by Andrew Zhou) (answer: bangs)

Helps for short people, for short? (4) (by Ori Brien) (answer: ATMs – think about it!)

What a historical librarian might do? March this way, perhaps. (4,4) (by Frank Lewis) (answer: file past)

Who rapidly shared stage with dancer (6) (by Eugene T. Maleska) (answer: Dasher [transposal of "shared"], reindeer partner of Dancer)

Now here are ten more cryptic clues in the same vein, all devised by Frank Lewis, which appeared in *The Nation* in 1974 and 1975. The answers are given at the end of the article.

1. Was its rubber worth a fortune, possibly? (8)

2. Where a little green might be found, and nothing unchanged (5)

3. But Ophelia never got herself there (7)

4. Like a circle of three blind mice (5)

5. Given new heart, and managed to get one acre dug (10)

6. Certain, as suds are (7)

7. A battering ram pushes a killer inside (7)

8. Proving a detective should be half naval hero and half craftsman (5,5)

9. In the Tuileries, you might have a good case for sewers (4)

10. Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, according to the titles (9,5)

Of course, crossword puzzle constructors (also called "setters") sometimes get complaints about the fairness of their clues or the accuracy of their answers. But as Jeremy Howard-Williams advises in his book *The Complete Cryptic Cross-word Companion* (NY: Harper & Row, 1984), the novice solver would be wise to "distrust every word in a clue, because the puzzle setter's aim is to say one thing while meaning another. Once the ruthless nature of the setter has been established, the solver is halfway towards success. The master-craftsman of the setting world is devious, inventive, clever, impudent, and extremely cun-ning, but always scrupulously fair (well, nearly always)."

Bearing that reassurance in mind, the reader is invited to tackle this further set of ten cryptic crossword clues:

11. Proving Tom is sort of wet (5)

12. The part of London where the rough sea has to take care of things (4,3)

13. The king of fairyland has a funny-looking robe on (6)

14. A Kipling character soon becomes a problem, when appears in oriental costume (6)

15. In Kenya and in the open air, obituaries make it obvious (7)

16. Running it might be dangerous, but throwing it down is a real challenge (8)

17. Give another name to the end of the quarrel with Adam's son (7)

18. Quite a few purposes for flowers here (7)

19. You are looking for Mrs. Goosey's husband: do this, or at least look this way (4,1,6)

20. This is nothing to certain court protagonists (4)

What is the best cryptic clue and answer of all time? Well, there must be thousands of different opinions on that question, but here is one worthy contender for the championship, as recorded by Marc Romano in his memoir, *Crossworld: One Man's Journey into America's Crossword Obsession* (NY: Broadway Books, 2005). "Nick Smith, a follower of puzzles in *The Manchester Guardian*, wrote to the Guardian about what he considered to be 'the best crossword clue ever':

"Consider two pieces of information that would have been readily available to Guardian readers such as Nick at the time. The first is that in 2000, 13 years after he told it, Jeffrey Archer's lie about Monica Coughlan came back to haunt him. The second is that, before his subsequent trial and conviction, Archer retired from the public eye and took refuge in the Old Vicarage, Grantchester.

"And so to the clue: 'Poetical scene has surprisingly chaste Lord Archer vegetating (3,3,8,12).' The answer is 'The Old Vicarage, Grantchester,' a 'surprising' anagram of 'chaste Lord Archer vegetating,' or as Nick Smith put it to me, 'the most perfect clue, probably the best ever.'"

I wonder how many *Interim* readers would be able to solve that clue today.

