# The Journal of Wordplay

#9 • May 2025



Comedy Music Interviews

Word Game: Handstands

All 720 AEIOUY Combos

Punsters' Competition

New Dictionary Game

Book Title Anagrams

Lipograms: Math - e

Automynorcagrams

"New Beginnings"

Plus: Double Features · TM Misuse

"Nonagrams" · Dictation Errors

THE JOURNAL OF WORDPLAY

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T Campbell

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http://tcampbell.net

Published Quarterly in February, May, August, November

Issue #9

May 2025

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Don Hauptman

Janice Campbell

Front cover image from **PNGTree.** Back cover image from **eBay.** Masthead designed by **John Langdon.**

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## INTRODUCTION

T Campbell, editor

You'll notice there's not as many pieces from me, this time out—just two lengthy interviews with talented comedy musicians and a piece on automynorcagrams, an exotic kind of wordplay good for recharging the creative juices! Many thanks to Steve Goodie and Luke Ski for sharing detailed insight into the process of creating parodies and original comedy songs.

There are a few reasons there's less *me* this time: A scriptwriting day job is keeping me busy, and much of the wordplay-related writing I produced this quarter was further exploration of the history of crosswords, which I now plan to run in the next issue.

I'd always planned to let others take more of the writing reins of the *Journal* in the long run, though there may be some ebb and flow ahead—I do have more ideas for explorations I want to try. But the body of work represented in this issue allows me to step back, for this issue at least, with a clear conscience.

One piece we're publishing is a real magnum opus and the end of a long quest. Eric Chaikin has found an entry for all 720 possible sequences of vowels in euryvocalic phrases (those with one each of AEIOUY). Ranging across a vast body of interdisciplinary knowledge, this is a feat years in the making and worth the wait.

Darryl Francis has some work with euryvocalics and supervocalics worth sharing too, as well as a piece in celebration of our ninth issue. The former work shows his fruitful collaboration with Mike Keith, who's also found impressive sets of book-title anagrams and researched the world of e-less arithmetic.

Matt Abate's come up with a variation on Hangman that can provide hours of diversion, as can the exercise Richard Lederer offers up, "New Beginnings."

Louis Phillips offers up some pairings for film lovers and a few of his usual ridiculous dictionary (ridictionary?) entries.

Last and definitely not least, *The Journal of Wordplay*'s resident punster Don Hauptman includes three pieces: a meditation on the misuse of trademark marks, a collection of speech-to-text snafus, and an eyewitness report from Austin, Texas, about the 2025 O. Henry Pun-Off!

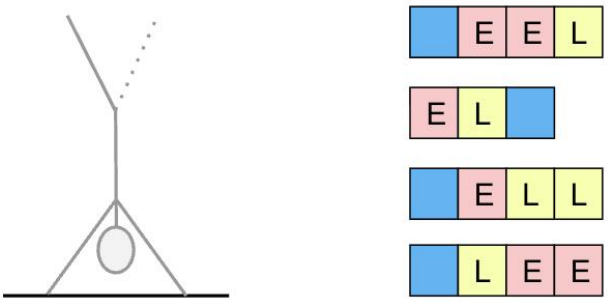
If you're moved by this display of creativity to contribute a piece of your own, just inspect the submission guidelines in the back. We'd love to have you, and we have room for some new voices! ■

## HANDSTANDS

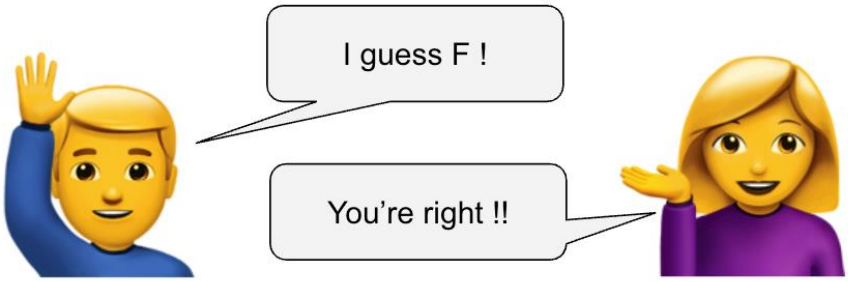
Matthew Abate
mabate13@gmail.com

### Introduction

This article presents a word game called ***Handstands***.




Failed Attempts: A, G, V, T, N




The gameplay is very similar to *hangman*. There are two players. One selects a set of words in advance and draws blanks for their letters, ***marking the locations of repeated letters.*** A second player will guess one letter at a time, until either all words are completed, or they reach six failed guesses, at which point a person performing a handstand is drawn to signify the failure.

Unlike hangman, which prioritizes short phrases or longer words containing many distinct letters, handstands prioritize choosing many semantically unrelated words that together use as few letters as possible.

