The Journal of Wordplay

#5 · May 2024

Wordle Gets Mad



Anagram Experiments
Hollywood's Tom H.'s
Time-Bending Poetry
Visual Portmanteaus
New Xword Trigrams
Spoonerisms Galore
Pi-Inspired Writing
Mixed Metaphors
Folk Humor

Origins of the National Puzzlers' League · More!

THE JOURNAL OF WORDPLAY

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INTRODUCTION

T Campbell

You could say the wordplay in this essay starts at its end. You'll see what I mean.

Words were far from my mind on April 8 of this year, when Janice and I ventured out to see the eclipse. We'd missed the opportunity to do so together in 2017, and as I'm sure you know, there won't be another really convenient opportunity for most Americans to see it for another few decades.

We gathered along with perhaps a thousand other umbraphiles in Ohio, at the Neil Armstrong Air and Space Museum, perhaps the most appropriate place we could have picked. Fifty-five years earlier, Armstrong had been the first of Earth's people to visit the moon; now his memorial would bear witness as the moon came to visit *us.*

It seemed to me that I could perceive a difference in the properties of the sunlight even by midmorning, hours before we'd been told to expect any change. Whether I was indeed more sensitive to such changes, or my brain was simply fooling my eye by telling it what to expect, I couldn't say for sure. But we took our spot early and rushed through the visit to the museum itself, determined not to miss a moment of the main celestial event.

The light got weirder and weirder as the afternoon progressed, and then it was almost all gone. A little ambient light persisted, just enough that it didn't feel like true night even if you didn't look up at the weird hole in the sky, suddenly safe to observe without special glasses. I whipped around with my phone's camera feature, trying to capture what I could of the effect on the museum exterior, the trees, the nearby businesses, the everything. (A few restaurants' signs automatically lit up as totality grew near, their light-detecting mechanisms informing them it was after dark.)

Typically American, we were more about the climax than the denouement. Before the sun had gotten halfway back out from under the moon, we were in our cars and heading home—at an average speed of about two miles an hour. Post-eclipse traffic is not to be trifled with. After a few stubborn miles logged, we gave up and found a hotel, restarting our journey at 5 AM the next morning, when the roads were far clearer.

Sometime during those hours, my wordplay brain kicked back in. *An eclipse is like a series of deletions: it STARTS with the unobstructed celestial body, but then as we serve celebratory TARTS, we experience the celestial ARTS of its visual majesty, sending RTS onto social media. This has been "T'S Bad Spoken Word Poetry." /S. Then another S, indicating the southern edge of the moon, the first part to retreat. ST for street, and STA for train station, urban areas to which the light is returning. And then as the sun emerges more fully…STAR START.*

I'm not sure whether this "eclipse" exercise has a future in my writing or anybody else's. But sometimes you have to try things out, especially when inspiration strikes from above.

29 SPOONERISM POEMS

Anil
Perth, Australia

Blue Tuesday
Day-frazzled,
fray dazzled.

Clementine
Deep water—
Weep, daughter!

Rosemary's Baby
Demon seed
semen deed.
See *Haywire Way Higher* (from Europe Books, 2024) for details.

Groundhog's Day
Hound groks stay?

PRESENT INTENSE
'Here and Now'
Near? *And how!*

Know-it-all
A low nit:
"I'll own it."
(**Alone knit!**)

My Personal Persuasion
Lazy bum,
buzzy-lame.

Big International Trade
Arming.
Marring!
Harming!
Mower-ing!

FAR OUTNESS
Mind-blowing,
"blind" mowing.
Bursting the seems!

GOOD LOOKING?
Peephole,
hope peel.
(Bon Voyeur!)

How to Succeed *with* Really Trying
(prevalent formula)
Progress!
Grow!
Press!

'Fallen Soul'
Promiscuous.
Miss Pro, cue us.
"**Cunt hot, hunt cot.**"

Reinvented the Wheel
Whee, invented the reel!

Satisfaction
fattest action
(**Faddist action?**)
Fattest side
satisfied?
Are fat cats ever satisfied?

Preachers
Sky pilots,
"Pie Sky" lots.

Social Worker
Woes shall irk her.
"**Third ear**" **heard tear.**
Also psychoanalysts.

A Definition
Terrifying,
fear a-tying.

Harmony
Wholesome
soul hum.

FROM *REGIONAL AND SOCIAL DIALECTS*

Don and Aileen Nilsen

The frontier humor of the American West or Australia tends to be exaggerated: *He is so stingy that he sits in the shade of the hackberry tree to save the shade of the porch. His feet are so big that he has to put his pants on over his head. His teeth stick out so far that he can eat a pumpkin through a rail fence. When Slue-Foot Sue married Pecos Bill, Sue insisted on riding his horse, Widow-Maker. Widow-Maker bucked her off and she bounced so high on her spring bustle that she orbited the moon and they had to throw jerky to her to keep her from starving to death.* When Pecos Bill died, they marked his gravesite with "Here lies Pecos Bill. He always lied and always will. He once lied loud. He now lies still."

Joe Barnes was sired by a yoke of cattle and suckled by a she-bear and had three sets of teeth and gums for another set. Nimrod Wildfire was a touch of the airthquake. He had the prettiest sister, the fattest horse, and the ugliest dog in the district. Wirt Staples has a shadow that can wilt grass, breath that can poison mosquitoes, and a yell that can break windows. Mike Fink was a Salt River roarer, a ring-tailed squealer, half wild horse and half cock-eyed alligator and the rest crooked snags and red-hot snappin' turtle.



(Image from Disney's *Pecos Bill,* 1955—ed.)

PECULIAR PORTMANTEAUS

John Herrick
NYC

port·man·teau
/pôrtˈmantō/ · noun

1. *a word blending the sounds and combining the meanings of two others, for example motel (from 'motor' and 'hotel') or brunch (from 'breakfast' and 'lunch').*

The other day my friend was struggling to think of the word *portmanteau* and in the process created something magical. "What's the word for where when you stick two words together? You know, like a stairquesadilla?"

stair·que·sa·dil·la
/ˈsterˌkā-sə-ˈdē-ə/ · noun

1. *a word formed by combining two words that end and start with the exact same sound, for example staircase and quesadilla*
2. *a staircase of quesadillas perhaps?*

Stairquesadillas are a subset of portmanteaus and have a stronger "smushing" requirement, needing the full pronunciation of each word to remain in the combination. As a result, they are delightfully fun to say.

I realized I could write a python script that would take in a word list and generate all possible stairquesadillas by matching phonemes. I also realized that this could turn into a very fun visual puzzle game where you have an image that represents the stairquesadilla and you have to figure out the word combination. For example:



Answer: Guitar + Target = Guitarget

Without further ado, see if you can figure out the answers to these 10 stairquesadillas!

Puzzle 1



Puzzle 2



Puzzle 3



Puzzle 4



Puzzle 5



Puzzle 6



Puzzle 7



Puzzle 8



Puzzle 9



Puzzle 10



Answers in the back of the issue.

FROM *NOT A WAKE*

Michael Keith

Pilish is a kind of constrained writing in which each word's length corresponds to a digit in pi. Since pi begins with 3.14159, a Pilish piece of writing begins with a three-letter word, followed by a one-letter word, then a four-letter word, one letter, five letters, nine letters, and so on. Not a Wake *by Michael Keith is the longest such work, going on for 10,000 words. There's more about the book, including some resources to buy it, here. The following selection is from its beginning:*

Now I fall, a tired suburbian in liquid under the trees
Drifting alongside forests simmering red in the twilight over Europe.
So scream with the old mischief, ask me another conundrum
About bitterness of possible fortunes near a landscape Italian.
A little happiness may sometimes intervene but usually fades.
A missionary cries, striving to understand worthless, tedious life.
Monotony's lost amid ocean movements
As the bewildered sailors hesitate. I become salt,
Submerging people in dazzling oceans of enshrouded unbelief.
Christmas ornaments conspire.
Beauty is, somewhat inevitably now, both
Feelings of faith and eyes of rationalism.
Blinded delusional horses stumble;
Facetious nonsense is a dark, secluded tabernacle.
Comfort's buried: bleed a bit as antidote. Is one recovering?
Verily, octopi sing:
Burning choristers accompany the mournful song.
Don't ponder constantly—existence waits,
Among sunsetting tones, bringing it to you.
A wedding of birds and boars compounds with disloyalty,
Devising contemporary treasons.
This morning's displeasure: a badger's life ended,
Frightened to roadkill when a procession of hearses approached.
I whispered the profound truth of symmetrical restraints:
Untie every chain, sacrifice belief, free each beggar,
Go to everybody with peaceful, beautiful hands.
From stairways the multitudes fly downward,
A pointless heaven-like hell to conceive together.
A tourniquet-enwrapped servant walks beside Dover's beach,
Creatures cut the skin deep within a so-infinite void.

WORDLE GETS MAD

T Campbell

Early this year, the *New York Times,* owner of Wordle, issued several copyright takedown notices to developers who've come out with Wordle-like games. One of them affected over 1900 variant games, many of which have twists that make them inarguably different experiences. The *New York Times* has filed a series of copyright takedown requests against Wordle clones and variations in which it asserts not just ownership over the Wordle name but over the broad concepts and mechanics of the word game, which includes its "5x6 grid" and "green tiles to indicate correct guesses."

As reported on 404 media, Parker Higgins, a copyright expert, software developer, and crossword constructor, reviewed the takedown request and said, "the *Times* is operating against the spirit of both the word puzzle community and the open source software world that fostered Wordle's creation."

> In both puzzles and tech, people understand that you build on established conventions both to learn the craft and to discover new fun things incrementally. Wordle itself is a beneficiary of that dynamic. It builds on gameplay mechanics from the existing game Jotto, it incorporates community innovations like the emoji results-sharing system, and its reputation was absolutely bolstered by the popularity of variant versions," he added. "To turn around and smother the ecosystem now is just kicking down the ladder. And it's especially shameful given that the Times has enjoyed success recently with Connections, another great game with clear ties to prior art.

In his Daily Crossword Links series, Matt Gritzmacher added:

> As at every point that the *Times* has pointed to the prestige of its crossword to credentialize other games while actively diverting resources and features from that same crossword, we are once again presented with the disconnect between *New York Times Games* operating as a capitalistic business venture and as a steward of puzzles as an art form. The *Times* has consistently chosen the former in recent years, all while telling us how wonderful they are at the latter. It's difficult to reconcile.

It's *extremely* difficult to reconcile. The *NYT* hasn't just sold itself as a *steward* of games, it's sold itself as a *leader.* It's well aware that other outlets have followed its example when making crosswords: many still consider its example to be the gold standard, and its puzzles still get more media attention than any other publication's.

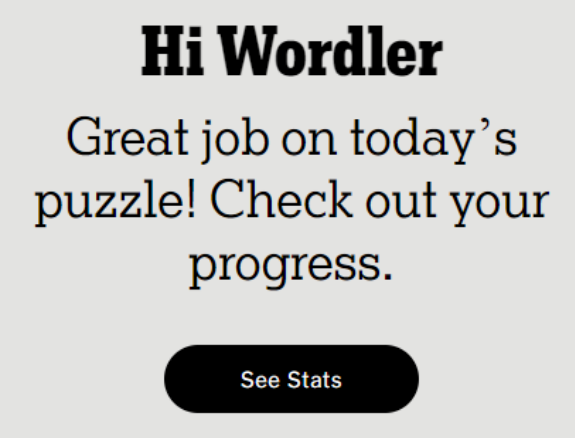
Until recently, one could argue that thought leadership was a side benefit of its whole Games section. "Hey hey, puzzle community! Stand back and let the *experts* show you how it's *done!"*

But you can't be a leader if you attack people for following your lead.

* * * * *

When the *NYT* bought Wordle, some observers issued gloomy predictions that the game would soon require a subscription fee or be choked with obtrusive ads. Tweaks to the game were minor and attracted little controversy: removing hot-button words after the response to FETUS, a brief experiment with seasonal content (FEAST for Thanksgiving), other edits to the word list, streak data, and a "WordleBot" publishing a few additional statistics.

If anything about the NYT-dle itself feels "capitalistic," it's the interface around the game itself, which can feel too invested in "promoting engagement." To my eye, something seems a little desperate about Wordle greeting me as a "Wordler," like if I logged into Facebook and saw a popup saying "Hello-o-o, Zuckerhead!" (Oh, and Wordle? Have you heard of *commas?)*



This reflects the fundamental disconnect within the *NYT,* a disconnect between art and commerce mirrored in many other media companies.

Wordle editor Tracy Bennett would probably have removed that "Hi Wordler" screen by now, or at least fixed its comma, if doing so had been her purview. The bright side is that whatever executive approved that screen is not in charge of choosing Wordle answers. (If they were, we might expect more business-speak-ish material like CHURN, PIVOT, or BUY-IN.)

So the fun-loving puzzlemakers at the *NYT* (whom I'll describe later in this issue as "a thought leader in crosswords") aren't the same *NYT* as the *NYT* rattling its sabers and threatening lawsuits. But is that enough? Does that resolve the issue?

It's tempting to think that the *New York Times'* flurry of takedown notices won't affect the art of puzzles much in the long run. The Bosnian Wordle, after receiving one of the first of those takedown notices, reinvented itself as "Primer," changed its color scheme, and now soldiers on. A Korean Wordle, after getting another such notice, has blinked out of existence…but there are other Korean Wordle variants online.

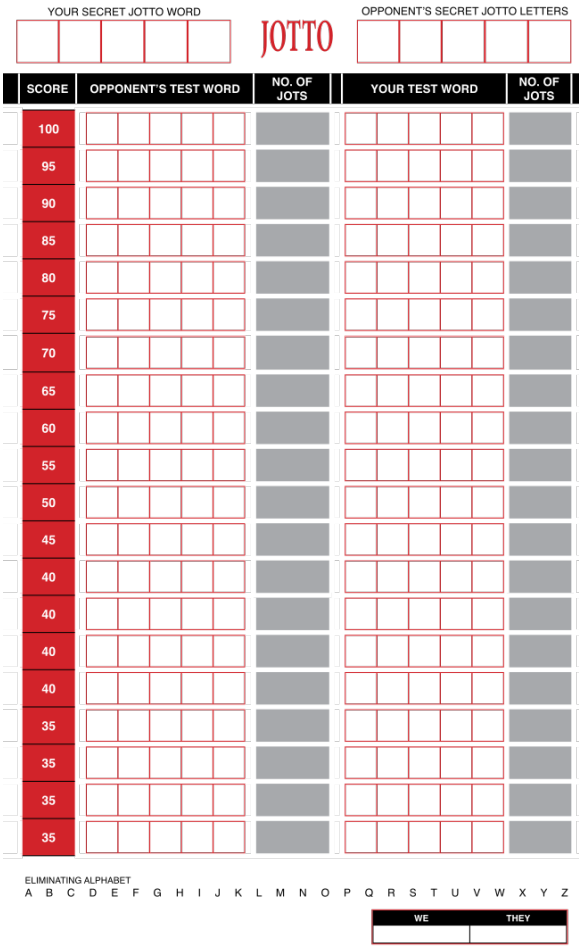
To research the matter further, I consulted a "comprehensive list of Wordle variants" created online in 2022 at GitHub. Of its 94 entries, I found that 15 were now no longer operational—a significant drop, but hardly indicating a massive purge. A few of those, like the independent Wordle Archive, had indeed gone under due to pressure from the *NYT,* but others had fallen victim to more mundane issues like lack of maintenance or their creators shifting focus to other pursuits. In other cases, the reasons for the loss were unclear.

However, the 404 media article cites a couple of Wordle variants that were lost with little chance they'd be replaced. And we'll never hear about the Wordle-like games that are never created because developers get wind of the takedown notices and would rather avoid trouble.

The latter issue is known as a **chilling effect.** A chilling effect happens when the threat of legal sanction scares people off even when they'd be within their rights to act. How do you know that lawyers are trying to create such a chilling effect? Usually, it's when their statements are maddeningly broad or vague.

The *NYT*, perhaps sensing it had stepped in a hornet's nest, contacted 404 media to try to set the record straight. But its statement didn't clear things up as much as it could have:

> The *Times* has no issue with individuals creating similar word games that do not infringe The *Times*'s 'Wordle' trademarks or copyrighted gameplay. The *Times* took action against a GitHub user and others who shared his code to defend its intellectual property rights in Wordle. The user created a 'Wordle clone' project that instructed others how to create a knock-off version of The *Times*'s Wordle game featuring many of the same copyrighted elements. As a result, hundreds of websites began popping up with knock-off 'Wordle' games that used The *Times*'s 'Wordle' trademark and copyrighted gameplay without authorization or permission.



This sounds reasonable-ish at first, but which "similar word games" are safe, and which are "infringers"? What are those "copyrighted elements"? It can't be "guess a five-letter word and get points for getting letters right," because that's the 1955 game Jotto.



It can't be the more specific "guess a five-letter word and learn which letters are in the final word *and* whether they're in the right *place* or not," because that's the 1987 game show *Lingo*, which returned to the screen in 2023. That similarity led copyright lawyer Bruce Boyden to argue that such gameplay is not copyrightable.

There is a trademark attached to the Wordle name, but even that's a little dodgy. Actually, there have been many "Wordles" that came out before Josh Wardle invented the game in late 2020. A few uses of the "Wordle" name could be argued to cause confusion in the marketplace, but not as many as one might suppose.