Editor's note: Or even present-day Guardian *readers, for that matter. Can any reader suggest a cryptic crossword clue and answer that surpasses in niftiness the* Guardian's *uncommonly apt Archer anagram?*

ANSWERS

1. Aladdin's lamp
2. Oasis (nothing, as is — i.e., nothing unchanged)
3. Nunnery (Hamlet tells her "Get thee to a nunnery")
4. Round (a circle is round, and "Three Blind Mice" is sung as a round)
5. Encouraged (anagram of "one acre dug")
6. Assured (anagram of "as suds are")
7. Grampus (found inside the sentence: "battering ram pushes")
8. Perry Mason (Perry as in Oliver Hazard Perry, renowned American naval commander)
9. Etui (a run-on – the Tuileries; an etui is a small needle case)

10. Adventure Story (The correct titles are *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*)

[Editor's note: Darryl Francis takes issue with the answer provided for this clue:

The clue reads "Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer according to the titles (9,5)." And Louis' answer is "Adventure Story." I assume the clue and answer were those originaly used in *The Nation*, and not created by Louis. I don't have any problem with the 9-letter word being "Adventure," as that clearly appears in the titles of the two books. But why should the 5-letter answer word be "story"? It could just as easily be "tales" or "books." It could even be argued that the 5-letter answer word is something like "mates" or "chums," as the clue only refers to their names. Indeeed, since the clue refers to *two* characters, it makes more sense for the 5-letter answer word to be a plural, so I'd claim "books"and "tales" were better choices than "story." Crossword clues should lead the solver to a demonstrable correct answer – they shouldn't have to guess that it's this word or that word. Probably not a very good choice of clue and answer to demonstrate how cryptic crossword clues (and answers) work. Here endeth the lesson!

Agreed—something in the wording of the clue should have clued the word "story," if that was the second word wanted. For the record, the complete titles of the two books are "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer."]

11. Moist (anagram of "Tom is")
12. East End (eas, "sea" reversed, + tend, "take care")
13. Oberon (anagram of "robe on")
14. Kimono ("Kim? O, no!")
15. Nairobi ("open air, obituaries")
16. Gauntlet
17. Relabel (end of "the quarrel" + Abel)
18. Lotuses (lot[s of]uses)
19. Take a gander
20. Love (to tennis players)

WAILING AGAINST THE SINNED
A Spoonerism Anniversary Tribute, Plus New Specimens

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A good name for a cow might be "Terry Moo." Then, if the farm were invaded by a platoon of rebellious and carnivorous soldiers, we would witness *a military coup to kill a Terry Moo*.

That strikes me as an appropriately silly example to commemorate an important event: This year marks the 30th anniversary of *Cruel and Unusual Puns,* my spoonerism/transposition book. It was a volume in the "Intrepid Linguist Library," a series of Dell paperbacks on various aspects of language, both serious and amusing.

My "fine couth tome" went through two printings, totaling 40,000 copies. I assume most were purchased because I didn't receive the dreaded call from my editor, reporting that unsold copies were about to be "pulped," as happened with my second wordplay book!

C&UP was reviewed widely and, aside from the cavils of one or two curmudgeons, favorably. My efforts and that of the publisher generated considerable publicity: an Associated Press review in a multitude of newspapers, an author interview on NPR's prestigious *All Things Considered*, other coverage in print media and on radio and TV, and assorted speaking/signing appearances. Though the book is now out of print, used copies are available for a few dollars via Amazon and other sites.

Over the following three decades, I wrote 20 articles on the subject for *Word Ways*, and now, here's another for *Interim*. I probably have enough material for a sequel.

Below, a bevy of new original coinages. Well, I thought they were all original when I dreamed them up. But, as sometimes happens, I wasn't first in every case. See credits at end for my usual notes on antecedents and attributions. Diligent Googling, however, turned up duplications in only a few instances.

- Potentially bestselling diet book: *Get Your Lard Down.*
- Complaint about messy children: *They track muck like a Mack truck.*
- Postprandial Thanksgiving query: "*Is there room in the adult?*"
- Poignant memoir of a troubled rural childhood: *Whelp is on the Hay!*
- Documentary investigating kids' excessive internet use: *Screen Time: Teen's Crime*?