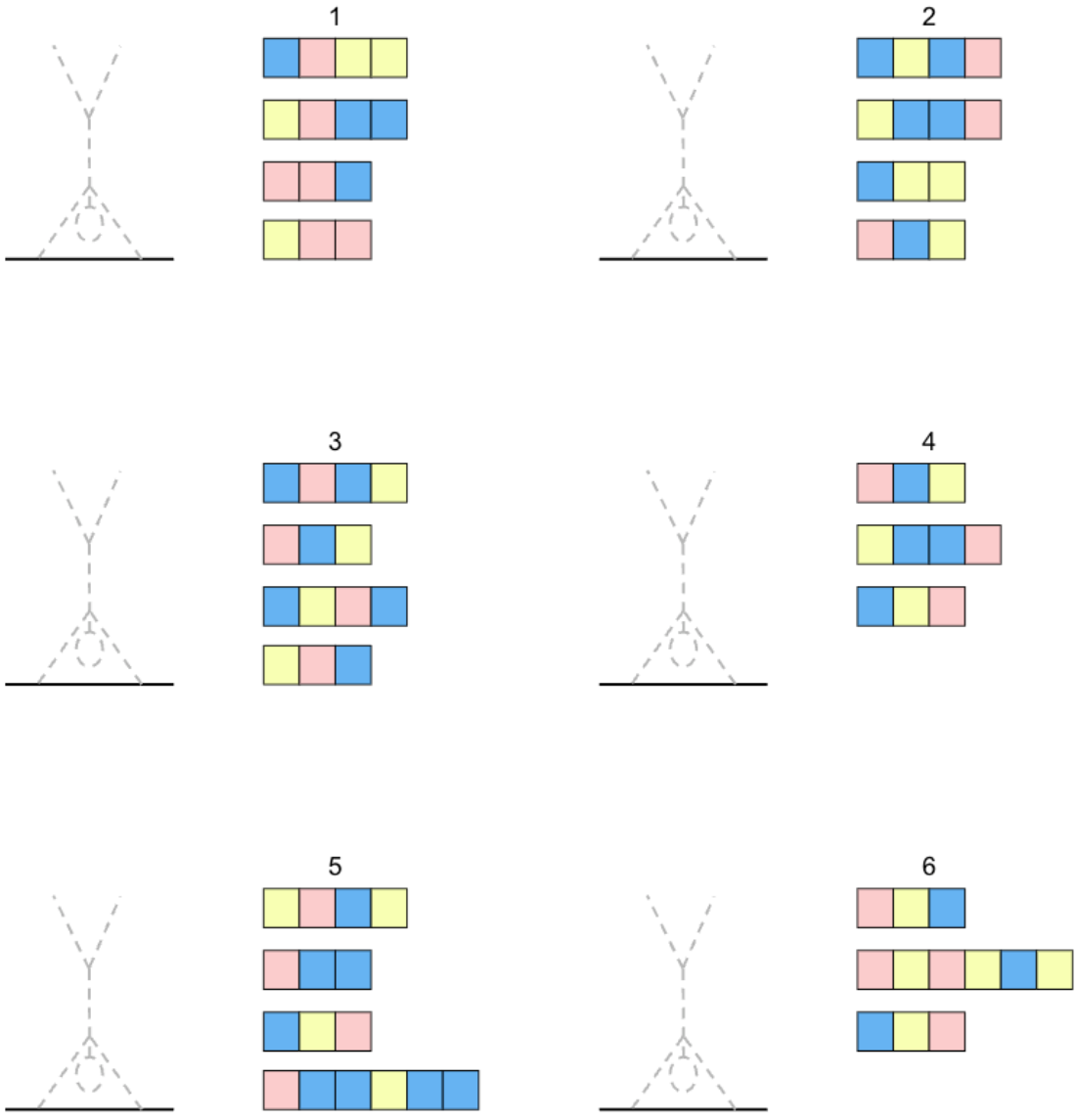
The remainer of this article is a game set, and I've provided the solutions in such a way that you can play by yourself or with a partner.

Enjoy the Handstands!

– Matt

## Games

The written-out solutions are provided on page 82. To play with one player, refer to the solution checker below. ■

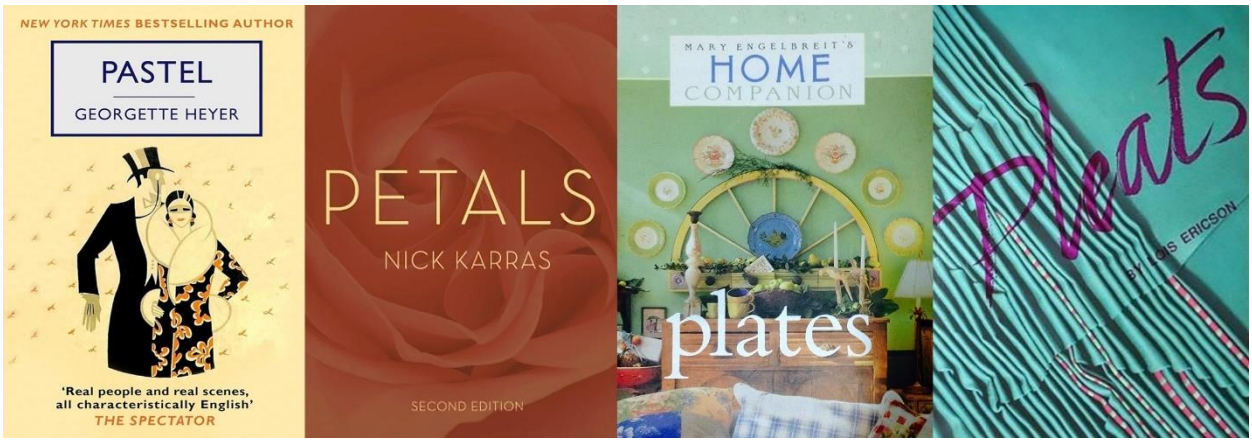



| Solution Checker | B | Z | A | M | D | X | U | O | K | S | I | T | P | F | E | V | Q | N | C | H | R | G | L | J | Y | W |
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| Puzzle #3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Puzzle #4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Puzzle #1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## QUADRUPLE AND SEXTUPLE BOOK TITLE ANAGRAMS

Michael Keith

In "More Book Title Anagrams" (*The Journal of Wordplay* #8, Feb. 2025, p. 48) a collection of book pairs and triplets were presented in which the two or three book titles in each group are mutual anagrams, and this question was asked: can a group of four or more mutual-anagram books be found? The answer is yes, and here we'll show examples of four and six.




*Pastel* is one of the lesser-known works of English author Georgette Heyer (1902–1975). Unlike her signature historical romances, this novel has a contemporary setting.

*Petals* is a 2003 book of photographs by California photographer Nick Karras. (What they are photographs *of* is interesting—look it up!)

*Plates* is one in a series of books by Mary Engelbreit on home decoration.

*Pleats* is a book on that subject by well-known sewing expert Lois Ericson.

---

*Slate* is a 2017 novel by Sandra Conner about the owner of a charter boat service in Florida. Why the title? As the blurb says, "Everyone calls him Slate."

*Stale* is a 2020 novel by Dutch author Finn Holland about the life of a high-school student named James Yale. Maybe everyone calls him Stale?