Maybe it's the color scheme? After all, who could imagine another context in which green means "all clear" and yellow means the next best thing to "all clear"?

(If you get stuck on this one, the picture at right may be of some help.)



Many Wordle-influenced games do use Wordle-like grays, soft yellows, and soft greens, including Waffle and CineNerdle. But it's tough to argue that *those* are close enough to Wordle to be considered "clones." And while other color designs are possible, the gray-yellow-green has an intuitive logic that seems cruel to deny.

Maybe it's how the game gives you six chances? Yeah, I'm sure no game designer's ever come up with *that* before.

If there's any copyright case to be made here, it involves some *combination* of the above elements. But which combinations might bring legal action or threats is anyone's guess—and that seems likely to be by design.

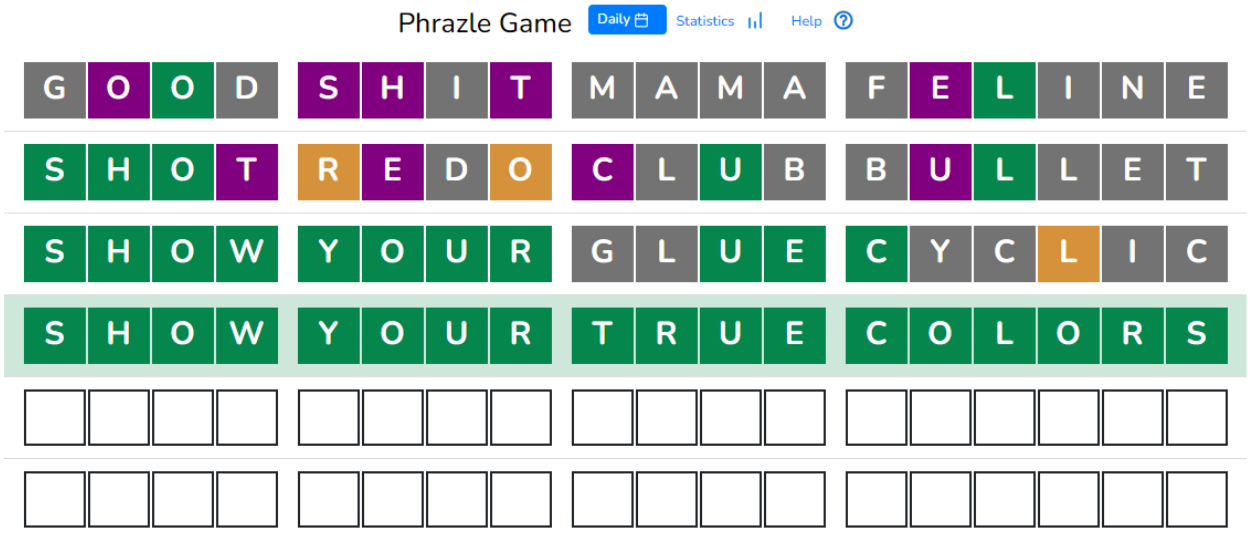
However—none of this creates a clear obligation to stop playing Wordle. While it's true that your enjoyment of it may enrich some people you probably wouldn't like, the same could be said of almost any major media entity. The game was one of the few silver linings of the pandemic era, and even now, it offers unfiltered joy to millions.

I've seen a lot in the last decade to remind me of the importance of such joy in the face of life's terrors, disappointments, and disillusionments. And I'd never seek to take that joy from others.

That makes it perhaps impossible to fully resolve this issue, but I'll tell you the resolution that I've found. I've pulled away from Wordle and have been spending more time on wordles, the very variants that *NYT* execs would prefer I not think about. I want to see what the community has to offer!

I've experimented with making my own wordle, following a set of 2022 instructions by Taq Karim.

For a while, I enjoyed Phrazle, a wordle that used phrases, and Sedecordle, a game that let you solve sixteen wordles at once. (As seen below, Phrazle adds a little bit to Wordle's color scheme, using green for "right letter, right space," orange for "right letter, right *word,* wrong space," and purple for "right letter, wrong word.")



My current fixation is Lewdle, a "bad word game" that's taught me a few new definitions that up till now I've just been too gentlemanly to learn. Sometimes it's fascinating to explore the sides of culture you usually avoid!

Here's the dirty little secret about Wordle: it's almost *too* simple. Like straightforward sudoku, you can set it up with only a little know-how and then run it on automatic for years. Basically, that's what Josh Wardle did with the original version. No disrespect to Tracy Bennett, but I often can't see the hand of human authorship in individual Wordle installments.

That "death of the author" sets it apart from other *NYT* puzzles like Connections and Strands—and, of course, the crossword. The *NYT* Crossword has no need to attack its rivals through the law when it can outshine them just by being itself. Its voice isn't something others can copy without direct plagiarism. (Or possibly AI-based mimicry, but we're still a year or three away from that issue.)

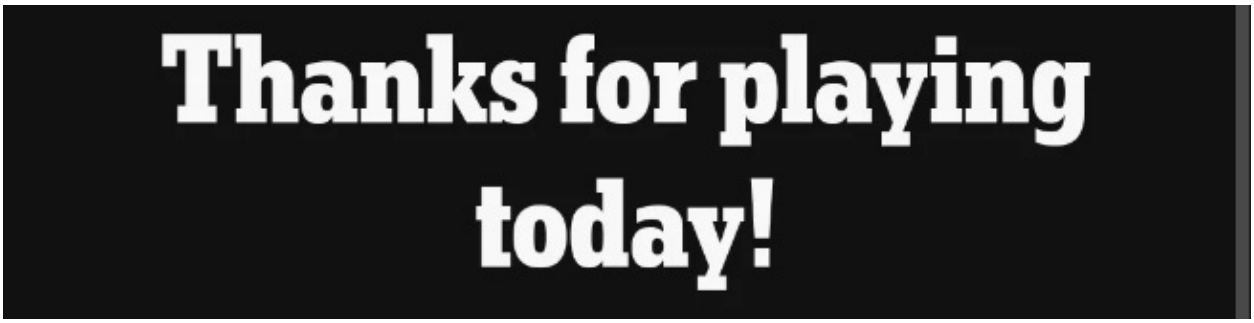
Wordle is copyable, and such reproducibility may be some motive for the takedown notices. But as a result, those notices seem less a show of strength than a show of weakness. And not just business weakness, but *creative* weakness.

The more I think about stuff like this, the more I find my enthusiasm for *NYT*'s Wordle has dulled. Connections, Strands, the wordle variants? No issues there. Wordle? Eh.

So I'm taking it off my rotation.

I'm not going to swear it off entirely. If my friends mention an interesting answer to me, I'll play. (Recently, the answer turned out to be the name of my Aunt SALLY, so the chance for family fun took precedence over my issues.)

But as editor of *The Journal of Wordplay,* I'm more interested in watching Wordle's footprint than its daily installments. A big part of the *NYT*'s journalistic reputation hinges on holding the powerful to account. But now and then, someone needs to hold *its* people to account—even when the stakes seem low.



YOU CAN'T PUT THE GENIE BACK IN THE TOOTHPASTE TUBE
More Marvelous Mixed Metaphors, Real and Invented

Don Hauptman
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From three recent news reports: "[President Biden] may not broadcast everything on his sleeve." "[A critic] urged Mr. Biden to harness his moral compass." And the provocative question: "Did he take a dive on something he should have stepped up to the plate on?"

Because my previous article about this intriguing genre was in November 2021, let's review. A *mixed metaphor* is "the use in the same expression of two or more metaphors that are incongruous or illogical when combined." (Definition courtesy of my well-thumbed *Random House Unabridged Dictionary*.)

In my paradigm, MMs come in two flavors: real ones unintentionally committed, and those deliberately devised for jocular purposes, such as the title above.

To begin, here is a carefully curated compilation of genuine specimens, found in my routine reading:

- "Mr. Musk uncorked a political firestorm."
- "Harry and Meghan were, if you like, the monarchy's silver bullet, making it more palatable."
- "As the team unearths evidence, the documentary offers a ripe window into the process of scientific discovery."
- "[A think-tank official] said that the notion of sending migrants to other cities was 'kind of an old chestnut,' adding, 'It's just that nobody pulled the trigger on it.'"
- "The electronic cash register should not tilt the playing field."
- "When [Hollywood] stars meet material that is their fastball, it cuts through all the noise."

- “And in a show with more personality and less baggage, she would be a galvanizing touchstone.”

- “Putin . . . knows how to fine-tune gray-scale warfare.”

- “It was just the kind of icing on the cake that was, like, the middle finger of 2020.”

- “Your competitors were feasting on a leak of thousands of internal company documents.”

- “[The sewing classes] just catapulted into a whole different animal.”

- “Does this story have legs or is it running out of gas?”

And one so convoluted that it deserves a special award: “This dog of a witch hunt won’t hunt at the Supreme Court.”

Some metaphor combinations are not technically mixed, but rather are awkward juxtapositions of expressions, usually clichés. I call these *mashed metaphors.* Recent real examples:

“She is trying to grasp at straws to gaslight voters.” “Not that I’m holding my breath, but one can dream.” “When I say we’re an anchor in his community, we literally built a fort.” “Checkout is kind of the killer app, but that’s just the tip of the iceberg.” “Families like mine have little choice but to pay though the nose and suck it up.” “The endgame was to stop them from stealing our thunder, but we didn’t have a leg to stand on.” “Mr. Musk might be able to thread the needle of taking a chunk of money off the table.”

What lessons can we learn? When judging mixed metaphors, never pour cold water on a home run. If you’re falling into a rabbit hole, get off your high horse. And finally, remember that the buck stops where the rubber meets the road.

Credit for article title: A search revealed that my genie/toothpaste quip had previously been coined, presumably with humorous intent, by four other clever people. The earliest is a Chuck Muth, in a 2011 newspaper opinion piece about Nevada gaming.

ANAGRAM POEMS

T Campbell

Anagram poems are poems that involve some kind of letter-remixing. In the type I've seen most often, each line is an anagram of every other line. In the example below, the lines also anagram the title:

> "Washington Crossing the Delaware" by David Shulman
>
> A hard, howling, tossing water scene.
> Strong tide was washing hero clean.
> "How cold!" Weather stings as in anger.
> O Silent night shows war ace danger!
>
> The cold waters swashing on in rage.
> Redcoats warn slow his hint engage.
> When star general's action wish'd "Go!"
> He saw his ragged continentals row.
>
> Ah, he stands—sailor crew went going.
> And so this general watches rowing.
> He hastens—winter again grows cold.
> A wet crew gain Hessian stronghold.
>
> George can't lose war with's hands in;
> He's astern—so go alight, crew, and win!

On the next page is another neat one from Kevin McFadden's "Eight Anagrams After OuLiPo," working off a Ralph Waldo Emerson quote. It's more abstract than the first one, but maybe that's appropriate to the quote (which is not the title of the poem, but its first line):

"Variations Against the Credo of Raving Saviors"

To be great is to be misunderstood.
I bet it's true, Emerson. Too bad. God's
too big to estimate, dress unrobed.
Greatness is to dote, bob, dim out, re-
store, ebb, a too-odd gesture in mist,
to grab onto tidbits (seed, ore, muse)
and gibber. O tides, O meteors, *totus*
orbis, mein Gott, déesse, art, O doubt,
Tao, dross, bromides, bite tongue! Et
tu, Emerson? So it's great to be odd, bi-
odegrade into ribs, testtubes. Moo
to be tiger misunderstood, O beast,
O song mistreated. So be it. But doer,
deed are one big orbit. Toss utmost
reason out, it'd better be good. (Miss
most, but so?) A desire to be God inert,
to be *soirée* absurd, totems doting
in sedate bedroom grottoes. But is
it great to be *so* misunderstood, be
moot? outside sense? to brag dirt? be
modest bores? to diatribe tongues
tied? Dog mottoes, rabbit neuroses:
sit, be obedient, taste good. Rumors
run aside doom, boost getters, bite
gottens. Bid me adieu. Boots resort
to ties, bodies but to Emerson. Drag
mud in. Obsess. Edit rot. To be great
is not "odd I," "obstruse me." To be great
is to resent to be misread, but good.

You can read the rest of McFadden's "Eight" here.

Word Ways #2.1 featured this anagram poem by Xavier Balilinkinoff, a variant on an earlier work by Dmitri Borgmann. The shorter the base anagram, the less the anagrammatist has to work with, so I find this one pretty impressive (even if "sot" is a dated insult now):

VIOLETS
It's love
I've lost
To Evil's
Vile sot.
Violet's
Love 'tis.

Stet, by Dora Malech, is a collection of poems using anagram pairs and "triplets," mostly putting them on the same line. The results can be challenging to decipher, but they're full of evocative language and a strange kind of music.

SURE RUSE

neither *well* *well i nether* nor Babel- able born:

a veil alive in camera's manic eras:

shot math well hot math's *well* *that'll show 'em*

numbers underfoot our dumb front seen-

through gauntlet late-rung thought

no double positive (i've no doubt I slope)
no double positive (i've bled out poison)
no double positive (stoop: be unloved: *i i*
yes yes *yes yes*)

agitates machine wishable aching is the blame (wait: sea)

ruined inured

tine to a best touch cut those into a bet

ink bling blinking

GAG ME WITH A SPOONERISM

Richard Lederer

The Reverend William Archibald Spooner entered the earthly stage near London on July 22, 1844, born with a silver spoonerism in his mouth. He set out to be a birdwatcher but ended up a word-botcher. As the legend proclaims, he tended to reverse letters and syllables, often with unintentionally hilarious results. He once supposedly lifted a tankard in honor of Queen Victoria. As he toasted the reigning monarch, he exclaimed, "Three cheers for our queer old dean!"

That was appropriate because Dr. Spooner became a distinguished master and warden at Oxford University. But because of his frequent tips of the slung, he became famous for his tonorous rubble with tin sax. In fact, these switcheroos have become known as spoonerisms.

The larger the number of words in a language, the greater the likelihood that two or more words will rhyme. Because English possesses almost four times the number of words of any other language, it is afflicted with a delightful case of rhymatic fever. A ghost town becomes a toast gown. A toll booth becomes a bowl tooth. A bartender becomes a tar bender. Motion pictures become potion mixtures. And your local Wal-Mart becomes a Mall Wart.

More rhymes mean more possible spoonerisms. That's why English is the most tough and rumble of all languages, full of thud and blunder. That's why English is the most spoonerizable tongue ever invented. That's why you will enter this discussion optimistically and leave it misty optically.

In honor of Dr. William Archibald Spooner's tang tongueled whiz and witdom, I present, in one swell foop, a gallimaufry of tinglish errors and English terrors:

Dr. Spooner's Animal Act
Welcome, ladies; welcome gents.
Here's an act that's so in tents:
An absolute sure-fire parade,
A positive pure-fire charade—
With animals weak and animals mild,
Creatures meek and creatures wild,
With animals all in a row.
I hope that you enjoy the show:

Gallops forth a curried horse,
Trotting through a hurried course.
Ridden by a loving shepherd
Trying to tame a shoving leopard.
Don't think I'm a punny phony,
But next in line's a funny pony.
On its back a leaping wizard,
Dancing with a weeping lizard.

Watch how that same speeding rider

Holds aloft a reading spider.
Now you see a butterfly
Bright and nimbly flutter by,
Followed by a dragonfly,
As it drains its flagon dry.
Step right up; see this mere bug
Drain the drink from his beer mug.

Lumbers forth a honey bear,
Fur as soft as bunny hair.
Gaze upon that churning bear,
Standing on a burning chair.
Gently patting a mute kitten,
On each paw a knitted mitten.
Watch as that small, running cat
Pounces on a cunning rat.

See a clever, heeding rabbit
Who's acquired a reading habit,
Sitting on his money bags,
Reading many bunny mags,
Which tickle hard his funny bone,
As he talks on his bunny phone.
He is such a funny beast,
Gobbling down his bunny feast.

Gasp in awe as winking seals
Sit atop three sinking wheels.
Don't vacillate. An ocelot
Will oscillate a vase a lot.
There's a clever dangling monkey
And a stubborn, mangling donkey.
And—a gift from our Dame Luck—
There waddles in a large lame duck.

That's Dr. Spooner's circus show.
With animals all in a row,
(As you can see, I give free rein
To this metrical refrain.)
Now hops a dilly of a frog
Followed by a frilly dog.
Hear that hoppy frog advise:
"Time's fun when you're having flies!"

Originally published in Lederer's The Word Circus, *1998.*

SAME NAME GAME: TOM H.

T Campbell

The abbreviated name **Tom H.** is shared by Tom Hanks, Tom Hardy, Tom Hiddleston, Tom Holland, and Tom Hollander, all of whom are major stars. Well…Hollander's close, at any rate. Other second-tier actors with the name and initial include Tom Hopper, Tom Hulce, Tom Hughes, and Tom Hallick.



Holland, Hiddleston, Hardy.

The odd prominence of "Tom H." can't be fully explained by statistics. The name "Tom" (slash-"Thomas") is common, but not *that* common—it ranks ninth in terms of male names over the last century. The first is "James." And you'd expect the S. initial, most common for last names overall, to be more fertile ground in this context. But the James/Jimmy S. combo peters out after James Spader and Jimmy Stewart. Robert D. gives us De Niro and Downey, Jr., but that's it for the A-list. No combination approaches Tom H.