- Another scathing doc on puppy mills: *The Lies of the "Aww!"*
- Still another about nursing facilities: *Wait Till Your Home Gets Father.*
- Life-changing self-help book: *Wending Your Maze and Mending Your Ways.*
- Gossipy restaurant-industry exposé: *Tattle of the Bitin's.*
- Provocative proverb: "*It is better to trust one's gut than to gut one's trust."*
- Rules for medieval role-playing online game: *1. Say "liege." 2. Lay siege.*
- Enticing name for lawn-care company: *Basher Of Rakin'.*
- BBC News alert: *Top Story: "Stop Tory."*
- Witches' kitchen-supply company: *Coal Ovens for Ol' Covens.*
- Acolytes' tribute to Marie Kondo: "*At your neat, I feel.*"
- Scandalous political thriller: *Polls are Surging and Souls are Purging.*
- Gold Rush miners' prayer: "*He who sieves by the Lord. . . .*"
- Advice for domestic-abuse victims: *Heave the louse!*

Harris Glenn Milstead (1945-1988) was a drag performer and cult-movie actor who used the stage name Divine. Had he been canonized and then patronized prostitutes, he would have been known as *St. Divine the John*.

It's uncanny, yet canny: Today, the appeal of spoonerisms and transposition puns continues unabated. In Dan Piraro's Feb. 17, 2021 "Bizarro" syndicated comic strip, a resplendent king (why not queen?) is presented with his "slip and pipers." Perusing *The New York Times*, I spotted these three specimens: "In rural India, people still cast their votes by voting their caste." Campaign by a plastics-industry association: "Bag the Ban." Philanthropist and ballet impresario Rebecca Harkness, on the spacious mansion she inhabited: "Well, it's not home, but it's much."

CREDITS: Screen Time: posted on Reddit by yank.eh, 2020. Tory: tweet by Stefan Linnemann, in response to a UK Sunday Times article, 2017. Louse: on several sites, including the spooneristic shigbam.wordpress.com, 2020. St. Divine: One match, with almost the identical setup, in a post on gothamist.com, 2014, by a commenter who goes by Rob T Firefly. For sending me the "Bizarro" cartoon, thanks to Susan Thompson, Orange, Ca.

The Fewest Elements Containing 24 Letters

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The names of the 118 chemical elements do not contain a single J or Q. But all the other 24 letters are present. So, here's a little puzzle. What is the fewest number of element names which contain all those 24 letters?

Probably the best way to start is to pick off element names with letters which don't occur frequently. There are only two elements with a Z – ZINC and ZIRCONIUM. So it would seem sensible to choose ZIRCONIUM to begin the list of names, because in addition to the letters of ZINC it also uses ROUM.

There is only one element with a W in its name – LAWRENCIUM. (I am ignoring WOLFRAM, as its scientific name is TUNGSTEN.) So the embryonic list now stands at:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM

There are only two elements containing the letter X – OXYGEN and XENON. Since the letters of XENON appear in OXYGEN, it makes sense to add OXYGEN to the list, as it's mopping up YG, too. The list now looks like this:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN

Another tricky letter to deal with is K, present only in NICKEL, KRYPTON and BERKELIUM. The NICEL of NICKEL are already present in the ZIRCONIUM/LAWRENCIUM/OXYGEN group, so no need to select NICKEL. Is it better to choose KRYPTON or BERKELIUM to add to the growing list? KRYPTON would mop up KPT; while BERKELIUM would only mop up BK. Let's choose to add KRYPTON to the list, which now looks like this:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON

There are now only six letters not represented – BDFHSV. Two of the more clunky of these, F and V, can be picked off by adding FLEROVIUM to the list, now standing at:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON FLEROVIUM

Only four letters unaccounted for now – BDHS. Three of those can be taken care of by selecting BISMUTH as the next addition to the list, thus:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON FLEROVIUM BISMUTH

Only D remains unrepresented, so choose the shortest element name with a D, LEAD. The final list using 24 letters is now:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON FLEROVIUM BISMUTH LEAD

That's all 24 letters contained in seven element names, which contain a total of 52 letters.

A further question arises: can the total of 52 letters be reduced? It can be seen that, apart from the Z, all the other letters of ZIRCONIUM exist in the names of the other six elements, so ZIRCONIUM can be swapped out and replaced with ZINC. This is obviously contrary to the first choice made of ZIRCONIUM over ZINC. The list now looks like this:

ZINC LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON FLEROVIUM BISMUTH LEAD

That's still seven element names, but now reduced to a total of 47 letters.