*Steal*, by Charlotte McGinlay, is pretty much what it says on the book cover photo!

*Stela* is a novel set in an authoritarian regime by accomplished author Anca Cristofovici, who has published work in three different languages (English, French, and Romanian).

*Tales* is a best-selling series of at least four volumes of stories about the conductor of a train that travels to different worlds from a central hub called The Station Between Worlds.

*Tesla* is Book 1 of a science-fiction tetralogy called *Tesla Evolution.* There are also two biographies of Nikola Tesla that could qualify, but each has a subtitle (in rather small print on the cover), so it's unclear if referring to the book as just *Tesla* is legitimate. These two books are *Tesla: Inventor of the Electrical Age* and *Tesla: Man Out of Time*.)




Is it possible to find a seven? Perhaps, but it won't be easy! ■

## NONAGRAMS

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No, this article's title is not a misspelling of NANOGRAMS! It's a nonce word which alludes to anagrams of words beginning with the sequence NON-, to celebrate this ninth issue of the *Journal.* Familiar words beginning with NON- where it indicates some connection to "nine" include NONAGON (a nine-sided polygon), NONAGENARIAN (a person in their nineties), NONANE (a hydrocarbon with nine carbon atoms), and NONUPLET (one of nine siblings).

But…there are plenty of other words beginning with NON- which have nothing to do with the number nine and simply refer to the absence or lack of something. I'm going to treat these as NON- words.

The following 22 sets of transposals all begin with NON-. All are taken from my extensive collection of transposals having 10 or more letters. Careful scrutiny should reveal that the fourth letters of the NON- words progress through the alphabet—A, B, C and so on. Each transposal pair has a percentage figure to its right. Each percentage is a measure of how well-mixed the two transposals are. For a detailed explanation of how the percentages are calculated, using the "minimum number of blocks" metric, see Mike Keith's article "More Book Title Anagrams" in the February 2025 edition of the *Journal.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| nonaltruistic | instructional | 53.8% |
| nonbilabiate | inobtainable | 83.3% |
| noncurantist | unconstraint | 66.7% |
| nondictatorialness | condensation trails | 83.3% |
| nonempirical | prenominical | 66.7% |
| nonfertile | Florentine | 90.0% |
| nongeometrical | inconglomerate | 71.4% |
| nonhistorical | chlorinations | 76.9% |
| nonidealist | alstonidine | 54.5% |
| nonjuristical | junction rails | 76.9% |
| nonliteracy | intolerancy | 72.7% |
| nonmediation | denomination | 58.3% |
| nonnautical | cannulation | 72.7% |
| nonorientals | resinotannol | 75.0% |
| nonpearlitic | pratincoline | 83.3% |
| nonqualities | quinolinates | 66.7% |
| nonrecessive | overniceness | 75.0% |
| nonsyntonical | inconsonantly | 69.2% |
| nontheatric | trochantine | 81.8% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| nonuniversalist | involuntariness | 93.3% |
| nonvisitation | innovationist | 53.8% |
| nonylamine | in name only | 70.0% |

All the well-mixed percentages are greater than 50%, with one of them as high as 90%.
All the words (and terms) can be found in one or more of various standard dictionaries. But what about the four gaps? There are no 10-letter transposals beginning nonk-, nonw-, nonx- and nonz-. But the nonw- gap could be filled with this 9-letter pair:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| nonwhites | whinstone | 66.7% |

However, I can't offer transposals of any length for words beginning nonk-, nonx- and nonz-. Can readers help out?

A postscript: readers will also be aware that the prefixes NOVEM- and NOVEN- also relate to things with a connection to the number nine. For example, NOVEMBER (the ninth month in the old Roman calendar) and NOVENNIAL (occurring every nine years). So, to finish off with, here are two pairs of transposals, one with nine letters, and one with ten letters. As before, the well-mixed percentages are shown:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| novemdial | movieland | 88.9% |
| novenaries | Savonnerie | 80.0% |

Readers are invited to submit additional NOVEM- and NOVEN- transposals. ■

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## DOUBLE FEATURES GAME

Louis Phillips

*Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*
*The Odd Couple*

*Stolen Kisses*
*The French Connection*

*Giant*
*The Big Sleep*

*Cheaper By the Dozen*
*With Six You Get Eggroll*

*Fahrenheit 451*
*Some Like it Hot*

*Days of Wine and Roses*
*The Grapes of Wrath*

*The Razor's Edge*
*Blade Runner*

*Midnight Cowboy*
*12 O'clock High* ■

## AUTOMYNORCAGRAMS

T Campbell

In *Word Ways* #8.3, fifty years ago, Howard W. Bergerson introduced the **automynorcagram.** An automynorcagram is a kind of *backronym.* The letters in the first word of an automynorcagram are initials for the first set of words in it. Consider:

> ***This h**its **i**n **s**equence.*

Many automynorcagrams are second-degree automynorcagrams, in which the effect continues over two words…

> ***I love o**verdone **v**ideo **e**pisodes.* ☜
> ***What happened? A**re **t**hey **h**ere? **A**re **p**eople **p**laying? **E**verybody **n**eed **e**xtra **d**rinks?*

…or even more.

Of course, the longer the automynorcagram, the harder it gets to do it with grace and style. That's the challenge of constrained writing, whether the constraint is that "alternating lines must rhyme" or "this paragraph must mention every color in the rainbow." For automynorcagrams, the constraint is that "the initials of each word must be identical to every letter, in order, of the first word or words."