Hanks is the most celebrated Tom H. of the bunch, an Academy darling whose career stretches back to the Eighties. You'd think he'd be the center of the Tom H. universe. But the only Tom H. who has intersected with multiple other Tom H.'s is Holland, due to his time as Spider-Man. He and Hiddleston appeared in both *Avengers: Infinity War* (where they both died) and *Avengers: Endgame* (where they both un-died).

Tom Hardy has played Venom, usually a Spider-Man villain, in two movies without ever meeting Spider-Man. In the Tom Holland vehicle *Spider-Man: No Way Home,* Hardy's Venom shows up in an after-credits sequence, implying we might one day achieve the dream: *a movie where two Tom H.'s show up onscreen at the same time.*

That said—and thanks to Don Hauptman for pointing this out—Holland and Hardy *have* done scenes together, just without showing Holland's face.

The movie *Locke* from 2013 is ambitious in its smallness. Hardy is the only actor we see onscreen, and almost the whole film consists of him taking calls in a BMW. Hardy plays construction foreman Ivan Locke, who had a one-night stand months ago now resulting in a child. Locke is determined to drive from Birmingham to London and be there for the birth, a decision that costs him his position and his existing two-child family. In voiceover, Holland plays Locke's younger child Eddie, who ends the movie in denial, telling his dad to come home after his trip so they can watch the game.

We recorded it for you, so you have to come home to watch it. You'll have to come home, and I've had an idea. We'll pretend we don't know the score and pretend it's happening then. Pretend it's live. And me and Sean will go mad the same. You can have the beer and Mum can make the sausages. So that's what we'll do. Good night, Dad.

As Steven Smith points out, movie fans aren't the only ones who get Tom Holland mixed up with Tom Hollander. As the BBC reported, Hollander once got a check meant for Holland. Hollander is a star on TV's *The White Lotus,* among many other credits. He's doing just fine for himself…but he's not making Avengers money, as that experience rudely reminded him.

> *My feelings of smugness disappeared…I obviously don't actually get mistaken for him, but in non-visual contexts, I'm mistaken for him all the time. Talking to utility companies...or when I'm introduced to somebody's very excited, then confused, then disappointed children.*

Those last three adjectives really tell a story, don't they? Makes me grateful there are no well-known writers named "Dee Campbell."

IS THERE A TRANSPOSAL OF THE WORD *PALINDROME?*

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By "transposal," I mean a single-word anagram of the letters **P A L I N D R O M E**

Searches on the internet offer the word **emordnilap**. The definition of this is that of a reversal, a word which spells out a different word when spelled backward – such as **diaper** / **repaid**, **desserts** / **stressed**. It seems odd to spell the word **palindrome** backwards to create a word with the definition which is that of a reversal. A more sensible word to create would be **lasrever**, which would at least be self-defining.

None of the major dictionaries list **emordnilap**. It is not in *The Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com), the Unabridged Merriam-Webster Dictionary (unabridged.merriamwebster.com), or a host of printed unabridged dictionaries. It is a confected word, but it does seem to have a limited circulation online.

Where did **emordnilap** come from? One online source (www.yourdictionary.com) quotes author O.V. Michaelsen, who claims it was created in 1961 by logologist Dmitri Borgmann, renowned author of *Language on Vacation* and *Beyond Language*. Michaelsen is the author of *Words at Play: Quips, Quirks and Oddities*, a 240-page 1998 publication, and authored several articles in *Word Ways: The Journal of Recreational Linguistics*.

In his article *Seventeen Synonyms of Semordnilap*, (*Word Ways*, February 2000), James Puder penned the following about this one-letter longer reversal:

> The word **semordnilap**, apparently first mentioned in the 1961 Dover reprint of Bombaugh's *Oddities and Curiosities of Words and Literature*, gained considerable prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, and still seems to have a significant following. (This word has been erroneously said to appear in Lewis Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno*).

I have the 1961 Dover reprint referred to. This comprises an unabridged and unaltered version of Bombaugh's 1890 work, plus a new introduction and notes by Martin Gardner. Gardner's notes (page 345) do indeed mention **semordnilap** ("semordnilap…palindromes spelled backward…has been proposed for words that spell different words in reverse"). Gardner does not say where **semordnilap** has been proposed or that Borgmann suggested it, and no mention is made of the singular form **emordnilap**. Gardner points out that the text of Lewis Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno* contains the example **evil** / **live**, but not that it contains either **semordnilap** or **emordnilap**.

Borgmann's groundbreaking work on recreational linguistics *Language on Vacation* was published in 1965 yet makes no mention of either **emordnilap** or **semordnilap**. Borgmann's book contains a whole section entitled *Transposing Palindromes*, where he offers numerous transposals of the word **palindromes**. His offerings are all coinages, ranging from imagined personal names such as **Pearl D. Simon** and **Linda P. Morse**, to nonce-words such as **spinodermal**, **pralinedoms,** and **Polanderism**. Nowhere does Borgmann offer any transposals of the singular form **palindrome**. I suggest that if Borgmann had coined **emordnilap** (or even **semordnilap**) as early as 1961, then—always one for bigging up his coinages and discoveries—he would have included it in *Language on Vacation*, along with his attempts to transpose **palindromes**. I had extensive contact with Borgmann from the late 1960s to his

death in 1985. I don't recall him ever mentioning his supposed coinage of **emordnilap** or even **semordnilap**. I wonder how O. V. Michaelsen determined that Borgmann created **emordnilap** in 1961—I'm not saying he is wrong, but I see no evidence of it in Borgmann's books or his communications with me.

Anyway, after the **emordnilap** / **semordnilap** diversion, how about checking out some real, genuine, no-quibbles transposals of **palindrome**? I'm going to offer two of these.

First off…

Wikipedia has an article entitled **Dimethylaminoisopropanol**. The entry runs thus:

> Dimethylaminoisopropanol is a chemical compound with the molecular formula $C_5H_{13}NO$ that is classified as an amino alcohol. It is used as a building block in organic synthesis. Under the name **dimepranol**, it is also used as an active ingredient in some pharmaceutical formulations such as inosine pranobex.

Yes, there's a genuine transposal lurking there: **dimepranol**. That name has been generated from parts of the compound's full name: **dime**thylaminoiso**pr**o**p**a**nol**. Created by a transposal-seeking chemist or simply an unexpected coincidence?

Dimepranol can be found on various other websites—for example:

pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/Dimepranol drugs.ncats.io/drug/OX17195H4T
www.medicines.org.uk/emc/ingredient/1962#gref

Second off…

The Wikipedia dictionary, Wiktionary, includes the word **pramindole**, which it notes is a former name of the drug iprindole. Going back to Wikipedia, here is part of what it has to say at the entry Iprindole:

> Iprindole, sold under the brand names Prondol, Galatur, and Tertran, is an atypical tricyclic antidepressant …that has been used in the United Kingdom and Ireland for the treatment of depression but appears to no longer be marketed…Iprindole was originally known unofficially as **pramindole**.

The Wikipedia article goes on to cite a couple of technical references where **pramindole** can also be found:

> *The Dictionary of Drugs: Chemical Data: Chemical Data, Structures and Bibliographies,* by J Elks, published 2014
> *Index Nominum 2000: International Drug Directory*, published 2020

I contend that we now have two genuine transposals of **palindrome**, in addition to the artificially created **emordnilap**.

Further genuine transposals of **palindrome** will be welcomed!

A DEFINITIVE SPOONERISM DICTIONARY

Anil
Perth, Australia

Here I expand "Spoonerisms" to allow swapping non-initial syllables or even part-syllables, as done often in my 2024 Spoonerism book, *Haywire Way Higher* (Europe Books; =HWH), where over a third of these were presented. All pairs are etymologically unrelated synonyms in a context, or strong cognates, or ~antonyms, or both. Many are anagrams.

Thanks to Jeff Grant for much help and a few of the entries, and thanks to Don Hauptman for helping weed unoriginals. All these are believed original, unless noted, except a number I published previously in my *How to Double the Meaning of Life* (2011; =HTD) and in *Word Ways*.

SYNONYMS (**=/≈**) or Cognates (> = leads to, < = from/by) @ = anagrams
@ **Abba = Baba** (both mean father or holy man)
@ **Achilles' heel = he-kill-ease ail**
acid test = tacitest (fair coinage? *Please!*)
ashtray = trash, eh? (old Pig Latin gem)
agony > gone "Aiee!!!"
Apportions. = Pour rations.
"awakened" = a weighed ken (compare **wise saying, sides weighing**)
@ **backslider = slack bider**
bad mood = mad, booed
@ **beer stumble = steer-bumble**
blacklist > blissed lack (not on the blessed list)
@ **bully fashion = fully bashing** (an overstatement for amateur bullies)
Decide 1. **See dyed.** 2. **Cede.** 3. **Hied**!
three steps to decisive action: 1) see it "painted"; 2) agree; 3) act.
dilemma > I'll dim, huh?
Earthed = third (on which planet the aliens (and life?) landed)
dissenter: "Is sin—deter!"
Self-stimulation = stealth simulation. ("stolen sex")
Ejaculate. Jack you, elate.
episode = soapy ed
eulogize: "Jewel! Oh, wise!"
@ familial = Ma, filial (These three words of relations are unrelated. So, apparently, is Pa!)
fathead = Hat fed?
@ **finished = in-fished**
@ **flinched = inch-fled**
follower > wallow fer
formidable = more fit/able
forming = morphing
full of beans = bull of fiends
GP = peachy (a good doctor)

growing pains > pay in groans
@ **Grasp = clip = clasp = grip.** four synonyms; only two are unrelated. (G pair and C pair elated.)
@ **hidebound = bide hound**
@ **hobo ≈ boho**
@/@ **Hustler, lust her lustre, luster!**
@ **incapsulate = cap, insulate** (Unrelated: capsule < case; cap < cape)
incest = sin nest
@ **jitterbug = butter jig** (a jig that really churns)
@ **lambasting = Am blasting**
leave fast = flee vast
Leery "Really?" – *Leary*
little toe = tittle low Low in place, size, and respect. *And* it's my most bullied body part.
lucre = cooler (cold cash)
lunch meat = Munch, 'll eat.
meeting of minds = mining of meets productive conference or conversation
mensurate = sum 'n' rate (vb. in Web3, = measure; rare, not a Collins Scrabble word.)
@ **needless to say = seedless to nay**
otter way = water, eh?
"Our King!" = cowering This one's for the new King Chucky. Lead well.
Pandora's box > banned, or as pox
Persuaded. = Swayed it per. (Purse-suaded?)
pleonasm = "neoplasm" ("cancerous" word growth)
poker face = faker pose
poll tax = toll packs (tax all groups)
tax loophole = lax to poll
@/- **rampage = amp rage amperage** (high-"electricity" rioting)
rattle, boil = battle royal
recess = See rest. (school or meeting recess)
reporter < **poor reader**? (Couldn't make it as a news reader?)
ribald = ball ride (I've ribald ball drive.)
@ **rite of passage = pass of right age** (related)
@ **Reduction pro reproduction**. (Pro = before. Chromosomal reduction division, meiosis, precedes or begins reproduction in all sexual organisms.
saying = a "sing"
science = incise Science (nonce vb.), by observation, analysis, and experiment, dissects phenomena "incisively."
Second Rate: Reckoned's "8." 8 out of 10—*not* third or fifth rate, thank you very much!
Paris, Asian Separation (movie theme)
sexy = X-see
@ **shoplifter = lop-shifter**
shower = washer
slam-bang = **"bam!"** (slang) = **slap-bang** = **"bap!"** (slang) (Bold words are unrelated, but all are echoic in origin.)
Slur and slander.

sloughing = off-sling
snotty nose = knotty "snows"
@ **sprouting = out-spring**
stochastic = chaos tick (or a nonce **chaotics**)
sycophant = kiss of "ant" (**Sick, off ant.**)
talent scout > scale and tout
tar and feather ≈ fire and tether old public punishments
telephone > fellow tone (especially the old party lines)
theme song > "Something!" (reviews)
thoroughfare = furrow there
TM > empty Empty one's head thru transcendental meditation. (illustrated in HWH Appendix)
Trespassin' = pressed ass in
@ **gatecrasher = crate gasher**?
Try and test > tie interest?
two-faced > "Foo!" taste
@ **umbrage ≈ bum rage**
waitress = **tray whiz**
uniform = if you norm
wallop = all whop
whispered = "psst!" word
whistle ≈ "hissed" well (Try both and you'll see!)
whodunit > do hunt it
whoremonger < more hunger
@ **wipes = swipe**
wobble = bob well (both side to side and up/down)
>Here's one honoring our new logology outlet, *The Journal of* ***Wordplay*** **= layered whop.**
writhing = thigh wring (illustration: §)
zoom lens > loom-ins

~ ANTONYMS (loosely squeaking)
@ **bang, hack ≠ hang back**
better off ≠ off her bet
bona fide ≠ phony bide or, if "bona fi-dee," **Phony bide, he.**
bury the hatchet ≠ hurry the bad shit
"Dear John" ≠ cheered on (= jeered on?)
@ **deep pockets ≠ peep dockets** Not worried about cost, doesn't check bills.
desire ≠ See dire.
Does a diamond ≠ dime a dozen? (**Dies a dumb 'un!**)
Fair judge ≠ cheer, fudge.
Fear Judge ≠ jeer, fudge.
fair shake ≠ share fake stock market fraud (or other interpretations)
@ **fakir ≠ kafir** devout ascetic v. infidel

false alarm ≠ a lost farm (fire, flood, etc.)
fast lane ≠ last, fain Don't want to be last yet don't think about lasting.
"first water" ≠ worst fodder
fool around ≠ a rule found
@ **free will ≠ wee frill** (except in deterministic philosophy)
Gets around. ≠ It's aground. Or for teens, **Gets around it. ≠ It's a "grounded."**
@ **gung-ho ≠ hung go**
A little bird told me. ≠ A little turd bowled me!
luckiness ≠ nookie-less
maidens ≠ demons (Many disagree!)
On. ≠ Naw! @ **(ON ≠ NO)**
piece of cake ≠ case of pique
@ **prime mover ≠ mime prover**
@ **releasing ≠ resealing**
road skill ≠ skid, roll > Road's kill!
@ **roused ≠ soured** (mood)
rules of the road ≠ roles of the rude
smattering ≠ mastering
@ **Spits the hot. ≠ Hits the spot.** Two episodes from the Goldilocks story.
steal ≠ leased @ (**Steal** > **least** respect.)
straightaway ≠ wait as stray
@ **studier ≠ dustier** (up to date vs. not)
stunning ≠ none sting
success ≠ cusses! Yet many "winners" cuss in every fucking sentence regardless of its sentiment.
tight ship ≠ shit type
@ **toiler ≠ loiter**
triumphal ≠ Um, *trifle!* But winners often fake-claim, "It was nothing."
unassailable ≠ as unsaleable (said of arguments)
white feather ≠ Fight, weather! A white feather signifies cowardice or surrender.

DOUBLES: Several can be taken as synonyms or antonyms.
astride =/≠ ride "assed" "Riding assed" could also mean sidesaddle, not astride.
blacklight ≠/= lack bite UV bites sharply and is deeply harmful, yet it's painless at the time.
black suits =/≠ slacks, boots Stylish formal wear for women, opposite for men.
creation =/≠ accretion Brand new vs. newly created added to old.
dole gig =/≠ gold dig syn.: easy money; ant.: not rich, on welfare
KO =/≠ okay! syn. to KOer; ant. to KOed
@ **silence =/≠ license** syn. (nouns): Silence gives consent.; ant. (vbs.): freedom of speech
real world =/≠ whirl reeled syn.: Earth spins on its axis and whirls around the sun while human events spin around in chaos. ant.: Not a movie, nor an orderly unreeling of plans.
service =/≠ versus syn.: *against you* in tennis or warrants; ant.: *for you* in eating, help, business
@ **slickness =/≠ nicks less** syn.: smooth surface; ant.: "slick" humans more inclined to steal.
tirade =/≠ right aid syn.: tirader's view; ant.: not the usual listener's view

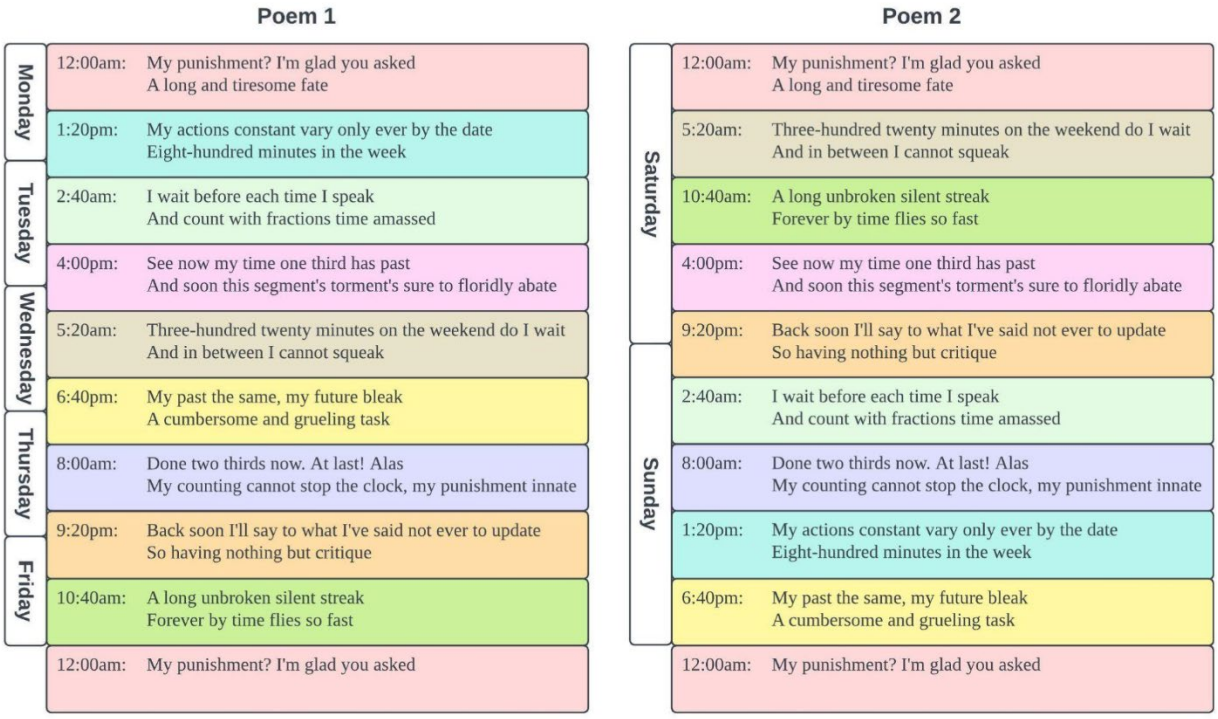
PUZZLE POETRY

Matthew Abate

I recently came across an old journal entry from March 2023:

> *Write a story with sections that start nine hours from one another—12:00am, 9:00am, 6:00pm, 3:00am, 12:00pm, 9:00pm, 6:00am, 3:00pm, and 12:00am. That story would span three days. The sections could then be rearranged to start three hours from one another—12:00am, 3:00am, 6:00am…9:00pm, and 12:00am. This would create a new story, spanning one day.*

I decided to run with this idea for the new work below, titled "Puzzle Poetry." There are two poems, both constructed from the same nine passages rearranged.