But let's backtrack. Once the following stage was reached:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON

the letters BDFHSV were still unaccounted for. FLERVOVIUM was then selected because it contained the awkward letters FV. Suppose instead that HAFNIUM was selected, leaving BDSV still to be tackled. The set of elements would now look like this:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON HAFNIUM

Now only BDSV are unaccounted for. These can be picked off by selecting SILVER and DUBNIUM. The full set of names is now this:

ZIRCONIUM LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON HAFNIUM SILVER DUBNIUM

Once again, the final set is seven elements (no change there, then) and the total number of letters used is 52. But once again, ZIRCONIUM can be swapped out and replaced by ZINC. Now the set looks like this:

ZINC LAWRENCIUM OXYGEN KRYPTON HAFNIUM SILVER DUBNIUM

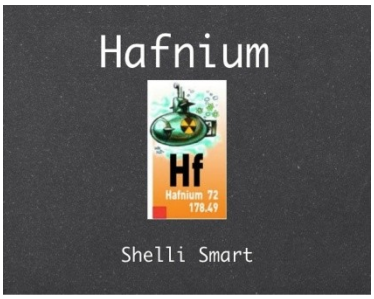
That's seven elements and 47 letters.



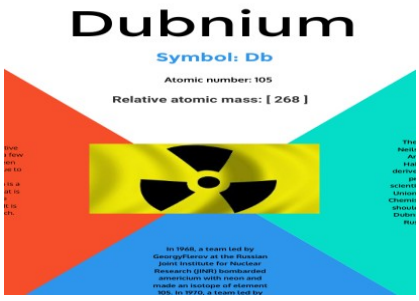












Are there any solutions with less than seven elements, regardless of the total number of letters used? Also, are there any solutions with less than 47 letters total, regardless of how many elements are used? Over to you.

BULLETIN BOARD

From **Mark Saltveit** (as of 4/22/2021*)*:

The movie "The Palindromists" is out right now on AppleTV (along with the excellent Ted Lasso) and on Itunes. Details at www.thepalindromists.com

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I will be presenting my paper "The Tradition of Latin Palindromes" at the international Medieval Congress -- Leeds (which is entirely online this year), Wednesday July 7, 2021 14:15 GMT + 1 = 9:15am EDT = 6:15am PDT.

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Not long ago I gave my talk for the Paideia Institute recently. It's now on You Tube https://youtu.be/azq-hio8oy4?t=237 It was meant to be that talk on Latin palindromes but turned into a survey of ancient palindromes focused on the ROTAS / SATOR square.

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Interim readers might also enjoy an epic (3 hour) podcast that Anthony Etherin, Lori Wike and I made on the history of written and musical palindromes. We were three of the eight competitors at the 2nd World Palindrome Championships, and Lori took second place falling behind Martin Clear of Australia by the smallest possible mathematical margin. This fun talk is about 50% hardcore wordplay history and half jokes, laughter and funny digressions.
https://www.buzzsprout.com/834940/8341422-episode-23-lori-wike-and-mark-saltveit-palindrome-special

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Finally, everything is completely up in the air due to the pandemic, but Anthony and I are planning on hosting a live improv palindrome comedy show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival this August, if that is at all possible. I've done the show before in the United States with excellent (and well-known) standup comedians such as Myq Kaplan, Zach Sherwin, Dax Jordan and, uh, me. Here's a scene that was cut from *The Palindromists* showing the show at the Bridgetown Comedy Festival in its final year (May 7, 2017)**:**
The Palindromists - Palindrome Fight - featuring Myq Kaplan, Zach Sherwin, and Dax Jordan! - YouTube

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Please email articles and other correspondence to **wordways2@outlook.com** *Interim* is published in February, May, August and November on or around the first day of the month; submissions intended for a particular month should be received no later than the 22nd day of the preceding month. Articles should be submitted in an MS-word format and emailed as attachments. Do not send a PDF; the entire issue will be converted to a PDF before being distributed. Choices of typeface and font size, as well as all other stylistic conventions, are left to authors; *Interim's* own editorial matter will appear in 12-point Times New Roman.

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