Here's another example. I started this one as a riff on Smash Mouth's "All Star," before it got away from me and went into a direction more cynical about male-female relationships than I usually go…

> ***Somebody once mentioned, "Each b**oy **o**rates **d**eception," **y**ou're **o**vertrusting **N**ed's **c**andidness… **E**very **m**an, **e**very **n**ame, **t**ells **i**t **o**nce; **n**ow **e**very **d**ame **e**xposes **a c**oncealed **h**appiness…*

Bergerson challenged *Word Ways* contributors to come up with an automynorcagrammical version of Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven." Probably the best result is Matt Franklin's entry, reproduced here:

> *One night, evil, nerves imploded,*
> *Guts hitched, thoughts exploded,*
> *Very introspective, letting nether energies restore…*
> *Vocal echoes sounded in*
> *Monstrous pandemonium,*
> *Lawlessness of devildom etched deeply, gashing underscore.*
> *That scoundrel, horrible, infernal troubadour!*
> *Cease howling, evermore!*
> *Drawled the heathen opposition, under godless Hell's tradition:*
> *"Such explicit xenophobia! Prejudice! Leave open door!"*
> *"Evil doings validated? Evil ruined you!" I negated.*

*”The rank odor saturated, penetrated every core.*
*This I vow, ex-angel Lucifer, else tempted to implore:*
*Never growl, nevermore.”*
*Ended then Hell’s evildoing,*
*Restoratively eschewing*
*Nastily explosive riots getting inner eardrums sore.*
*Rhapsody! Eternal silence tunes out roiling evil violence.*
*Oh, cacophony’s annihilance lets exquisite claim hang o’er.*
*Even so, some other ugly net’s descending evermore—*
*Death. I’m nevermore.*

The odd little blog linked here includes a few examples of *reciprocal* automynorcagrams, in which the words of the first work spell out the initial letters of the second work, and the words of the second spell out the initial letters of the first:

*IN VIEW EUROPA = I’ve not visited into Europa’s waters, Europa’s unusual rivers: ovular, panoramic, aimless.*

*I’VE NOT VISITED = In view Europa never opens today’s varied infinity, sitting in tilted eagerness, drowning.*

Automynorcagrams haven’t caught on like the most popular wordplay types. Sure, *all* wordplay is a niche interest, but even so, you’re far more likely to hear about limericks or anagrams. Aside from their clunky name, one frustration of the form is that there’s no way to “win” at it. You’re never finished: every word you add implies another set of words to initialize, so even the best automynorcagrams can’t achieve full closure, only be abandoned. Or, if you prefer…

You only “unfinish,” obviously. No letters you use now finalize it. So horizonless! Or bottomless. Vast implications of uninterrupted series. Lost your nerve? Oh, let’s extend this treatise embarrassingly, ridiculously. Say “You only unfinish.” Under scrutiny, everyone’s now off with, for instance, natterings about lions, iguanas, zebras. In time, sense or humor or rational insight zonks out. Now, length extends silly sentences: *Orderly rabbis bathe ordinary types; that overextends male life expectancy.* Silly, see? ■

## ADJACENTS
## or READING THE DICTIONARY AS PROSE

Anil
Perth, Australia

For a fun solitaire or party game, look for meaningful runs (phrases, sentences) of two or more consecutive headwords or their inflections in the same order they appear in a dictionary. I recommend a pocket dictionary for best results. You may treat adjacent forms of the same word as a single entry. This got me started: **seminal seminar semination** (planting the seed of a seminal idea at a key colloquium). Here are my best results for A-C from Merriam-Webster's *Pocket Dictionary.*

"**Abolish, abominate Aborigines!**" Mentality of many early (and some current!) White Oz settlers. *(Meant as satire, no offence intended!)*
**Abstruse absurdities abundant.** Sigh of the times (No typo, sigh!).
**Acknowledge acme acne.** Admit it—zits explosion!
**Actuate acumen, acupuncture!** Asking a lot of non-traditional medicine (but not too much, I suspect).
**Adolescents adopt adorable adornments.** Much ado—about nothing. *(Adorable??)*
**Aerospace: aesthetics afar**. Ethereal sky beauty.
**Aged—agenda: agents' aggrandizement**. Robbing the old and defenseless.
***Ahoy! Aid* aide's AIDS ailment!** *You!* Donate to their treatment fund *now!*
**Alchemy Alcohol Alcove**. Name of a liquor store in la-la land.
**Aliens alight alit.** UFOs land fully aglow.
**Aloneness alongside aloofness**. The hermitic life, or life at the top Trump-style.
**Amateur's amatory amazement.** Beginner's luck at lovemaking.
**AMOEBAE AMOK AMONG AMORAL AMOROUS AMORPHOUSNESS** (headline)
So that's what those frisky shapeshifting protozoa get up to when we're not looking!
**Anachronistic anaconda anagram's anal analgesic.** Outdated anagram of anaconda unbelievably relieves proctalgia.
**"Anathema anatomy!"—ancestors.** They used to think the body was sinful.
**Anus anvil anxiety**. Fear of sitting on or being struck on one's rear by an anvil.
**Apostate apostle**. Backslider.
**Appealing appearance appeases.** Good aesthetics can overcome hostility.
**Approach approbations appropriately.** Be reasonable with praise.
**Army aroma around!** You can smell where soldiers have exercised.
**Arrested arrive arrogantly.** "I'm innocent, goddammit!"
**Asinine ask**…dumb questions.
**Avarice avenged**. Greed didn't pay!
**Ban banal banana band.** Avoid humdrum Latin music.
**Bear beard-bearing beasts.** Tolerate hairy-chinned animals.
**Below belt bemoan.** Ouch, low blow!
**Bend beneath benediction.** Genuflect.