On the left, passages are separated by thirteen hours and twenty minutes so that the full poem takes place over five days (weekdays, 120 hours). On the right, passages are separated by five hours and twenty minutes, so that the poem spans two days (weekend, 48 hours).

Monday: 12:00am	Saturday: 12:00am
Monday: 1:20pm	Saturday: 5:20am
Tuesday: 2:40am	Saturday: 10:40am
Tuesday: 4:00pm	Saturday: 4:00pm
Wednesday: 5:20am	Saturday: 9:20pm
Wednesday: 6:40pm	Sunday: 2:40am
Thursday: 8:00am	Sunday: 8:00am
Thursday: 9:20pm	Sunday: 1:20pm
Friday: 10:40am	Sunday: 6:40pm
Saturday: 12:00am	Monday: 12:00am

The narrator is a prisoner whose punishment changes from the weekdays to the weekends. He speaks once every 800 minutes during the week and once every 320 minutes on the weekends. In both arrangements, the poems rhyme, and there are certain other intricacies—4:00pm, for example, doesn't move between the two arrangements, and the narrator exclaims "See now my time one third has past," noticing he's exactly one third of the way through the week (weekend). The same is true at 8:00am with "Done two thirds now. At last! Alas." Both lines couple with "And count with fractions time amassed" from 2:40am, which precedes the 4:00pm passage in Poem 1 and the 8:00am passage in Poem 2.

"And count with fractions time amassed"
"See now my time one third has past" or "Done two thirds now. At last! Alas"

Together, the poems create a long purgatory of infinitely repeated actions, patterns, and rhymes. Indeed, I had quite a bit of fun putting this together.

Of course, it would be possible to create other poem-pairs like this, with different numbers of passages, timestamps, and story-time lengths. The constraints of my writing were

1. In each arrangement, the time-distance between passages should be constant.
2. Both poems should begin and end with the same 12:00am passage. Otherwise, there should be no repeated timestamps.
3. It should not be the case that the passages appear in the same order in both poems—some rearrangement is necessary.

As a demonstration of when this would not be the case, imagine splitting the week and weekend with two passages:

Monday: 12:00am	Saturday: 12:00am
Wednesday: 12:00pm	Sunday: 12:00am
Saturday: 12:00am	Monday: 12:00am

On the right, every time stamp is 12:00am (violating Rule 2), and on the left, there is a passage at 12:00pm that has no counterpart on the right (violating the premise). Now, imagine splitting the week and weekend with three passages.

Monday: 12:00am	Saturday: 12:00am
Tuesday: 4:00pm	Saturday: 4:00pm
Thursday: 8:00am	Sunday: 8:00am
Saturday: 12:00am	Monday: 12:00am

Here there is no rearrangement, the passages appear in the same order in both poems (Violates Rule 3). As it turns out there are only two valid ways of splitting the week and weekend up using my constraints. The first method (demonstrated above) uses nine passages that arrange 800 minutes apart in one poem and 320 minutes apart in the other. In this case, passages do not change their position modulo 3—for example, the 1:20pm passage above appears in position two in Poem 1 and moves to position eight on Poem 2. This facilitates creating an interesting rhyme scheme using, e.g., three rhymable suffixes, two of which appear in each passage.
There is actually a second way of splitting the week and weekend, which I did not pursue, that would use 27 passages, spaced 4 hours 26 minutes and 40 seconds apart in the first poem, and 1 hour 46 minutes and 40 seconds apart in the second poem.

Monday:	12:00:00 am	Saturday:	12:00:00 am
Monday:	4:26:40 am	Saturday:	1:46:40 am
Monday:	8:53:20 am	Saturday:	3:33:20 am
Monday:	1:20:00 pm	Saturday:	5:20:00 am
Monday:	5:46:40 pm	Saturday:	7:06:40 am
Monday:	10:13:20 pm	Saturday:	8:53:20 am
Tuesday:	2:40:00 am	Saturday:	10:40:00 am
Tuesday:	7:06:40 am	Saturday:	10:40:00 am
Tuesday:	11:33:20 am	Saturday:	2:13:20 pm
Tuesday:	4:00:00 pm	Saturday:	4:00:00 pm
Tuesday:	8:26:40 pm	Saturday:	5:46:40 pm
Wednesday:	12:53:20 am	Saturday:	5:46:40 pm
Wednesday:	5:20:00 am	Saturday:	9:20:00 pm
Wednesday:	9:46:40 am	Saturday:	11:06:40 pm
Wednesday:	2:13:20 pm	Sunday:	12:53:20 am
Wednesday:	6:40:00 pm	Sunday:	2:40:00 am
Wednesday:	11:06:40 pm	Sunday:	4:26:40 am
Thursday:	3:33:20 am	Sunday:	6:13:20 am
Thursday:	8:00:00 am	Sunday:	8:00:00 am
Thursday:	12:26:40 pm	Sunday:	9:46:40 am
Thursday:	4:53:20 pm	Sunday:	11:33:20 am
Thursday:	9:20:00 pm	Sunday:	1:20:00 pm
Friday:	1:46:40 am	Sunday:	3:06:40 pm
Friday:	6:13:20 am	Sunday:	4:53:20 pm
Friday:	10:40:00 am	Sunday:	6:40:00 pm
Friday:	3:06:40 pm	Sunday:	8:26:40 pm
Friday:	7:33:20 pm	Sunday:	10:13:20 pm
Saturday:	12:00:00 am	Monday:	12:00:00 am

This arrangement also facilitates constructing poems using three rhymable suffixes.

MEAN SIDEWALKS

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Perth, Australia

JUMBLES

Jumbles is my new name for the MEAN SIDEWALKS wordplay, evoking a circus juggler tossing the words of a sentence up and about, which after freezing midair or alighting change their order and create a new meaning. Since Mean Sidewalks is also the name of my wordplay column, I'll quit using it in the wordplay meaning, which Jumbles shall now assume, and use M.S. only as the column name. The present jumble is of ca. opposites or inequalities. [a] marks more exact opposites or negators. The comments are just drivel, skip them unless you're weird or really hungry.

ANTONYMS or INEQUALITIES
air base ≠ base air - The air is quite polluted at an active air base.
all the above ≠ the "above all"
at once ≠ once at (in due time)
arm of the law ≠ law of the arm (but often, they're partners)
army rule ≠ rule army!
bathrobe ≠ robe bath
beast of burden ≠ burden of beast
bedlam ≠ lambed Lambed means tamed, ruly, sane.
above one ≠ one above [a]
better off ≠ off better (needed to be a better better)
beyond comprehension ≠ comprehension beyond
Bill of Rights ≠ rights of [$] bill (in highfalutin theory!) [anagram: in high fault in theory?]
bird of prey ≠ prey of bird
bird's eye view ≠ View bird's eye.
birth control pill ≠ control pill birth
black sheep of family ≠ family of black sheep
bloodbath ≠ bath blood
blow your cool ≠ Cool your blow. [a]
body language ≠ language body (except when dictionary compilers stretch and yawn)
boob-tube ≠ tube boob (an old one from when you couldn't show tits on TV)
bounty hunters ≠ Hunters Bounty
Hunters Bounty is ecological terrorism, a large anonymous bounty for the scalps of sport hunters. Sports reacted and created an unorganized army of counter-bounty-hunter hunters. It goes on.
boxer shorts ≠ short boxers Also ≠ short films about boxers.
brain trust ≠ Trust brain!
break of day ≠ day of break
brute force ≠ Force brute.
bughouse ≠ house bug

building block ≠ block building (strike, picket)
bum rap ≠ rap bum (unjustified corporal punishment)
burglar alarm ≠ alarm burglar (There is no burglar alarm. The burglar stole it!)
burning questions ≠ questions burning (ignoring them like governments do; or book burning!)
cancer stick ≠ Stick cancer! (You know where, and it's not in your mouth.)
candy bar ≠ Bar candy! [a]
cash cow ≠ cow cash (Jack sold a cow for beans. But in the end, it *was* a cash cow!)
center strip ≠ strip center (except for extreme exhibitionists)
chest of drawers ≠ drawers of chest (life artists)
chip on one's shoulder ≠ Shoulder on, one's chip.
class coach ≠ coach class (teaching "class" vs. economy fare)
class consciousness ≠ Consciousness class (The latter can conquer the former.)
close call ≠ Call close. — almost ≠ the end
coat of arms ≠ arms of coat
consumer research ≠ research consumer (A consumed consumer of research, however, will consume consumer research.)
country of origin ≠ origin of country
court of appeals ≠ appeals of court (It only appeals to lawyers and judges! And tennis players.)
crew cut ≠ Cut crew. (Fire a bunch, with or without crew cuts.)
critical mass ≠ Mass critical
curry favor ≠ favor curry
data highway ≠ highway data
day off ≠ off day
dead to the world ≠ world to the dead
death tax ≠ tax death
Definitely not! ≠ Not definitely. (Possibly.)
doggy bag ≠ Bag doggy. (Take away pup.)
dog star ≠ star dog (Sirius ≠ Lassie)
down pat ≠ Pat down. (Yet patting down might create a down-pat outcome.)
drawing room ≠ room drawing
dregs of society ≠ society of dregs (But they often hang together as a society. It's easy to conclude we are *all* a society of dregs.)
dry run ≠ Run dry.
drive up the wall ≠ wall up the drive
daylight ≠ lightday (1/364 of a lightyear, i.e., a distance, not a time)
economy class ≠ class economy
elbow ≠ bowel (A strange pair, these two. They never lay eyes on each other, yet gladly leave it up to each other to do what's necessary to save the organism.)
end users ≠ Users end.
engine block ≠ Block engine.
ever so often ≠ ever often so [a]
eyeglass ≠ glass eye
factory building ≠ building factory

fair-weather friend ≠ friend-fair weather (Friend-fair weather means weather that's fair for fair weather friends.)
faith curing ≠ curing Faith
family tree ≠ tree family
farm out ≠ out-farm
fast break ≠ breakfast
fast food ≠ food fast
feel sorry for ≠ sorry for feel
finger foods ≠ Food? Fingers!
fire department ≠ department fire
fire truck ≠ truck fire
fish out of water ≠ fish water out of
flip out ≠ out-flip
flip your lid ≠ lid your flip
floodlights ≠ light floods
folk medicine ≠ medicine folk
food chain ≠ chain food
food for thought ≠ thought for food
four-letter word ≠ four-word letter ≠ word letter four ≠ word four-letter
• **freedom from fear ≠ fear from freedom** (Being free is scary!)
• **freedom of the press ≠ the press of freedom** (It's also demanding.)
Free-for-all ≠ all for free!
free rein ≠ Rein free. [a]
free speech ≠ speech-free [a]
free thought ≠ thought-free
free will ≠ will-free
funeral home ≠ home funeral
ghost town ≠ town ghost
• **God-given right ≠ right given God** (Why do you give God the right to dictate your life? He's like a spoiled parent who won't let His children go. Grow up, God!)
• **God forgive.** ≠ Forgive God. (What a catastrophe He unleashed when He invented us. Admittedly a rather glorious catastrophe nonetheless, like fireworks or atomic bombs.)
happy medium ≠ medium-happy
hard drive ≠ drive hard
hard to understand ≠ to understand hard
hold your water ≠ water your hold [a]
home base ≠ base home
house of worship ≠ worship of house
in crowd ≠ crowd in
in the family way ≠ family in the way
in the nick of time ≠ in the time of Nick (last minute Xmas shopping)
investment firm ≠ firm investment (well, maybe, if you're lucky.)
joint return ≠ Return joint. (unless it's a joint you'd rather not return to.)
kangaroo court ≠ Court kangaroo.

keyhole ≠ hole key
kids' stuff ≠ Stuff kids. (Of course, this is illegal in most places, except the USA.)
knock senseless ≠ senseless knock
know-how ≠ How know?
lady-killer ≠ killer lady [a]
last ditch attempt ≠ Ditch last attempt.
the law of the jungle ≠ the jungle of the law
Leave it on. ≠ Leave on it. (TV, wager, etc.)
leave of absence ≠ absence of leave [a]
life after death ≠ death after life [a]
life science ≠ science life (except for biologists)
Look over. ≠ overlook
lovers knot ≠ knot-lovers
mad money ≠ money mad
malpractice insurance ≠ insurance malpractice (Hopefully!)
man-made ≠ made man (No, we did not create ourselves, tho' many may think so.)
manners of speaking ≠ speaking of manners
manual work ≠ work manual
man without a country ≠ country without a man
matter of life and death ≠ life and death of matter
mean business ≠ business mean (Or is it?)
mess jacket ≠ jacket mess (depends on age)
milk bar ≠ Bar milk. (the world milk bank conspiracy theory)
mob rule ≠ Rule mob. [a]
monkey bars ≠ Bars monkey.
mother superior ≠ superior mother!
neighborhood ≠ hood neighbor
no laughing matter ≠ laughing, no matter! [a]
not of sound mind ≠ not mind sound of
off the beaten path ≠ beaten off the path
of no effect ≠ effect of "no"
once in a while ≠ a while, once in
one-piece suit ≠ suit, piece one [a]
one two punch ≠ two punch one
on leave ≠ leave on
operator behind the scenes ≠ scenes behind the operator
out of work ≠ of workout
outsell ≠ sell out (can coincide)
pack rat ≠ rat pack
party philosophy ≠ philosophy party
passed out ≠ outpassed
passover ≠ overpass
pencil drawing ≠ drawing pencil [pic of a pencil drawing a pencil]
point of no return ≠ return? of no point!

play school ≠ school play
plant-eater ≠ eater plant
playschool ≠ school play
Pop cork. ≠ Cork pop. [a]
pregnant moment ≠ moment pregnant (except perhaps once)
queen-size bed ≠ bed-size queen (or king)
visitations of the sick ≠ sick of the visitations
sex before marriage ≠ marriage before sex [a] (or many other A before B ≠ B before A)
speed of sound ≠ of sound speed
state of mind ≠ mind of State
stock in trade ≠ trade-in stock
store-bought ≠ bought store (Seems like it sometimes!)
strike a deal ≠ deal a strike
throw out ≠ out-throw

Advice for Hamlet
To be or not to be?
To be, *be*, not to "or"!

trade secret ≠ secret trade
trailblazer ≠ blaze trailer [a]
understand ≠ stand under
the void above ≠ void the above
underground ≠ Ground under. (Except what the establishment tries to do.)
wearing out ≠ out-wearing [~a]
weapons of mass destruction ≠ mass destruction of weapons
wind break ≠ break wind
wonder drug ≠ drug wonder

DOUBLES:
break habit =/≠ habit break (permanent vs. temporary)
cost accounting =/≠ accounting cost
complex number =/≠ number complex
creation science =/≠ science creation
go all the way =/≠ the way all go
heart of the matter =/≠ matter of the heart
king of sports =/≠ sports of king
moneyless =/≠ less money
path of destruction =/≠ destruction of path
wage war =/≠ war wage

THE BILLBOARD HOT 100: A QUIZ

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In the two previous editions of *The Journal of Wordplay* (numbers 3 and 4, November 2023 and February 2024), I've offered 80 transposals of the names of artists and groups who have appeared in various Billboard charts during the period 1935-2023, then challenging readers to find the corresponding artist and group names. All the transposal pairs had 10 or more letters, ranging from the relatively short **waterfalls** / **Fats Waller** to the lengthy **Aristotelianisms** / **Alanis Morissette**.