**Bewail, beware bewildering bewitchment.** I warned you about her. Yes, the **bitch's bite's bitter.**
**Bigoted big shot bigwig bikie**. Typical Trumpie enforcer.
**Blockade blockheads.** Obstruct stupid obstructionists!
**Blurry blurb blurted.** Incoherent nonsense, e.g., Trump's?
**Bogus bohemian**. Fake rebel.
**Boo booby book!** Prude's opinion. Similarly, **bust bustle busies busybody.**
**Bootleg booty booze (bourbon bourgeoise's bout?)** ODing, legally or not.
**Brightness's brilliance brim**. Intelligence limit (or Mensa?).
**Broke, brokenhearted broker**. "Damn that 'sure thing' I bet everything on! I wish I'd chosen not to **buy buzz** and follow the fad."
**Cafeteria caffeine cage**. Coffee addicts trapped.
**Cameo camera camouflage camp campaign**. Paparazzi?
**Capitalist capitalizes Capitol.** Typical political bribery.
**Cardiovascular care careens.** It takes a dive in an overloaded hospital.
**Catty catwalk Caucasian**. Gossipy snow-white model.
**Cement cemetery.** Where dead sidewalks are buried? Cheap tombstones? Paved burial grounds?
**Change channel chant.** Get that off my TV!
**Charismatic charity charlatan charm**. Fake charity con artist.
**Climate climax climbs!** Greenhouse effect spirals despite high-level denials.
**"Connoisseur" connotes connubial conqueror?** Expert seducer defined.
**Constitutional constraint**. A concept anathema to Trump.
**Contact contagion? Contain contamination!** Ditto to RFK Jr. (and Trump).
**Contemplating contemporary contempt**. Why is everyone so angry?
**Continuously contorting contours**. Trump's at it again.
**Convenient convent conventions converge.** Pope imposes a norm. (As do witches', cf., c**ovens' covenants coverage.**)
**Convict's conviction convincing**. Guilty beyond doubt.
**Cossack's costly costume**. Dear but required gear.
**Cows cow cowardly cowboy.** The bulls fight back; aka a "cattle drive."
**Create creature credence credentials.** Get an official pedigree.
**Crucifixion crude, cruel.** Just ask Jesus. ■

## THE CLANG OF SYMBOLS

## Unpacking a Humorous Device of Dubious Merit

Don Hauptman
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For more than half a century, the print edition of *The New York Times* has been delivered to my door each morning. It's one of the sources for my compilations of funny media bloopers and oddities, published periodically in *The Journal of Wordplay*.

Earlier this year, however, I spotted in its pages another sort of solecism: the use of the trademark symbol for allegedly humorous purposes. The writer couldn't exercise restraint, going on to deploy the gag *two more times.*

As a matter of discretion, I'm omitting the offender's byline and other identifying information. Instead, here's a hypothetical example. Suppose someone's beloved relative devised an original recipe. He decides to share it in a community newsletter or on a neighborhood website. It's presented as: My Aunt Gertrude's Secret Chocolate Cake™.

Of course, the pastry *isn't* really trademarked. The joker reckoned that the superscript symbol was amusing, or that the honorific lent a distinction, however fictitious, to the culinary feat. Many years ago, I read that the panjandrums at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) frown on such shenanigans. After all, it's a misuse—illegitimate and potentially confusing. Further, the abuse is disrespectful to those who own *real* trademarks, and to their entrepreneurial efforts and achievements.

Trademarks come in a couple of flavors. When they are registered with the USPTO, the word or phrase or logo is followed by ®. When they are unregistered, TM is used. Legitimate examples: Nintendo Switch 2™ and Nike's slogan, Just Do It®. Whether registered or unregistered, the mark is protected and enforceable against copycats and other infringement, though registration offers broader protection.

To determine the legal implications of the facetious appropriation of the symbols, I contacted the International Trademark Association (INTA). I was referred to Catherine M.C. Farrelly, an attorney and partner at Frankfurt Kurnit Klein + Selz in New York. She is a leading authority on trademark law and Chair of INTA's U.S. Trademark Office Practices Subcommittee.

Ms. Farrelly told me that the USPTO encourages proper trademark use, but added: "As a practical matter, the use of a trademark notice symbol in a comedic fashion is unlikely to have any real consequences under U.S. law. The purpose of the law on false use of notice symbols is to protect the public from fraud, not jokes of questionable funniness."

Aside from the legal and ethical considerations, the device is by now bromidic, cliché, tired, old hat, and eye-rollingly twee. And no longer risible, if it ever was.

I sent *The Times* a complaint about its misbehaving columnist. I received a reply from an editor whose responsibilities include such matters. His thoughtful response concluded with: "Please consider your point raised. We . . . will discuss this and save the critique for future training and reminders with our staff."

Confession: Despite the above whinge, I occasionally succumb to the temptation myself. But I devised a mischievous solution. For example, I routinely ship news clippings and other items to friends around the country via postal mail. If I fail to receive an acknowledgment, I might follow up with an email message: "Did you receive the Donvelope$^{\text{NOT TM}}$ I sent a week ago?" ■

* * *

## TO ERR IS NON-HUMAN
## More Amusing Dictation Gaffes

Don Hauptman

Here's a new batch of personal "Who's Siri Now?" iPhone bloopers via email, texting, and search. Below, what I dictated, followed by what appeared on screen:

● *ameliorated*: *Amelia rated*

● *apparently*: *a powered lady*

● *assiduously*: *I said Wesley*

● *catch her unawares or asleep*: *underwear for a sleepover*

● *cognoscenti*: *cardio Sandy*

● *coincided*: *go inside it*

● *doppelgänger*: *double Jäeger* [a liqueur]

● *is the Getty* [museum]: *is spaghetti*

● *nightingale*: *knight and Gail*

● *reconnaissance*: *ricotta salad*

Curiously, on two occasions, *philharmonic* generated different results: *Phil erotic* and a possible fashion mogul named *Phil Armani.* ■

## NEW BEGINNINGS

Richard Lederer
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When I was a child, I conjured up "a butterfly will flutter by." As a teenager, I improved that to "a dragonfly will drink its flagon dry." I was editor-in-chief of my junior high school literary magazine and my high school newspaper. Words have always embraced me, and the alphabet dances in my brain.

I owe these abilities to three letters—OCD. In truth, I am blessed with CDO, which is OCD in alphabetical order. Thanks to the convergence of genes, environment, and drive, I experience spasmodic joy about my unstinting love affair with language.

Here is one example of my CDO: What is the longest string of fairly common Modern English lower-case words in which you add a single letter to the beginning of a set of letters? Here are 20 double-digit clusters that I've identified: Most of the lists would have been longer had I included arcane, recondite words, but my unstinting policy is that I employ only words that a fair swath of English speakers actually use. For instance, I believe that a number of people recognize and employ the word *vig*, "the charge for accepting a gambling wager," and those who play the rhyming game *hink pink* (short for *inky pinky*), recognize the word *hink*.

For this exercise, I considered *qu* as a single letter, since *q* rarely turns up unaccompanied in any common words.

Compiling these lists was, as Shakespeare quilled, "a mingled yarn, good and ill together." The good was when I conjured up a clever vowel to start a word, such as *oink* grunting its way into my *dink fink* cluster. The ill was the many attempts that sadistically fell short. For example, *brown crown drown frown* and *grown* burst out of the blocks to supply the first five double consonants in a row…and then—*Weep weep! Sob sob! Honk honk!*—nothing, nada, zilch, bupkis, not even one bupki, afterward.

Here are my 53 double-digit examples. I challenge you verbivorous readers to add words to these lists or create new clusters.

*10 words*

back hack jack lack pack quack rack sack tack yack
bale dale gale hale kale male pale sale tale vale
ban can fan man nan pan ran tan van wan
bate date fate gate hate late mate pate rate sate
bee fee gee hee lee nee pee see tee wee
bend fend lend mend pend rend send tend vend wend
bicker dicker kicker licker nicker picker quicker sicker ticker wicker
bight eight fight light might night right sight tight wight
bing ding king ling ping ring sing ting wing zing
bo do go ho lo no quo so to yo
bone cone done gone hone lone none pone tone zone

boot coot foot hoot loot moot root soot toot zoot
bop cop fop hop lop mop oop pop sop top wop
buck duck fuck huck luck muck puck suck tuck yuck
buff cuff duff guff huff luff muff puff ruff tuff
bug dug fug hug jug lug mug pug rug tug
bull cull dull full gull hull lull mull null pull
cave fave gave have lave nave pave rave save wave
caw haw jaw law maw naw paw raw saw yaw
deal heal meal peal real seal teal veal weal zeal
gilt hilt jilt kilt lilt milt quilt silt tilt wilt

*11 words*

bam cam dam gam ham jam lam mam ram tam yam
bang dang fang gang hang pang rang sang tang wang yang
bare care dare fare hare mare nare pare rare tare ware
bash cash dash gash hash lash mash quash rash sash wash
bet get jet let met net pet set vet wet yet
bent cent dent gent lent pent rent sent tent vent went
big cig dig fig gig jig pig rig vig wig zig
bin din fin gin kin pin sin tin vin win yin
bob cob fob gob hob job lob mob nob rob sob
bock cock dock hock jock lock mock pock rock sock tock
bore core fore gore lore more pore sore tore wore yore
but cut gut hut jut mut nut out put rut tut
dine fine line mine nine pine sine tine vine wine zine

*12 words*

bail fail hail jail mail nail pail quail rail sail tail wail
bake cake fake hake jake lake make quake rake sake take wake
bar car ear far gar har jar mar oar par tar war
bear dear fear gear hear near pear rear sear tear wear year
bit fit hit kit lit nit pit quit sit tit wit zit
best fest jest lest nest pest quest rest test vest west zest
dick hick kick lick mick nick pick quick rick sick tick wick
dip hip kip lip nip pip quip rip sip tip yip zip
bell cell dell fell hell jell pell-mell quell sell tell well yell
bill dill fill gill hill kill mill pill quill rill sill till will

*13 words*

bag gag hag jag lag mag nag quag rag sag tag wag zag
boo coo doo foo goo loo moo poo too woo yoo-hoo zoo
bot cot dot got hot jot lot not pot rot sot tot zot
bow cow how low mow now pow row sow tow vow wow yow
cap gap hap jap lap map nap pap rap sap tap yap zap
dink fink hink jink kink link mink oink pink rink sink tink wink

*14 words*
bad cad dad fad gad had lad mad pad quad rad sad tad wad
bat cat eat fat gat hat lat mat oat pat rat sat tat vat

For me, the runaway champion is this string of 18 words:

bay cay day fay gay hay jay kay lay may nay pay quay ray say vay way yay ■

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## NEW DICTIONARY OF WEIRDS

Louis Phillips

BLUBBERMOUTH – A person who cannot help talking about *Moby Dick.*

COMBFORT – Barbershop.

CRABBAGE – Popular card game played with a peg board and a head of cabbage.

CRICKETTEARS – Sobbing when your country loses an important international match.

CYPHERPRESS – Any tree that grows in a puzzling manner.

DIPLOMATH – The act of explaining to voters where all the money went.

HOPTOMETRY – The profession devoted to helping people to look before they leap.

LAMPOON – Tool used to capture whales that gives off more light than an ordinary harpoon.

LETTERGIVERSATION – The act of starting to spell a difficult word and then giving up and trying to think of a synonym instead.

MANGERAMA – A wide-screen 3-D documentary exploring the birthplace of Jesus.

MENUDACIOUS – Describing a restaurant's offerings in an extravagant or fallacious manner.

PELESCOPE – Device once used to watch an all-time great soccer player.

PREDICTIONARY – Alphabetical listing of psychics' statements about the future.

PUNHEAD – Pinhead with a better vocabulary.

SLIDEWALK – Icy pavement.

TRIMPRESARIO --Expert barber.

VALENTINY – A card to be sent in February to a person you only love a little. ■

## AT THE 2025 O. HENRY PUN-OFF, I WAS "IN MY ELEPHANT"

## An Exclusive On-the-Scene Report for *The Journal of Wordplay*

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For decades, I had heard about the annual Pun-Off competitions in Austin, Texas, but had never attended. This year, I flew to Austin for the 48th annual production, an all-day event on Saturday, May 10. I didn't participate but was merely an observer and intrepid reporter for this publication. ("Forgive us our press passes.")

Here is my eyewitness report. . . .

The afternoon main event is called the Punslingers Competition, which is entirely improvisational. Two opponents are assigned a topic, learning it for the first time. Alternating, they spontaneously create a series of puns on the subject. It's doubly challenging because you first have to think of an associated word or term, then come up with a relevant pun, all within a five-second time limit. And then perform this feat repeatedly. A judge penalizes infractions: if it's not a pun, or doesn't fit the category, or duplicates a previous solution in that round, or time runs out. Whew!