For my third and last venture into the Billboard charts, I'm offering 100 transposals of song titles (which have charted during the period 1948-2024) and challenging the reader to find the corresponding song titles.

Hundreds of short song titles can be transposed into words and names. Here's an easy dozen, with 4 to 9 letters:

Let It Ring (Doris Day – 1955)	**littering**	-	**Secret** (Madonna – 1994)	**erects**
When (The Kalin Twins – 1958)	**hewn**	-	**I'm Real** (Jennifer Lopez – 2001)	**mailer**
Things (Bobby Darin – 1962)	**nights**	-	**Ours** (Taylor Swift – 2011)	**sour**
My Girl (The Temptations – 1965)	**grimly**	-	**Earned It** (The Weeknd – 2015)	**retained**
Let It Be (The Beatles – 1970)	**betitle**	-	**Say So** (Doja Cat - 2020)	**soyas**
The Rose (Bette Midler – 1980)	**heteros**	-	**Players** (Coi Leray – 2023)	**parsley**

But I wanted to be more ambitious and go for longer song titles, seeking out titles with a minimum of 10 letters. Below, in the righthand column, are 100 words and terms, along with brief definitions. Each of these words/terms is a transposal of a Billboard song title performed by the artist/group in the lefthand column, with the date of the Billboard chart appearance shown. **How many of the song titles can you unravel?**

Depending on your age or era of music interest, it might make sense to begin with the years for which you have good knowledge. (Note 1: the words/terms in the righthand column can all be found in one or more printed and online dictionaries. Note 2: **microtines** appears twice, at 1968 and 1989—so there are two different song titles with this transposal.)

Artist / Group	**Transposal & Definition**
Red Ingle & the Natural Seven (1948)	**nature boys:** naïve or innocent persons; persons who are fond of the outdoors; yokels, rough or crude persons
The Andrews Sisters (1948)	**sacred bean:** the seed of the Indian lotus
Mel Tormé (1949)	**hardness scale:** a scale for measuring the hardness of various substances
Bill Kenny (1951)	**resectionist:** a surgeon or physician who performs resections
Doris Day (1954)	**clove trees:** small- to medium-sized tropical evergreen trees
Eddy Arnold (1955)	**mischanter:** misadventure, a mishap, an injury

Nelson Riddle (1956)	**biangulations:** the plural of "biangulation," the establishment of the two-dimensional position of a point, relative to a fixed point, by first establishing the position of an intermediate point
Nelson Riddle (1956)	**porcupine rat:** any of various South or Central American rats of the genus *Echimy*
Johnny Cash (1958)	**romantic greens:** light olive colors
Doris Day (1958)	**space tether:** a long cable which can be used for propulsion, momentum exchange, stabilization, and attitude control of a large, dispersed satellite/spacecraft sensor system
Lloyd Price (1959)	**antileprosy:** used or effective against leprosy
Ruby Wright (1959)	**shatterers:** ones or things that shatter
Della Reese (1959)	**tensometer:** an apparatus for measuring the tensile strength of a material
Jimmie Skinner (1960)	**Rooseveltians:** supporters of President Franklin D Roosevelt
Spencer Ross (1960)	**tachymeters:** surveying instruments, adapted to the rapid location of points on a survey
Al Brown's Tunetoppers (1960)	**nasethmoid:** pertaining to the nasal and ethmoid bones
June Valli (1960)	**Plagerepne:** a genus of moths
Neil Sedaka (1961)	**Cardan grille:** a method of writing secret messages using a grid
The Jive Five (1961)	**mystery tour:** an organized pleasure trip whose destination is kept secret from the passengers
The Champs (1962)	**Demoblican:** in US politics, belonging to either of the two main political parties but with a voting record not distinguishing them from the other
Billy Joe & the Checkmates (1962)	**Procaterol:** a drug used for the treatment of asthma
The Rivieras (1963)	**californianus:** part of the scientific name of the California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) which is native to western North America
The Randells (1963)	**Amphitorna:** a genus of moths
The Rip Chords (1963)	**dishearten:** to discourage, dispirit, make despondent
Ernest Tubb (1963)	**talkathons:** prolonged speeches, discussions, or debates
The Beach Boys (1964)	**outreading:** outdoing in reading, reading more or better than
Willie Mitchell (1964)	**pratincole:** a long-winged, plover-like bird of the Old World genus *Glareola*
Jack Jones (1965)	**Heteroscian:** of the nature of noon-shadows in the temperate zones
Herman's Hermits (1965)	**hotel suites:** sets of connected rooms in hotels, usually larger than individual hotel rooms
Bobby Bare (1965)	**trail sight:** the line of sight from a moving airplane to the point of impact of a bomb dropped by it taken at the instant of impact
Claude King (1965)	**worm-eating:** the eating of worms into fruit, timber, etc.
The Ronettes (1966)	**Chaucerianism:** a word or expression characteristic of the writings of the English author Geoffrey Chaucer
The Beach Boys (1966)	**Neo-Lanicor:** a synonym for the antiarrhythmic drug digoxin
Marty Robbins (1967)	**magnetic north:** the north magnetic pole; also, the direction of this
Dave Clark Five (1967)	**lead-burned:** welded together using pieces of lead
The Kinks (1967)	**master plan:** a large-scale or comprehensive plan of action

Four Jacks & a Jill (1968)	**microtines:** rodents of the subfamily Microtinae, which includes voles, lemmings, and muskrats
The Small Faces (1968)	**Tridesilon:** a trade name for the drug desonide, used to treat various skin conditions
Tommy Cash (1970)	**die in harness:** to die while in full work
Charley Pride (1971)	**Holiday Overture:** a composition for orchestra written during the summer of 1944, to celebrate the liberation of Paris during World War II
The Rolling Stones (1971)	**burrawongs:** Australian plants yielding edible nuts
Lynn Anderson (1971)	**green roads:** grassy tracks or roads, farm roads, untarred roads
Cat Stevens (1971)	**paraenetic:** advisory or hortatory
Cat Stevens (1971)	**womanhoods:** the states, conditions, or facts of being a woman rather than a man
Mel Tillis (1972)	**Inverinate:** a small village on the north shore of Loch Duich in Scotland
Melanie (1972)	**slockening:** quenching, extinguishing, putting out (fire, flame, etc.)
David Houston (1973)	**goodnights:** farewells at night or late in the evening
Al Wilson (1974)	**the Lowlands:** a cultural and historical region of Scotland
Johnny Cash (1976)	**Astorville:** a community in the East Ferris township of Ontario, Canada
Freddy Fender (1977)	**athermancies:** the plural of "athermancy," the power of stopping radiant heat
Mel Tillis (1978)	**African oil nation:** any oil-producing country such as Nigeria, Algeria, Angola, Libya, and Egypt
Gerry Rafferty (1978)	**brake tester:** a person or device for testing brakes
Randy Newman (1978)	**stopper hole:** in a puddling furnace, a hole through which the rabble is introduced
Johnny Duncan (1979)	**downscaling:** the action or process of reducing something in size
Dave & Sugar (1979)	**goaltenders:** players whose principal duty is to defend a goal
Abba (1980)	**pourpresture:** an illegal enclosure of or encroachment upon land or property belonging to the public, an appropriation of land or property
Little River Band (1980)	**Cochlogena:** a tropical genus of colorful land snails
Diana Ross (1980)	**downside-up:** so that the lower side or surface becomes the upper
Anne Murray (1981)	**Old Castilian:** another name for Old Spanish, a dialect of Vulgar Latin spoken between the 9th and 15th centuries
Charly McClain (1985)	**arthrodiae:** the plural of "arthrodia," a gliding joint in the body
George Strait (1985)	**in the frame:** under suspicion in a criminal investigation
Don Williams (1987)	**novelettish:** relating to or characteristic of a novelette, frequently depreciative
Def Leppard (1988)	**Great Diamond:** a group of stars that can be seen during spring evenings in the Northern Hemisphere
Jive Bunny & the Mastermixers (1989)	**smooth-winged:** having smooth wings, as certain types of birds
Steve Wariner (1989)	**dogmatiser:** a person who asserts or lays down particular dogmas
Dan Seals (1989)	**Heterogyna:** a superfamily of insects which includes all ants
Babyface (1989)	**microtines:** rodents of the subfamily Microtinae, which includes voles, lemmings, and muskrats

McBride & the Ride (1992)	**ground-cedars:** common highly variable junipers that are cultivated in many varieties
John Michael Montgomery (1992)	**defailances:** failings, failures
Restless Heart (1993)	**Chinese shrew:** a species of mammal endemic to China
Brian McKnight (1993)	**alectryons:** mature males of the domestic chicken
Alabama (1995)	**unit prices:** prices at which single units of a commodity are sold
Reba McEntire (1998)	**night-grown:** describing something grown at night
Westlife (2000)	**waiting areas:** rooms (as in hotels, airports, etc.) with seating where people can wait
Kelly Clarkson (2003)	**independentisms:** the principles of any party called Independent
Switchfoot (2003)	**metavoltine:** a mineral consisting of a basic hydrous sulfate of iron, sodium, and potassium
Trapt (2003)	**stag-horned:** having mandibles that are large or branched like an antler —used of a beetle
Clay Walker (2004)	**plasticene:** an alternative form of "plasticine," a type of modeling clay
Keith Urban (2005)	**beet lifter:** an implement that lifts sugar beets out of soil at harvest time
Backstreet Boys (2005)	**emplection:** an archaic form of "emplecton," a method of building or type of masonry consisting of a double external wall, with a core of rubble
They Might Be Giants (2007)	**demipremiss:** a half-formed premise or principle
Rodney Atkins (2008)	**Erismatica:** a genus of moths
Dr. Dre, Eminem & Skylar Grey (2011)	**dedecoration:** a disgracing or dishonoring
will.i.am & Britney Spears (2012)	**trachomedusans:** organisms belonging to the sub-order Trachomedusæ
Eric Church (2012)	**presentings:** presentations
Chase Rice (2013)	**all-destroyer:** something that destroys everything
Mariah Carey (2013)	**Holostemma:** a genus of flowering plants native to southern Asia
Clare Bowen (2014)	**rasselbock:** a mythological animal with the head and body of a rabbit and the antlers of a roe deer
Eminem featuring Rihanna (2014)	**stenotherm:** an organism resisting only slight changes in temperature
Dustin Lynch (2014)	**wreathiest:** most wreathy, especially of smoke, clouds, mist, etc., which are characterized by twisting, curling, or coiling
Sia (2015)	**Castile earth:** a brown substance found in peat and lignite beds
David Nail (2015)	**forehintings:** hintings preceding in time
Ariana Grande (2015)	**Tasimelteon:** medication for the treatment of a sleep-wake disorder
Taylor Swift (2015)	**backplanes:** motherboards
Jason Aldean (2016)	**technologism:** belief in the power of technology to shape or improve human society
Cheat Codes (2017)	**spoonerism:** a transposition of the initial sounds, or other parts, of two or more words

Jon Pardi (2018)	**ianthinites:** hydrated oxides of uranium found as orthorhombic crystals of a dark violet color
Shaed (2019)	**intemporal:** eternal, everlasting
Flo Milli (2024)	**Selene vomer:** the scientific name for a lookdown, a species of game fish
Cody Johnson (2024)	**trephinate:** to bore or otherwise make a hole in (the skull, a fingernail, etc.), as in surgery using a trephine

Answers at the back of the *Journal.*

NEW THREE-LETTER CROSSWORD ANSWERS

T Campbell

What short answers have puzzles been failing to use?

I've been tweaking my database of "acceptable answers" for crosswords and other puzzles and wordplay stuff. Lots of times, this has meant cutting words that don't tend to appear in 21st-century puzzles—and a few that just annoy me. (Crosswords seem to think kilometers are abbreviated KMS. They're not! They're abbreviated "km"! It doesn't matter how many kilometers there are! *Get this right, dadblast it!)*

However, I have run into a handful of answers that data suggests have never—or almost never—appeared in "mainstream" puzzles, and I propose they should:

AMV. Like ASMR, the anime music video is a genre that exploded in popularity on YouTube (and now on TikTok). Take clips from one or more anime series, set them to any music, and you've made an AMV. Though some AMVs raise this simple definition to high art.

An F, an H, an X. Every so often, a crossword clue will invoke a single letter:

"I got ___" (great report card news) - AN A
"Gimme ___!" (start of a cheer for the Marlins) - AN M
What makes a man moan? - AN O

I'm not saying these are *fantastic* short entries, but they're serviceable enough—and if we can use those, seems like we can talk about *terrible* report card news, cheering for the Hornets, and what you filter out to make Texas teas.

ASD. Don't know why puzzles have been slow to recognize this acronym for autism spectrum disorders—they snapped ADHD right up.

AXS. Competitor to Ticketmaster. And when you're #2, you try harder.

BDE. This acronym for *big dick energy* means the self-contained confidence of one with nothing to prove, as opposed to the arrogant "confidence" of one who might be *compensating* for something. (Cockiness?) Ariana Grande coined the term when talking up her boyfriend Pete Davidson in 2018, an advertisement Davidson wasn't entirely thrilled about. She later tried redefining it as "big *diva* energy," but the former definition seems to have had more staying power.

BSB. All the Nineties kids who once sneered at their boomer parents for playing records from their teenage years over and over…are now old enough to be playing mp3s from their teenage years over and over, while those 1990s tunes make their way into movies like the *Trolls* series. So I think this nickname for the Backstreet Boys is on enough people's minds to merit inclusion.

Buh. You can find this fragment in the signoff "Buh-bye" as well as the sound of a rim shot, *buh dum tsss.* Puzzle vocabulary has long included "partials" such as this and *oom* or *pah* as in *oom-pah…*

___-pah (tuba sound) [Answer: OOM]
___-dum tsss (rim shot sound) [Answer: BUH]

BUP and **CBT** are both notable as treatments. BUP is a drug to wean people off opioid addiction. CBT, cognitive behavioral therapy, has been helpful with a large number of mental and emotional problems—it's focused on teaching better ways of *doing* things rather than just underlying beliefs. In vocab lists like this, I try not to get too much into what people *should* know instead of what they *do* know. But these are two things people really should know. (And they're learning! But they could stand to learn faster.)

CTs are in most puzzle word lists as *CT scans,* so we may as well start using the shorter form too.

CVC and **CVV** basically mean the same thing: they're those three-number identifiers on the back of your credit card, that one extra layer of security that doesn't wind up in your browser autofill. As such, they're pretty important to modern society. (Easy way to remember: "CV**C"** is used by Master**Card,** while "CV**V"** is used by **Visa.** I've also seen it called "CSC," but that string already stands for cosecant in trigonometry. You remember trigonometry, right?)

ENM stands for "ethical non-monogamy"—a poly relationship where all parties have agreed to the terms and are doing right by each other, or at least doing their best to do so. I'm glad to see the rise of this term. I'm firmly monogamous myself, but doing love right is important no matter its flavor.

ESH. One of the most popular Reddit subforums is Am I The Asshole?, where people call for advice on their interpersonal conflicts. As the title implies, original posters are often seeking others' perspective on their actions—*Am I being unreasonable? Or is it the person I'm arguing with as irrational as I feel like they are?* Its shortened form, "AITA," has made it into a handful of crosswords.

The answers to the Am-I-The-Asshole question have also become acronyms among users, including YTA (You're The Asshole), NTA ([You're] Not The Asshole), and most memorably, ESH: "Everyone Sucks Here." ESH has applications outside the Reddit community; it can really be used anytime there's a dispute between two or more parties, and neither or none of them are innocent or all that defensible.

gpd, gph, gpm. These figures stand for gallons per day, gallons per hour, and gallons per minute, and they're useful in slightly different contexts when describing the transfer of oil and other fuels.

hyd? How *you* doin'? Also, **wyd?** *What* you doin'?



K-Ci, along with his brother JoJo, seems like a Nineties artist worth spotlighting a little more. You've definitely heard them sing "All My Life" before.

-kun is a Japanese honorific, attached to the names of men the same age or younger than the speaker. (Really, they should have used "Daniel-kun" instead of "Daniel-san" in the original *Karate Kid,* but too late to do anything about that now.)

MFW stands for *my face when…* It's used to post an expression as a reaction to a given situation, whether personal ("MFW my crush starts dancing") or more general ("MFW I realize this is an election year"). Somewhat similar to **TFW** (That feeling when…).

Mhm. Although more often seen as "mm-hmm," this simple, tight-lipped affirmative appears often both in casual conversations and texts with my friends. There's a jauntiness to the short form I really like.

Nuh/Yuh. Similarly, these two fragments work as answers when joined with "huh," as in:

"___-huh!" ("No way!") Answer: NUH.
"___-huh!" ("I'm telling you, it's true!") Answer: YUH.

NGL. Not all LOL-style internet initialisms have had—or likely will have—staying power. But the short form of "not gonna lie" feels like a good bet.

Nio, despite an unstable stock performance, is a solid competitor to Tesla in EV manufacturing.

NIV. Puzzles have honored the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) and others, so it seems like time to shine a light on the New International Version, which was standard in the churches I attended, back in the day.

NPC. This abbreviation for "non-player character" has been around since at least the early days of *Dungeons and Dragons* and has



transferred into online gaming. Ryan Reynolds played an NPC come to life in the movie *Free Guy* a few years back. So yeah, I think this one's got traction.