Given the draconian rules, many attempts don't quite work. Well, as a diamond cutter might exclaim, "They can't all be gems!" Here are a few of the better efforts I captured, preceded by the categories:

- *Fire*: On a common language misuse: "Infer? No!" Re: college graduation: "First degree." And with a complicated setup involving prisoners who mistreat flags so the vexillological items have to be parsimoniously allocated: "Con flag ration."

- *Currency*: "I'm shilling for time."

- *Retail stores*: "We Macy more puns. . . ." "I told my wife I was dieting but I was Food Lion." "This one is a more Safeway."

- *Cartoons*: "If a friend is overweight, you might have to tell a tubby. . . ." Clever, but disqualified because the characters in the children's show are not animated.

The winners: first place, Blake Bausserman. Second, Arun Debray. Third, Toby Miceli-Gwiazdowski and Jarred Abel.

But wait! There's more! A companion event, beginning in the morning, is called "Punniest of Show." Competitors prepare a two-minute routine, which they either memorize or read from notes. Contestants choose their topics and rattle off puns thereon. Subjects this year included Broadway shows, names of colleges, authors, musical instruments, and desserts. Six judges vote, awarding scores ranging from one to 100. Here too, the quality varies widely, but the judges are diplomatic and generous, rarely bestowing scores below 60, with the best performances ranking way up in the 90s.

Winners: first place, Erika Ettin. Second, Emma Miller. Third, Toby Miceli-Gwiazdowski. Still other activities include an auction, games, social gatherings, and an award to the Punster of the Year. This year, that honor went to Frances McGrath, a local musician, with whom I was chatting when the award was announced and presented.

It all took place alfresco in downtown Austin's Brush Square Park. No official audience count is made, but I estimated the crowd at several hundred.

Over the years, occasional inclement weather has disrupted the Pun-Off. In 2019, it was almost canceled or postponed but was able to relocate to an inside space. This year, the Punslingers event was interrupted by a sudden cloudburst. Fortunately, such disturbances don't last long in Austin, but the unexpected precipitation necessitated a break of an hour, after which almost everyone, audience and contestants alike, returned. (I was reminded of the African monarchy that was overturned because of a botched safari. Hence the headline: "Reign Called on Account of Game.")

The Pun-Off's origins are murky. By one account, in 1977, a few locals were indulging in recreational drugs—or in another version, beer—behind the O. Henry Museum. They started punning competitively and decided to turn the diversion into a formal event. But this story might be a legend or "apocryphal awry."

Further, no one can provide a plausible explanation for why the event is named for O. Henry, though he did occasionally indulge in wordplay. I admire his work and read all of his published stories decades ago. Austin was one of the places he lived and where he was married, and whence he drew ideas for his colorful fiction. Just steps from the stage is the aforementioned O. Henry Museum, and some of the same people are involved in both the museum and the Pun-Off.

Forty-eight years is an impressive track record. During the pandemic, the show went on via Zoom. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, and some of the improvisational-theater performers there decamped to Austin, which offered them a temporary venue. I was told that by then, the Pun-Off participants and audiences had been aging and that this serendipitous incursion "revitalized" the Pun-Off with a bevy of younger people. Indeed, those I met this year, and observed onstage and in the audience, represented a wide range of ages.

Gary Hallock is generally credited for the success of the Pun-Off in its current form. Gary produced and hosted the event for many years. The "Punniest of Show" First Prize trophy is named in his honor. Sadly, Gary died in 2023, following a long illness.

Jerzy Gwiazdowski, a writer/performer who teaches at the New School in New York City (and brother of the equally talented Toby; see above), has garnered a multitude of top awards in the past 13 competitions, including first place in both 2024 contests. In response to my request for his thoughts about the Pun-Off, he said this:

"Although I take this foolish event very seriously, the most important thing about it, for me, is the community that it has created. These are folks I would not have otherwise met whom I get to see once a year and check in with. Among them are people who have become lifelong friends."

The next O. Henry Pun-Off will be on Saturday, May 9, 2026. The application deadline is, appropriately, April 1. So many aspiring punsters apply that contestants are selected by lottery. See www.punoff.com. Posted on the site are lists of winners, videos of past competitions, FAQs, and more. As for this year, in sum, a good time was heard by all! ■

## LIPOGRAM ARITHMETIC

Michael Keith

The E lipogram (writing in English without using the letter E) is one of the most famous writing constraints, but here's a new application of it. Consider an ordinary arithmetic equation using whole numbers, such as

$$2 + 4 + 6 + 54 = 66.$$

Expressed in words, this is

Two plus four plus six plus fifty-four is sixty-six

which is an E lipogram. In a lipogram equation* all the number names must avoid E, and so must the words for any arithmetic operations like *plus*. We've used "is" instead of the usual "equals," but "is" works just as well and is often used this way in casual math discourse.

The whole numbers (integers) whose names are E lipograms were first defined and studied around 1995 by mathematician Neil Sloane, whom you may know from the *Online Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences*, a highly regarded mathematical resource now 62 years old. Almost as interesting as the numbers is the elegant name Sloane devised for them: *eban numbers* (from "e-ban," because the letter E is banned), which fits very nicely into the Fundamental Theorem of Eban Numbers:

*Every Eban number is an Even number*.

which must be one of the very few mathematical theorems containing a pun.

To see why this is true, consider the contrapositive statement: every odd number is *not* an Eban number. This proof of this is simple: the last word in the name of any positive odd integer is either ONE, THREE, FIVE, SEVEN, NINE, or one of the odd TEEN numbers. Every one of these has an E, so...QED.

Each number in a lipogram equation must be an eban number, including the results of any arithmetic operations that are performed, such as the 66 in this example. But simply adding two eban numbers, for example, may or may not produce an eban number. This can be seen by taking the first 19 eban numbers, which are

2, 4, 6, 30, 32, 34, 36, 40, 42, 44, 46, 50, 52, 54, 56, 60, 62, 64, 66

and adding all possible pairs. In the table below, each box in the grid has the sum of the two numbers in the corresponding column and row heading *if that sum is an eban number* (if it is not then the grid square is empty).