PvE. Multiple puzzles have acknowledged PvP, the player-versus-player style of conflict in competitive games. This is its major alternative, player-versus-environment, where your competition is in the game itself.

Qiu. This is the name of Qiu Jin, a feminist hero of 19th and 20th-century China. Her story is fascinating and heartbreaking, and it's worth finding three good crossings for her name to give it a little exposure.

qq.v. The scholarly interjection "e.g." appears so often in clues that this abbreviation for *quae vide,* meaning "see (these references)," feels more in place to me than I would've expected. (The singular is "q.v.")

RDJ. You may have heard of this guy. Robert Downey, Jr.? He played Iron Man for, oh, a *while.* Won an Oscar this year.

SFX and **VFX** are moviemaking terms often associated with Mr. Downey Jr., though there's some ambiguity about whether "S" stands for "sound" or "special." V is definitely "visual," though, so between them the two acronyms have most of moviemaking imagery covered.

SJW. Some sources would probably prefer to avoid this term, as "social justice warrior," like "woke," widely varies in meaning by context, is often meant as an insult, and sometimes communicates a certain conservative set of values—values that crossword-lovers rarely share. (I certainly don't.) But the word is worthy of discussion, even if those issues would call for some careful cluing.

"Urp!" This belch sound effect is familiar to me from years of reading comics, but it seems like its meaning is clear wherever it appears.

WFH. A couple of puzzles have acknowledged how omnipresent work-from-home got after 2020 and remains today, but I'd give this one a little extra emphasis.

XXS. Very small, as XXL is extra-large.

Zan. I've restrained myself from promoting comics-and-superhero culture too much with my word choices here. But I think an exception can be made for Zan and Jayna, the "Wonder Twins" who can transform when they touch hands—he into water and ice forms, she into animals.

Widely known thanks to the goofy *Super Friends* cartoon of the 1970s and its many reruns, the Wonder Twins return every so often when somebody wants to channel that old goofy vibe. KJ Apa of *Riverdale* is set to play Zan in an upcoming movie.



This article began as a series on my Substack. Will Shortz, editor of the *New York Times* crossword, wrote in to express his reservations while the piece was in progress, especially about the initialisms in the list above. (Note that initialisms are distinct from acronyms like "NASA" and "scuba," which are pronounced more like ordinary words.)

> At the *Times,* I have a low tolerance for initialisms that many solvers might not know. It's no fun for someone to get an answer from the crossings and go "huh?"
>
> With a regular word that a solver doesn't know, at least they can make an intelligent guess based on what's pronounceable. With an initialism—where a letter can be absolutely anything—that isn't the case.
>
> For these reasons, new initialisms should be used with care. Most of the ones you've listed so far [up to "MFW"] would be puzzle-killers for me.

As I'd expect of Will, this is a helpful message with its priorities in order. It's very seductive to treat puzzlemaking as a venue for our own cleverness, but all the "cleverness" in the world doesn't mean boo if it leaves the solver confused and frustrated. It is also useful advice for anyone who wants their own work accepted by the *NYT*—and to some degree, even beyond it.

Will personally and the *NYT* more generally are thought leaders in crosswords. They've done more to influence the scene than anyone else. If I were to compose a puzzle for the *New York Times'* consideration—as I have done in the past and may do again in the near future—I'd be as careful as I could be about my word choices, and not just with initialisms. And the same goes for the venues following its example.

However…the words "initialisms should be used with care" are not a blanket ban. The *NYT* has never forbidden *all* initialisms from use (see "FBI," "CBS," "NYT"), and the list of accepted ones changes over time. The paper used to be leery of the initialism "iOS," Apple products'

operating system. That string of letters had appeared before, but only as "Ios," a Greek island, or the plural of "io" moths. But after 2012, *NYT* policy shifted, as you can see in the XWordInfo listings below.

Fri Nov 16, 2018	59D	Neighbor of the island Santorini	*Kyle Dolan*
Fri Oct 26, 2018	23A	Platform that many things run on	*Evan Kalish*
Wed Oct 10, 2018	29D	Apple creation	*Alex Eaton-Salners*
Thu Mar 29, 2018	23A	Apple platform (5)	*Claire Muscat and David Steinberg*
Tue Mar 20, 2018	39D	What 46-Down runs on	*Andrew Zhou*
Sun Jan 14, 2018	31A	Android's counterpart	*Joel Fagliano*
Tue Jan 9, 2018	28A	Greek island in the Aegean Sea	*Peter A. Collins*
Tue Dec 26, 2017	49A	Apple apps use it	*Peter Gordon*
Sun Sep 10, 2017	27A	What Siri runs on	*Brendan Emmett Quigley*
Fri Aug 18, 2017	50A	Platform for Siri (2)	*Brendan Emmett Quigley*
Tue Aug 15, 2017	22D	Platform for Siri (2)	*Zhouqin Burnikel*
Mon Apr 17, 2017	31A	Siri runs on it (2)	*Peter Gordon*
Thu Nov 24, 2016	45D	Apple platform (5)	*Brian J. MacDonald*
Tue Aug 2, 2016	47A	Apple devices run on it (2)	*Paula Gamache*
Sat Jun 25, 2016	19A	Androids don't use it	*Kameron Austin Collins*
Wed Jun 15, 2016	38D	Android alternative (4)	*Jason Flinn*
Wed May 4, 2016	44A	Hand-held platform	*Jacob Stulberg*
Thu Apr 28, 2016	52D	Runner of many Apple devices	*Kurt Krauss*
Wed Jan 6, 2016	28D	Apple's mobile devices run on it	*Jules P. Markey*
Thu Mar 12, 2015	37A	Island in the Aegean (2)	*Ellen Leuschner and Jeff Chen*
Sun Aug 17, 2014	25A	Platform for many apps	*Caleb Madison*
Sun Nov 17, 2013	56A	Google : Android :: Apple : ___	*Julian Lim*
Sun Sep 15, 2013	73A	Island where Homer is buried, by tradition	*Joe DiPietro*
Wed Jul 10, 2013	25A	Macs run it	*Ed Sessa*
Fri Jun 21, 2013	33D	Apple's mobile/tablet devices run on it	*Michael Sharp*
Tue Apr 9, 2013	27A	Aegean Sea island	*Steve Blais*
Thu Sep 27, 2012	53A	What portable Apple products run	*Joel Fagliano*

iOS displaced the island Ios more and more. An iOS entry has already appeared in 2024, and 2018 is as recent as Ios gets. (The io moths stopped showing up as "ios" in 2012.)

And while the *NYT* is a leader in the scene, no publication can be the whole scene. Different puzzles cultivate different audiences, with different demands. As far back as 2009, Brendan Emmett Quigley was using internet initialisms in his online work, sometimes even as themes. The brashness of STFU ("Shut the f$%# up!") attracted him early (see puzzle on next page).

Brendan liked the idea of using his own space to do the themes he *couldn't* do at other publications. Some strings begin their journey to "puzzle acceptability" when some scrappy indie puzzlemaker shares them with their scrappy indie audience.

Others don't necessarily complete that journey. Unlike "iOS," "STFU" feels kind of dated as internet slang today, while a perennial like "LOL" has earned a place in almost every crossword-maker's vocabulary. But I remember when "LOL" was an unfamiliar novelty, too…at least if you weren't "extremely online."



A couple of years ago, the *NYT* even featured WTF, albeit as the name of a podcast. That's one I would've expected to be a puzzle-killer, and maybe a few years earlier, it would've been.

Darryl Francis, a frequent contributor to *The Journal of Wordplay* and *Word Ways,* wrote in to discuss a few of these words within the larger context of the *whole* English language. Because even the broadest possible standards of "crossword-friendly" English are only a subset of the whole. There will always be words that no crossword audience would know, or even care to learn, that are still valid vocabulary in other contexts.

> Just scanning the third of your four items about New Three-Letter Words. I see that four of them are **nio**, **niv**, **urp** and **zan**. I reckon that almost any three-letter sequence containing at least one vowel probably exists somewhere as a word already, particularly if the middle letter is a vowel.
>
> The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) has the following entry for **nio**, with illustrative quotes for this spelling from the late 19th century:
> ***nio, variant of ngaio, n.***
>
> *A New Zealand evergreen shrub or small tree, Myoporum laetum (family Myoporaceae), bearing clusters of white flowers and yielding a light white…*
>
> The OED has these definitions for **niv**:
>
> *a variant of nib, the tapered part or point of a pen;*
> *a variant of nieve, a clenched hand, a fist.*
>
> And the OED also has **NIV** as New International Version (of the Bible), first published in 1978 (which you mentioned).
>
> Merriam-Webster's 2014 and 2019 editions of The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (5th and 6th editions) list **urp** as a verb, meaning "to vomit," so also allowing urps, urped and urping as valid Scrabble words. The online Collins dictionary also lists **urp**, but only as an interjection (www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/urp).

zan appears in several illustrative quotes in the OED. It appears in this children's counting rhyme, dating back to 1810:

*One-ery, two-ery, Ziccary **zan**; / Hollow bone, crack a bone, Ninery ten; / Stick, stock, stone dead, Blind man can't see, / Every knave, will have a slave, You or I must be He.*

zan also appears in this OED 1905 quote as a spelling of "than':

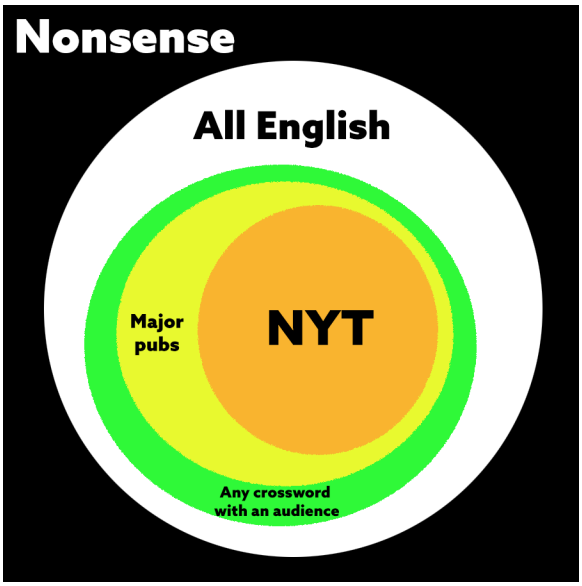
*But muvver's nicer **zan** 'em all, / She calls you "precious lamb," / An' let's you roll your ten-pin ball.*

And **Zan** appears as the proper name of an ethnic group - it appears in this OED 1972 quote:

*The Kartvelian (Iverian) or South Caucasian group consists of Kartli, Iverian, **Zan,** Migrel, Laz and Svan.*

Of course, the definitions here are probably too obscure to feature in crosswords, but it just goes to show that many three-letter strings have previously been referenced somewhere. BFN (www.dictionary.com/browse/bfn)

So to sum up a bit, here's a wildly simplified Venn diagram. The vocabulary that the *NYT* will accept is in the center-ish ring. Further out are established publications in general. (Just imagine the yellow zone as occupied by other rings for *USA Today, The Atlantic,* et cetera, that mostly but not entirely overlap the *NYT*.)



The green (and non-yellow) zone is for those scrappy indie projects (like anything with an "Ubercross" in its name). Beyond that is the zone of all accepted words that English-speakers might use, even those adopted from other languages. And in the dark outer border, there's utter nonsense like "sgelmcgaljgoapxxxz."

("It looks like an avocado on a plate," Janice notes. "Or maybe I'm just hungry.")

Any movements into the yellow and orange zones are not my decisions to make. But I feel like it's time to move, say, "NGL" from the white zone to the green zone. This isn't because I think "NGL" is pretty. It's because I feel like online crossword solvers are likely to know what it means and appreciate its inclusion—to see, in some sense, themselves reflected in it. And ditto for the others on this list, not gonna lie. Language, and puzzle language, is ever-changing. We need to look at it with fresh eyes every so often, if we want to appreciate it for all it can be.

THE NATIONAL PUZZLERS' LEAGUE: BEGINNINGS

A. Ross Eckler

NEW INTRODUCTION

The oldest puzzlers' organization in the world is the National Puzzlers' League, first known as the Eastern Puzzler's League. For many years, it was the only organized group to discuss unusual forms of linguistic play like anagrams, beheadments, and word diamonds. A. Ross Eckler, editor of Word Ways, *once published a book chronicling its history:* The National Puzzlers' League: The First 115 Years. *Though now out of print, the book is still a valuable document for those who study the history of puzzles and wordplay. Below, we reproduce selections from its first chapter, which paint a picture not only of organizational efforts but of the whole wordplay community of the late nineteenth century.*

—T Campbell

By the 1870s, American Puzzledom was well established on a successful course: each juvenile magazine had a loyal band of readers sending in rhymed word puzzles for publication in a regular column, as well as comments and criticism, which often appeared in a column of chat. No doubt for many it was the first time their names appeared in print, a powerful ego booster and stimulus to send in more. And sometime in this period—the historical record is not clear—the added stimulus of lists of noms [de plume] of those submitting solutions with prizes to the top scores, was introduced.

What more could these youthful puzzlers want? The answer is a bit surprising: a national organization of like-minded people similar to the National Amateur Press Association. The NAPA was founded by a group of editors and publishers then engaged in issuing private newspapers and magazines on literary or other special topics. They chose to hold their founding meeting on July 4, 1876, in Philadelphia, since many potential members would be visiting the Centennial Exposition there. This idea apparently committed itself to the puzzle-oriented members of the group as well. Goggles, co-editor with Magenta from March to June 1876 of a private monthly puzzle paper, had corresponded with Rob Roy of New York and Sphinx of Boston about the possibility of a national organization. As a result, he issued invitations for a charter meeting. According to the *Hermit and Crypt* of December 1897, a dozen or more puzzlers showed up at Magenta's house on Corinthian Avenue in Philadelphia on the evening of July 5, 1876. They adopted a name, the National Puzzlers' Association of America, and a constitution, and elected officers (Seth from Fly Creek, New York, was the president). The purpose of this group was not stated, but apparently, they intended to act as a watchdog against "questionable practices of publishers." No further meetings were ever held: no doubt the difficulty of operating an ill-defined organization by mail soon became apparent.

Goggles, the founder, was also a charter member of the NAPA. Not quite 15 years old (his birthday was July 9), he was, in the words of Willie Wildwave in October 1922, "forced up on a chair—he wore knickers—to make a speech." Known to the nonpuzzling world as James M. Beck, he had a distinguished legal career, becoming Assistant Attorney General and then Solicitor General of the United States in the Harding administration, and serving as a Pennsylvania congressman from 1927 to 1933. He dropped out of puzzledom early and never joined the League, though he frequently sent greetings by letter or telegram to NPL conventions in the 1920s. As D.C. Ver colorfully put it at the time of Goggles' death in 1936, "He conceived the infant and left it on a doorstep." In the August 1936 Enigma, Yorcas speculated that Goggles was perhaps involved in the dissensions of the time and withdrew because of some affront or slight, but it seems more likely that he merely outgrew his boyish enthusiasms. Some League members were a little bitter that Goggles had not maintained his interest. "He hasn't given Thedom a dinker's tam of recognition in 50 years," Nanki Poo wrote in March 1934.

Four years after the Philadelphia meeting, the puzzlers tried again. After a "great hurrah and blare of trumpets" in the puzzle press, seventeen assembled in this Sturtevant Hotel in New York City on July 5, 1880, and proceeded to organize the National Puzzlers' League (prophetic name!). Again a constitution was formulated, and Sphinx (apparently the only public puzzler from the 1876 meeting) was elected president. The delegates decided to bridge the communications gap by establishing a journal, *The Sphinx.* A storm of opposition vented itself in the puzzle papers during the following year: some called the NPL, "the Newark Puzzlers' League," and its claims to national representation were ridiculed. (Only three of its members were among the 25 puzzlers at the July 4, 1881 convention in Philadelphia, so a complete reorganization was needed.) The title of the journal (which had not yet appeared) was changed to *The National Puzzler,* and the members decided to meet semiannually. The NPL continued to encounter much opposition from outside editors, apparently fueled by the aggressive tone of the July 1881 issue of *The National Puzzler.* The third convention was held on schedule at Pythagoras Hall in New York City on December 26, 1881. A second issue of the paper was published in April 1882, but when the fourth convention met at the Grand Army Hall in Boston on July 4, 1882, only four members appeared, none of them officers, together with six or seven visitors. No attempt was made to hold a meeting and the second national organization of puzzlers collapsed…

At this point, puzzlers began to lower their sights somewhat, realizing that regional societies would be more cohesive and easier to administer (though just what such societies were supposed to do, other than provide a chance for puzzlers in different cities to get together and talk shop has never been clearly spelled out). Though the details of their formation and length of life are shadowy, we know that several such groups did exist: the Pacific Puzzlers' League (1881), the Keystone Puzzlers' League (1882), the Empire Puzzlers' League (1884) and the Golden State Puzzlers' League (1884).

The events leading up to the founding convention of the Eastern Puzzlers' League, the original name of the NPL, are equally vague. *A Key to Puzzledom* says merely that it was "founded on July 4, 1883, and is still in flourishing condition." *Golden Days* was equally silent until August 4 ,1883, when it said, "We acknowledge the receipt of an invitation to attend the meeting at Pythagoras Hall in New York City on July 4, for the purpose of organizing an Eastern Puzzlers' League." (According to the minutes, these invitations had been issued by Periyander of Boston.) We do have an account of the convention in the December 1895 and July 1905 *Eastern Enigmas,* including a list of the attendees and the founders of the Eastern Puzzlers' League—not always the same puzzlers.

(The EPL had some potential competition in the Midwest. The "Mystic Maze," column of June 21, 1883, in the *Cincinnati Weekly Times* reported on plans for a meeting to organize a "Puzzlers' Union" of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan residents. It was scheduled in Toledo for the same day as the EPL meeting! There was no record that it ever took place: perhaps, as the *Times* puzzle editor feared, the weather was too hot.)

The Eastern puzzlers' objective in assembling? "The E.P.L…. will accomplish many things which will have a beneficial influence upon our little world. It will strengthen the ties of friendship between the devotees of Puzzledom; contribute greatly toward elevating our standard by offering incentives to puzzleistic genius; remedy the predominant evils by adopting measures bearing upon plagiarism, prize-paying, obsolete and other words, etc.; and, in general, aim towards the promotion of puzzledom." The author of these words is not known, but they may well be taken from the neat speech with which Maud Lynn began the first meeting. Twelve years later, in his presidential message of December 2, 1895, Maud Lynn

summarized the purpose as he then saw it: “Make our organization what its founders originally intended it to be—the governing body of Eastern puzzledom.”

Sphinx was elected temporary chairman and Myself [a nineteenth-century puzzler with an especially confusing nom] temporary secretary. A committee was formed to draft a preliminary constitution which was adopted by the delegates. A large number of officers were elected.

President: Sphinx
First Vice President: Apollo (Adonis declined)
Second Vice President Maud Lynn
Corresponding Secretary: Will I. Am
Recording Secretary: Myself
Financial Secretary: Count Goforwhiski (Willie Wildwave declined)
Treasurer: Willie Wildwave
Editor: Krook
Sergeant-At-Arms (or Marshall): Hyacinthus

This rather unwieldy structure was soon streamlined. The position of financial secretary disappeared at the second convention and that of sergeant-at-arms at the third. A constitutional amendment combining the two remaining secretaries was introduced at the January 1907 convention and passed in July 1907.

There was much discussion at the initial meeting about the nature of the official organ. The members finally decided to obtain estimates for a paper at the size of *The Modern Sphinx* (9 by 12 inches) and submit them to the president who would authorize the financial secretary to assess members equally for payment. In other words, dues would fluctuate.

Two companies were created: a Credentials Committee to adapt to admit new members, and a Committee on Obsolete Words (Krook and Planet pro, Maud Lynn and Adonis con). Nothing was said about committees on flats, forms, and departments, issues that were later to play a prominent role in convention reports. The meeting was adjourned with “three rousing cheers”: there followed a controversy about obsolete words which ended only when the delegates dispersed.

A footnote to the proceedings was related 60 years later by Fort Sumter in the February 1943 *Enigma:*

> I remember there were 34 of us present that July 4, 1883, when we met in a hall near Canal Street and the Bowery in New York. After the business meeting, the entire membership walked down to the Brooklyn Bridge, which had been completed May 24. of that year. We paid one cent for the privilege of walking across that wonderful span, and were glad of the opportunity!

Actually, his memory was faulty. There were 34 charter members, but only 24 of them were at the convention (along with four people who declined to join—Mystical, Lancelot, Cigarette, and Numbskull).

What happened to Pythagoras Hall in later years? It was used for at least one more convention, in June 1886, but was certainly torn down by 1908, the year the Manhattan Bridge between New York and Brooklyn opened. Its location (134-36 Canal Street) is today the middle of a wide entrance plaza to that bridge, at the northeastern edge of the Chinatown district…

Looking over [the list of charter members], one is struck by the extreme youth of the founders. Those whose ages are known ranged from 16 to 24. As Majolica put it in September 1937, "A national convention in 1884 with all the big guns present would have been just a lot of boys and girls, with not 20 percent voters." [Note that the voting age in 1884 was 21.] (Actually, there were no girls; the first active female members of the EPL were not admitted until 1903)…

How was the birth of the Eastern Puzzlers' League viewed by the typical puzzle column editor of the day? Dr. Quiz, who edited the weekly department "Mystic Maze" in the *Cincinnati Weekly Times* from 1879 through at least the end of 1883, had a decidedly jaundiced outlook:

- June 28, 1883: We have received an invitation to meet puzzlers at Pythagoras Hall, 134 Canal Street, New York City, Wednesday, July 4, for the purpose of organizing an Eastern Puzzlers' League. Thanks, but guess not.
- August 2, 1883: The July number of *The Modern Sphinx* is on our table and, as usual, very good. It contains an epitome of the proceedings of the meeting in New York City, July 4, and the partial organization of the Eastern Puzzlers' League. We see nothing in the proceedings that changes our views in regard to puzzle leagues, indeed much that confirms them. We have seen leagues and leagues arise and fall, and we think all inevitably will unless grounded on correct principles and conducted differently from modern politics. There seems [sic] to be many worthy names of the organization, but we perceive a leaven of unrighteousness that will, if not eliminated, or neutralized, ferment and lead to early decay. We wish the organization's success but have no precedent for a strong hope. En passant, we are moved to say that a discussion of the [obsolete words] question at such a time and place was exceedingly importunate [sic]. If the association is founded on or managed by any such narrow, bigoted, clannish policy, we can predict better than Vennor the storm it will raise and the fate of the E.P.L. We are unpassionate in these remarks, but the truth had better be laid out and then opened and concealed. We may sometime give our views at length on conventions, leagues, &c.
- August 9, 1883: A correspondent says, "You seem to have a bad opinion of the E.P.L." We beg leave to say that if our remarks are carefully considered, no such interpretation can be given them. We said in substance that the body contained fungi that should be eliminated or it would breed disgust. Of the great majority of the members we entertain a high opinion, but the majority does not always rule, and one cannot touch pitch without being defiled.

According to an article by N.O. Body in the June 1930 *Enigma,* the June 1883 issue of *The Modern Sphinx* was less dubious.

> A league of this kind could perform good services in expelling plagiarists, denouncing non-prize-paying editors, etc.

However, when the League did try to provide these services, the attempt caused a great deal of acrimony and ill feeling, threatening its very existence in the early days…

What was Puzzledom like during the earliest days of the League, the 1880s and 1890s? Most of its activity was carried on in two kinds of publications—the puzzle department of a magazine or newspaper…and a new phenomenon: the privately issued paper devoted exclusively to forms and rhymed word puzzles.

The first of these, *The Nutcrackers Monthly,* was edited and published by W.L. Small of Auburn, Maine, who produced 20 issues from January 1875 through August 1876. (He stayed active in Puzzledom for quite a while: he joined the League at the January 1907 convention, and "spoken entertainingly of his efforts for Puzzledom many years ago and his positive associations with the mystic knights that period.") Goggles's previously mentioned *Sphinx* was the third to appear, in March 1876.

In the December 1899 *Eastern Enigma,* Arty Fishel provided a comprehensive list of the more than a hundred such journals that had appeared to date. That list is essentially complete: by then private puzzle papers were on a decline, and relatively few were started after 1900, the most prominent being Alec Sander's *Forms* from 1908 through 1919. The names of these papers give the flavor of a bygone age: *Tangled Threads, Puzzlers' Pride, Bric-A-Brac, The Amazing Master, The Mystic Messenger, Our Puzzle Bugle, Idle Hours. The Mystic Mini, Lotus Leaves, The Pine Tree Poser, The Gauntlet. Cornucopia, Esoteries, The Lucubrator. Materia Mystica, Logatricacy, Eusama, Quillets. The Skeeter, The Oracle, Knots, The Black Imp,* and *The Hermit & Crypt*.

Looking over Arty Fishel's list, one is struck by the short life of most papers. The median number of issues published by an editor was only five… Frans Folks provided some insight into the poor longevity of puzzle papers in the September 1903 *Eastern Enigma:*

> In reviewing the larger array of puzzle literature now in circulation, it's found that the combined subscription to the entire outfit is now $25 to $30. Few if any care to invest this amount per year, contribute to or solve for regularly in order to keep pace with the issues, which fail to thrive without proper support and are forced into untimely graves. The supply is greater than the demand: why…promote the life of new ventures…by puzzlers who, as soon as they become proficient in the art of building forms…or are able to produce [competent] verse, aspire to become editors?... It is manifest that but few have proven themselves eminently qualified to conduct puzzleistic affairs… The old saying "Too many cooks spoil the broth" aptly describes the situation.

He went on to argue for a few elite puzzle papers instead of the current scattering of prime material:

> Imagine a perfect 13-diamond or an 8-square appearing in So-and-so's "Mystic Meshes" of the *Mushtown Monthly Magazine!* What a commotion would ensue among the small fry, who are justified in wishing the author, who won the double-barreled shotgun offered for best contributions, would make proper use of it.

A detailed history of private public papers is beyond the scope of this chapter: they deserve a book of their own. The most highly regarded ones were Mamrion's *The Lakeshore Poser* (15 issues in 1884-87; described in some detail in the November 1910 *Eastern Enigma),* Anise Lang's and Dorothy Dolittle's *The Study* (88 issues, 1889-96), Kosciusko McGinty's *Puzzle Craft* (11 issues, 1890) and, of course, *The Ardmore Puzzler.* At Marmion's death, Majolica wrote (September 1937):

> *The Lakeshore Poser* as first issued was in general appearance just like a good many other puzzle papers that day and age…but with this difference: Marmion had an editorial taste, lightness of touch, and delightful way of doing things that was like a diffusion of sunlight. In only a few months the *L.P.* became the most popular of all puzzle papers, and so it remained, with first call on much of the best work, both flats and forms… But imagine a boy of eighteen trying to edit and publish such a magazine and, at the same time, make his way in the world. It just couldn't be

> did. That is, for any great length of time. *The Lakeshore Poser* lived for a year or so and then suspended, and loud was the weeping and wailing among the fraternity… that the *L.P.…* should go to the boneyard was regarded as a national calamity… In 1886, [he] brought out the magazine in a revised and enlarged form that took puzzledom by storm. Marmion had more taste and discrimination than any other puzzle editor up to that date. The new *L.P.,* in typography, get-up, and general appearance, made everything else of the kind that had thus far appeared look common. He was the first puzzle editor to enclose his magazine in covers… The pages, instead of being cramped, cluttered, and cheap-looking, were open, fair to the eye, and of admirable composition. The whole thing was a "de luxe" article of its kind… It set a standard that was not only higher than any ever attained, but one that has never since been surpassed, or indeed equaled; for in addition to its recherche aspect, it had the advantage of Marmion's editorial faculty, which was unequaled. He gathered within the pages the cream of the cream of the work then being done, it being the supreme ambition of the aspiring mystic to be "in" it and this recognized as a first-rater. But like all such things, it was too bright, too beautiful to last. Likewise too expensive. When Christmas 1887 came, Marmion got out what was by far the finest holiday number ever published… But—reading between the lines and leading editorial, there was…a premonition that was only too soon verified. That marvelous holiday number was the last one Marmion published. The expense was too large, the time and labor entailed too great. The prince of puzzle editors laid aside his toga and put by his pen, never to resume them.

Some papers specialized: *The Key* (1890-92) was at first devoted to cryptograms, and *The Square* (1883), *The Formist* (1891), and *Forms* (1908-19) to form puzzles. Most were monthly or tried to be, but *Word Hunt* (1881, later *The Mystic Journal)* was a weekly, and *The Ardmore Puzzler* was issued weekly from May 1899 to June 1901, and daily for six days from December 31, 1900, through January 5, 1901.

The newspapers and magazines that ran puzzle departments are far too numerous to list: even by 1877, Sphinx listed in *The Puzzlers' Guide* 42 promotional journals and 44 amateur journals running puzzle columns. Newspaper and magazine puzzle columns featuring rhymed puzzles and forms of various shapes and sizes hung on for many years, long after the death of the last private puzzle journal, but their decline was already apparent by the 1910s, and was accelerated by the advent of the crossword puzzle in 1924 and the cryptogram shortly thereafter. The last survivor in a general interest publication was probably O'Casey's puzzle column in *The Lion,* the monthly magazine for Lion's Club members, which ran from 1935 into the 1950s.

Puzzles appeared in a bewildering variety of publications besides the standard big city newspaper. Some papers had limited circulation indeed (the *Needham* [Mass.] *Chronicle, The Guga* [Ohio] *Leader,* the *Roseville* [N.J.] *Citizen,* the *Clinton Hill* [N.J.] *Citizen).* Prominent among these publications were magazines for youth *(The Youth's Companion Boy's Life, Youth's Delight, Junior Joys).* Some were general circulation magazines *(The Waverly Magazine, Woman's Home Companion, Family Fiction),* while others were aimed at rather specific audiences *(Home & Flowers, Allegheny Philatelist, Microphone, The Christian Advocate),* particularly farmers *(The Western Plowman, Farm Stock and Home, Journal of Agriculture, Star Farmer, Farm News, Farm Journal, Farmer Boy).* A few were in-house organs *(Masonic Journal, 4H Magazine, B&O Magazine).*

It is impossible to do justice to the story of departmental puzzledom without devoting several chapters, perhaps an entire book, to the subject. Instead, this chapter briefly describes two juvenile and two adult departments of unusual longevity, preeminent in the periods they were published. All four were important sources of members for the EPL and later the NPL.

The first of these was Colonel James Elverson's sixteen-page weekly magazine for boys and girls, *Golden Days*. First published on March 6, 1880, it survived for 1,349 issues through January 6, 1906. For puzzledom, the most important parts of these issues were the two columns of puzzles and editorial chat entitled "Puzzledom": countless members of the League have related that it was their introduction to rhymed word puzzles and forms. In his June 1, 1899, presidential message, Rex Ford said:

> During its long life, this department has been known as the "Nursery of Puzzledom," and has probably been the medium of entrance of fully nine-tenths of all the puzzlers.

During its 26-year span, it had only three editors, all members of the Eastern Puzzlers' League: Mystic, (1882-1886), Flo (1886-1885), and Arty Fishel (1895-1906). We know little about Flo other than the fact that she was Mystic's sister, and the colorful career of Arty Fishel is covered more fully [elsewhere in the history]. Mystic, the first editor, born in 1862, was a newspaperman in New York City, at one time editing the magazine section of the *New York Herald.* Later he was in charge of publicity for the film company Pathé. A gifted and prolific author, he wrote the movie scenario for Kipling's *Without Benefit of Clergy* and supervised its Los Angeles filming. He was eventually eased out of Pathé and died in Los Angeles in 1934, lonely and destitute.

Mystic divided his "Puzzledom" column into two parts: School and College, to appeal to both the tyro and the veteran. Later he stopped dividing it, probably because he was receiving so much material that he had no time to classify it. Arty Fishel revived the practice in January 1902. Frans Folks wrote in September 1903:

> ["Puzzledom"'s] skillfully prepared columns of interesting matter make a fine showing and are free from that cramped appearance which indicates lack of space. A portion of each issue consists of instructive work by advanced puzzlers, which serves to stimulate the energies of "future greats."

At the July 1899 convention, the League adopted a resolution praising *Golden Days* on the attainment of its thousandth issue (on April 29 of that year), noting that "this department has been the school in which most of our members learned their first lessons in enigmatic lore," and "it is consistently adding recruits to the cause."

The influence of *Golden Days* on *A Key to Puzzledom* is apparent: of the 337 forms and flats taken from newspaper or magazine departments and reprinted there, 35 come from "Puzzledom."

The second great puzzle column was "Complications," edited by Erlon R. Chadbourne, which appeared weekly in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* from January 1, 1881, until its demise in late 1913 (in the November 1913 *Eastern Enigma,* the editor wrote, "Word today from Chadbourne is that "Complications" is no more"). It was praised to the skies as the premier adult column of its day, often difficult, but containing the cream of the puzzleistic crop, including many of A.F. Holt's giant forms. In *A Key to Puzzledom,* of the 337 forums and flats from departments, 66 came from "Complications."

Chadbourne was born in 1855 in Auburn, Maine, and died in 1936. He got into the word business early, as apprentice to a book, job, and newspaper printer; from 1873 on, he earned a living as a puzzle editor. Besides "Complications," he edited "Enigmatic Oddities" in the Pittsburgh Post, mystification in *The Christian Advocate,* and "Our Puzzle Box" in *The Presbyterian.* He never joined the Eastern Puzzlers'

League ,a source of irritation to President Abel Em, who, in August 1905, advocated preferential support of newspaper departments run by members. But others pointed out an inconsistency: *The Eastern Enigma* was happy to accept flats for "Penetralia" submitted by nonmembers. In April 1907, D.C. Ver groused:

> It is an ugly paradox that this column, conducted by a non-member, gets the cream of the work turned out by League members while our fellow E.P.L. editors must be content with the skimming.

Perhaps in response to this griping, Chadbourne paid a total of five dollars in dues or *Eastern Enigma* contributions in 1910-12, and another dollar in 1921.

Jason wrote in September 1901:

> Chadborne's "Complications" is one of our very best weeklies and every issue contains fresh gems. Perhaps one of the reasons for the excellence of the work exhibited is the half-year prize lists for contributions. Valued prizes are also offered every month for solutions.

This opinion was echoed by Frans Folks in September 1903:

> Chadborne's "Complications" still continues to set the pace for all other weekly departments, both in the excellence of its contributed work, and the liberality of prize offers, and fully merits the faithful support received from veteran mystic writers throughout puzzledom.

The third puzzle column of special note was edited by Uncle Tangier (1900-12) and Kappa Kappa (1916-28) and appeared in the monthly magazine *The American Boy.* This was a very popular column, at one time (May 1924) boasting a solver list of more than 300 people.

In the May 1939 *Enigma,* Molemi gave a sketch of the career of Carleton B. Case, known as Uncle Tangler to the subscribers of *The American Boy.* Born in Wisconsin, the son of a minister, he took up amateur journalism as a boy. Unlike Chadbourne, he did not earn his living from puzzle editing. Case was a diamond merchant operating out of Maiden Lane in New York City and traveling to cities in the South and West; later, he was an advertising manager for Montgomery Ward in Chicago. It was during his Chicago sojourn that the editor of *The American Boy* engaged him to write "Tangles" for the new publication in 1900. There were no versified puzzles in the column. but there was a profusion of simple forms, pictorial rebuses, king's-move word-find puzzles. pictorial and zigzag acrostics, and anagrams. It was Uncle Tangler's avowed purpose to make puzzling of educational value, free from the vapid claptrap that permeated some juvenile departments. He must have found a successful formula, for recruits appeared by the score.

In 1912, he retired from business and moved near Belchertown, Massachusetts. He anticipated having more time to develop "Tangles" there, but it was not to be—there was a change of editors, and the new man canceled the column.

Molemi visited Uncle Tangler in the summer of 1934, two years before his death. He found him mentally alert and apparently vigorous physically, although then well along in his seventies. He still "retained that charm of personality which broke through the barrier of the printed page and made him the idol of the Tanglers."

Unlike Uncle Tangler, Kappa Kappa was active in the League, serving as second vice president in 1917 and first vice president in 1920. There is no record of her ever being elected a member of the League…but she did pay dues fairly regularly starting in 1919. She edited departments in 25 different publications, many of them farm papers in the Minnesota area: the earliest known was in *Farm, Stock and Home,* mentioned in the June 1898 *Eastern Enigma,* and the last, at the time of her death in 1938, was "Aunt Clara's Column" in the *Dakota Farmer.* A "vigorous, breezy" woman, she was 42 when her husband died suddenly in 1912, leaving her in straitened circumstances, with a family of four children to support. (One of these was Minuta, later to become active in the NPL.) Her editing, done for a pitifully small salary (she later figured that she had made only $12,000 for 40 years of work), was time stolen from household and farm chores. As she wrote Molemi in 1925 (quoted in the March 1961 *Enigma):*

> I not only bore children and reared them carefully, but made butter, raised chickens, did all the family sewing, ran from six to ten departments a month… This year I've had a nine-room house to care for and heat, six to cook for and five to launder for. I [currently] have three depts. a month, although Minuta has been an invaluable help with that work. I have been managing a group of campfire girls and acting as secretary and treasurer of the association which is in charge of all the groups in the city. Then, I'm clerk of the church to which I belong, sing in the choir, and have two committees to work on in the Ladies' Aid.

She was most proud of the fact that her copy to the papers was always on time, even during the periods around the births of her children. She made puzzlers out of thousands of people, and many of them stayed with puzzling: NPL members as late as the 1980s who had been inspired by her columns include Ajax, Amor, Blackstone, Larry, Sakr-el-Bahr, The Gink, and Wick. As Molemi commented, "She had an uncanny knack of attracting youngsters to word puzzles." Her column had 2,500 solvers at one time! Like Uncle Tangler, she lost her *American Boy* department when there was a change in management: the magazine itself folded not long afterward.

The last of the four noteworthy puzzle columns, "Do you Like Puzzles?" was started by C. Saw in the *Detroit Free Press* in 1927, at a time when most other old-time newspaper puzzle departments had long since been discontinued. Amazingly, it surprised most of the Depression. After a weekly appearance of more than ten years and 5,000 puzzles, it was canceled on August 2, 1937, less than three weeks after C. Saw's death. It seems likely that the editors used his death as an excuse to terminate a column they no longer wanted. C. Saw was assisted at least for a short time in 1932 by X. Specked and B. Natural. "Do You Like Puzzles?" introduced one new wrinkle that probably had never been tried before by a newspaper department: on June 19, 1932, its puzzlers were invited to Belle Isle for a one-day convention. Only 29 came—all NPL people—but the paper must have thought the experiment successful, for conventions were repeated in 1933 (37 attended), 1934, and 1935 (21 came). Accounts of the activities are somewhat sketchy: there was usually a picnic followed by various contests. In 1932, the contests included one by Leip based on twelve different three-letter words with the first letter changed (CAR, EAR, etc.), and another on a five-by-five letter grid in which a message could be found by using the king's move in chess. The following year featured a humorous advertising game and a word hunt. This column was quite successful in bringing new recruits to the League: the November 1938 *Enigma* listed Hoosier, Jean, Hattie, Jay Bell, Swastika, B. Natural, Beau Ned, Jack, Nollid, Sir Orm, Madda Boutem, and X. Specked.

So one gets the picture: for its first twenty years, the Eastern Puzzlers' League was a small ripple in an ocean of puzzleistic activity. Its active membership was seldom more than 50, whereas in 1886 *Golden*

Days was able to publish a directory giving the names and addresses of 3866 puzzlers (1140 with noms as well). Yet its members were a cut above the *Golden Days* norm. A high percentage of them edited, or had edited, puzzle departments or magazines, an important group to have the EPL was to succeed in its self-appointed role as "the governing body of Puzzledom." (For example, twelve of the fourteen founders…had had such experience.) And movers and shakers like Sphinx, Arty Fishel, Maud Lynn, and Ricardo, to say nothing of talented writers like Bolus, Krook, and Kosciusko McGinty, or master formists like K.T. Did, Mentor, and Majolica, were not to be valued lightly. With some adjustments in its modus operandi, the League survived, and by the time the next generation of puzzlers matured in the 1920s, its future seemed assured. But Fate had yet more surprises in store: the League was sorely tested by a 40-year decline that brought it to the brink of dissolution.

OTHER RESOURCES OF INTEREST

T Campbell

This is the spot for additional items of interest to *Journal* readers. Though it's aimed at recent work, sometimes things don't come to my attention right away, so publications can be from anytime in the last couple of years.

"Statistics and a mathematical model of the phenomenon of oddness in palindromes of European and oriental languages" by Dr. Yasir Z. Abo Rass and Dr. Saleh Y. Abo Romi, at https://www.psp-ltd.com/JIEB_102_11_2023.pdf

"Iconicity of Symmetries in Language and Literature," by Winfried Noth, found in his *New Horizons in International Comparative Literature,* 2024.

"Binomials in English and French: ablaut, rhyme and syllable structure," by Viola Green and David Birdsong, in *Linguistics* (62)1, at https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/ling-2020-0115/html. (Binomials, in linguistics, are joined expressions like "dribs and drabs," "hocus pocus," and "wheeling and dealing.")

Finally, a few links pertaining to the second-newest *New York Times* game, "Connections." ("Strands," it seems, is too new to have yet gathered the same level of attention.)

Wyna Liu released a brief, instructive video on how she makes the game: https://www.tiktok.com/@mynytimes/video/7321774552395255086?lang=en

Gail Cooper wrote a guide to playing: https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/nyt-connections-seven-hints-and-tips-for-winning-every-game/

And McSweeney's published a cheeky *"New York Times* Connections, Toddler Edition": https://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/new-york-times-connections-toddler-edition

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The Journal of Wordplay is a free-to-submit, free-to-read academic publication. All rights revert to the original authors after publication.

The Journal is interested in any studies, essays, puzzles, exercises, or other works that showcase wordplay of any kind. However, broader forms of wordplay call for a more specific approach.

Almost any material that uses specific wordplay types like anagrams, spoonerisms, palindromes, or letterbanks might be of interest. That's just a quick list of some of the most prominent types: there are many more.

Broader forms of wordplay include puns, puzzles, writing-style exercises, and even well-worn literary techniques like alliteration and rhyme. However, we wouldn't want to publish a piece of short fiction just because it reads like James Patterson, or song lyrics just because they rhyme, or a crossword with some punny theme entries. In the case of each of those examples, there are plenty of other venues for such works, and there'd be no point in us competing for those!

Here are a few examples of specific approaches to those broader forms: a jokey exercise where a famous work is rewritten in the styles of different authors, an account of how a songwriter might build a "book of rhymes," a study of Shakespearean punning, or a survey of the most commonly used crossword grids. (Here too, there are many more possibilities.)

Rule of thumb: *The Journal of Wordplay* is here to provide studies and perspectives on wordplay that readers won't often find anywhere else! If that sounds like something you're into, then we look forward to your *Journal* submission!

CONTRIBUTORS

Matthew Abate, Ph.D., is an Applied Mathematician from Rahway, NJ. He enjoys creating art with self-referential and self-descriptive aspects, often writing puzzles, patterns, music, and wordplay. Matt is the author of "Autograms" in Issue #4 of *TJoW,* as well as "Puzzle Poetry," which appears in this issue. Personal site: https://mattabate.com/.

Anil is the assumed name of Chas. Melton, preacher turned biologist and serial killer (of words). Kentucky born, educated at Wake Forest (BS) and Johns Hopkins (PhD), held positions at Illinois (Microbiology), Pittsburgh (Biology), and Western Australia (Biochemistry), where he now resides. He retired early to pursue creative writing, spirituality, and a more relaxed lifestyle and is especially wrapt in the artistic and humorous possibilities of wordplay, an early love. He has published a large collection of definitive, playful, and literary anagrams, *up/dn,* and has been a regular contributor to *Word Ways* and *The Journal of Wordplay.*

T Campbell has written many experimental works, including long-running webcomics series *(Fans, Cool Cat Studio, Rip and Teri, Penny and Aggie, Guilded Age, Traveler),* collections of anagrams, and the Ubercross Abecedaria, the world's largest crossword puzzle. He has served

The Journal of Wordplay as editor and contributor since its inception. Regular updates can be found at his Substack, http://tcampbell.substack.com.

A. Ross Eckler was an editor of *Word Ways* and member of the National Puzzler's League, who chronicled the League's early history. Selections from his work are presented posthumously.

Darryl Francis writes:

> My introduction to word puzzles and word games came via a Martin Gardner review in *Scientific American* of one of Dmitri Borgmann's first two books—either *Language on Vacation* or *Beyond Language.* I very quickly bought both books, then began subscribing to *Word Ways,* from its first issue in February 1968. I've created over 200 articles for *Word Ways* right up until its last issue in 2020. Then a brief stint at *Interim,* and now finally onto *The Journal of Wordplay.* I had ongoing correspondence with *Word Ways* editors Borgmann and Ross Eckler over the years, plus plenty of occasional contact with other word puzzlers. I've also been a member of the National Puzzlers' League. I've written books on Scrabble and been a longtime compiler of Collins Official Scrabble Words, which is used pretty much everywhere outside the US. I also collect all sorts of dictionaries, word books, gazetteers, thesauruses (thesauri!), and puzzle material.

Don Hauptman, *TJoW* Resident Punster, says:

> I'm a recreational linguistics enthusiast, thoroughly captivated by what Leo Rosten once called "the mischief of language." I've written two published books in this genre: My celebration of spoonerisms, *Cruel and Unusual Puns* (Dell, 1991), received rave reviews and quickly went into a second printing, selling in total almost 40,000 copies. The second book is *Acronymania* (Dell, 1993), a serious/funny look at abbreviations.
>
> For its last several decades, I was a regular contributor to *Word Ways.* My humor, wordplay, and light verse have appeared as articles, fillers, and letters in *Reader's Digest, Writer's Digest, The Village Voice, The New York Observer, 7 Days, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal,* and two major in-flight magazines: *Sky* (Delta) and *American Way.*
>
> I made more than 100 appearances in the wordplay competitions that were a popular feature of *New York* Magazine. For four and a half years, I wrote "The Language Perfectionist," a (mostly) serious weekly column on grammar and usage, for *Early to Rise,* at the time the largest-circulation online daily newsletter. In real life, I'm a freelance advertising copywriter, now quasi-retired.

John Herrick writes:

> Connoisseur of good questions and board game enthusiast. Find more of my work at https://john.fun/.

Michael Keith is a freelance software engineer and writer of constrained prose and poetry, in which a literary composition is required to satisfy one or more lexical rules. He is the author of numerous articles and several books, including another work of constrained writing, For more news and writings, visit, http://www.cadaeic.net/.

Richard Lederer is the author of sixty books about language, history, and humor, including his best-selling *Anguished English* series and his current books, *Lederer's Language & Laughter* and *A Feast of Words.* He is a founding co-host of "A Way With Words" on public radio. Dr. Lederer has been named International Punster of the Year and Toastmasters International's Golden Gavel winner.

Don Nilsen is the Assistant Dean of Arizona State University's Emeritus College's Division of the Humanities. **Alleen Nilsen** is the wife of Don Nilsen and was ASU's Assistant Vice President for Personnel. Don and Alleen are the co-founders of the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS), and co-winners of the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor Association (AATH). Their most recent books include *Encyclopedia of 20th Century American Humor* (Greenwood, 2000), *Names and Naming in Young Adult Literature* (Scarecrow, 2007) and *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (Pearson, 2013). The Language of Humor (Cambridge University Press) was published in 2019. Since their retirement from ASU's English Department in 2011, they have taught courses for the ASU Honors College, Osher, New Adventures, New Frontiers, Sagewood, Stonegate, Sun City, Friendship Village, and the Arizona Humanities Council.

ANSWERS

Peculiar Portmanteaus

1. Yoga + Gorilla = Yogorilla
2. Sleepy + Piano = Sleepiano
3. Shark + Charcuterie = Sharkcuterie
4. Referee + Eagle = Refereeagle
5. Bengal + Golf = Bengolf
6. Canoe + Newton = Canewton
7. Feline + Linebacker = Felinebacker
8. Giraffe + Raft = Girraft
9. Lincoln + Convertible = Lincolnvertible
10. Bouquet + Cable = Bouqueble

The Billboard Top 100

Serutan Yob	nature boys	|	Ain't No California	African oil nation
Saber Dance	sacred bean	|	Baker Street	brake tester
Careless Hands	hardness scale	|	Short People	stopper hole
It Is No Secret	resectionist	|	Slow dancing	downscaling
Secret Love	clove trees	|	Golden Tears	goaltenders
Richest Man	mischanter	|	Super Trouper	pourpresture
Lisbon Antigua	biangulations	|	Cool Change	Cochlogena
Port au Prince	porcupine rat	|	Upside Down	downside-up
Come In, Stranger	romantic greens	|	It's All I Can Do	Old Castilian
Teacher's Pet	space tether	|	Radio Heart	arthrodiae
Personality	antileprosy	|	The Fireman	in the frame
Three Stars	shatterers	|	Then It's Love	novelettish
Sermonette	tensometer	|	Armageddon It	Great Diamond
Reasons to Live	Rooseveltians	|	Swing The Mood	smooth-winged
Tracy's Theme	tachymeters	|	I Got Dreams	dogmatiser
The Madison	nasethmoid	|	They Rage On	Heterogyna
Apple Green	Plagerepne	|	It's No Crime	microtines
Calendar Girl	Cardan grille	|	Sacred Ground	ground-cedars
My True Story	mystery tour	|	Life's a Dance	defailances
Limbo Dance	Demoblican	|	When She Cries	Chinese shrew
Percolator	Procaterol	|	One Last Cry	alectryons
Martian Hop	Amphitorna	|	In Pictures	unit prices
California Sun	californianus	|	Wrong Night	night-grown
Here I Stand	dishearten	|	Swear It Again	waiting areas
Thanks a Lot	talkathons	|	Miss Independent	independentisms
I Get Around	outreading	|	Meant to Live	metavoltine
Percolatin'	pratincole	|	Headstrong	stag-horned
The Race Is On	Heteroscian	|	I Can't Sleep	plasticene
Silhouettes	hotel suites	|	Better Life	beet lifter
It's Alright	trail sight	|	Incomplete	emplection
Tiger Woman	worm-eating	|	I'm Impressed	demipremiss
I Can Hear Music	Chaucerianism	|	It's America	Erismatica
Caroline No	Neo-Lanicor	|	I Need a Doctor	dedecoration
Tonight Carmen	magnetic north	|	Scream and Shout	trachomedusans
Red and Blue	lead-burned	|	Springsteen	presentings
Mr Pleasant	master plan	|	Ready Set Roll	all-destroyer
Mister Nico	microtines	|	Almost Home	Holostemma
Tin Soldier	Tridesilon	|	Black Roses	rasselbock
Rise and Shine	die in harness	|	The Monster	stenotherm
I'd Rather Love You	Holiday Overture	|	Where It's At	wreathiest
Brown Sugar	burrawongs	|	Elastic Heart	Castile earth
Rose Garden	green roads	|	Night's On Fire	forehintings
Peace Train	paraenetic	|	One Last Time	tasimelteon
Moon Shadow	womanhoods	|	Blank Space	backplanes
I Ain't Never	Inverinate	|	Lights Come On	technologism
Nickel Song	slockening	|	No Promises	spoonerism
Good Things	goodnights	|	She Ain't In It	ianthinites
Show and Tell	the Lowlands	|	Trampoline	intemporal

Spy the moon



My, the spoon!