*Of course we could consider lipograms for any letter of the alphabet, but in this article, we'll only be using E.

| | 2 | 4 | 6 | 30 | 32 | 34 | 36 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 46 | 50 | 52 | 54 | 56 | 60 | 62 | 64 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4 | 6 | | 32 | 34 | 36 | | 42 | 44 | 46 | | 52 | 54 | 56 | | 62 | 64 | 66 |
| 4 | | | | 34 | 36 | | 40 | 44 | 46 | | 50 | 54 | 56 | | 60 | 64 | 66 | |
| 6 | | | | 36 | | 40 | 42 | 46 | | 50 | 52 | 56 | | 60 | 62 | 66 | | |
| 30 | | | | 60 | 62 | 64 | 66 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 32 | | | | | 64 | 66 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Note that this is actually a 19 x 19 table, but the bottom 14 rows are all empty (because there aren't any eban numbers there) and so are not shown. We see that only 41 of the 190 different sums are an eban number.

There can be large gaps in the sequence of eban numbers—for example, the next eban number after 66 is 2000, so this makes it more difficult to create arithmetic expressions whose value is an eban number since large swaths of the integers are unavailable. The next large gap is between 66,066 and 2,000,000, where there are no eban numbers. But there are enough eban numbers less than or equal to 66,066 to be able to make a sum of 2,000,000, as shown below. To save space we've written the first four lines in numbers rather than words.

64044 + 64046 + 64050 + 64052 + 64054 + 64056 + 64060 + 64062 + 64064 + 64066 +
66000 + 66002 + 66004 + 66006 + 66030 + 66032 + 66034 + 66036 + 66040 + 66042 +
66044 + 66046 + 66050 + 66052 + 66054 + 66056 + 66060 + 66062 + 66064 + 66066 +
6002 + 6004 + 6006 + 6030 + 6032 + 6034 + 2066 +
sixty-six plus sixty-four plus sixty-two plus sixty plus fifty-six plus
fifty-four plus fifty-two plus forty-six plus thirty plus two
is two million.

Note that we usually don't use AND in our number names (as in "two hundred AND fifty-six"), but we could, since AND is E-less.

What's the longest group of consecutive eban numbers, starting from the beginning of the sequence (2, 4, 6, 30, 32, 34, 36, 40, 42, 44, 46, 50, 52, 54, 56, 60, 62, 64, 66, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2030, ...), that can be added together to make a valid eban equation? The answer is quite small—just the first four:

Two plus four plus six plus thirty is forty-two.

Subtraction works naturally, just like addition, by using the E-less word *minus*. By combining addition and subtraction we can make equations like this:

40 – 34 – 64 – 32 + 2 – 54 + 46 – 62 + 50 + 30 + 66 – 44 + 36 + 60 + 56 – 42 + 4 – 52 = 6

Forty minus thirty-four minus sixty-four minus thirty-two
plus two minus fifty-four plus forty-six minus sixty-two plus fifty
plus thirty plus sixty-six minus forty-four plus thirty-six plus sixty
plus fifty-six minus forty-two plus four minus fifty-two is six.

Note that the numbers in this equation are just the first 19 eban numbers, each used once.

Multiplication is tricky. We can't write "X times Y" or "X multiplied by Y" or even "The product of X and Y" since each of those contains an E. As a compromise we use the third option but change "the" to "a." There are just six multiplication equations of the form $x \cdot y = z$ with $x$ and $y$ both less than 100:

A product of two and two is four.
A product of two and thirty is sixty.
A product of two and thirty-two is sixty-four.
A product of six and six is thirty-six.
A product of thirty-four and sixty is two thousand and forty.
A product of forty and fifty is two thousand.

The next smallest one is

A product of two thousand and two thousand is four million.

A larger example is 34,030,034 x 60,066,060 = 2,044,050,064,046,040:

A product of thirty-four million thirty thousand thirty-four
and sixty million sixty-six thousand sixty is
two quadrillion forty-four trillion fifty billion sixty-four million forty-six thousand and forty.

For either addition and multiplication, is the number of possible lipogram equations finite or infinite? If we use only the dictionary names for the powers of 10 (up to vigintillion) then clearly there can only be a finite number, so to make it more interesting we should employ one of the many infinitely extensible naming systems that have been proposed. The most commonly-used method nowadays was published in 1996 by mathematician John Conway and extended by Allen Wechsler—for a good description see the article "Conway's Zillion Numbers" at https://kyodaisuu.github.io/illion/index.html.

In this naming system there is, in fact, an infinite number of E-less names for powers of 10, and an infinite number of E-less addition equations. To make one infinite family, write

*a* X plus *b* X is *c* X

where *a* and *b* are two eban numbers whose sum is an eban number *c*, chosen from the table on this article's first page, and X is one of the (infinite number of) E-less names for a power of 10. For multiplication, we need an additional fact: in the Conway naming system there are an infinite number of powers of 10, say $10^k$, for which *both* of the powers $10^k$ and $10^{2k}$ have E-less names. Then

A product of two {$k$} and thirty {$k$} is sixty {$2k$}.

works, where {$k$} and {$2k$} stand for the names of $10^k$ and $10^{2k}$, respectively. For example, with $k = 123$,

A product of two quadragintillion and thirty quadragintillion is sixty unoctogintillion.

In closing, here are a few more exotic examples. Note that a duotrigintillion is $10^{99}$ in the Conway system, a superscript word indicates a power (just like with numbers), and "!" is a factorial, not an exclamation! ←(*That's* an exclamation, though.)

A product of (four plus six) and two duotrigintillion is two googols.
$\text{Six}^{\text{two}}$ is thirty-six. $\text{Four}^{\text{six}}$ minus $\text{Two}^{\text{six}}$ is four thousand thirty-two.
A sixth root of sixty-four is two (and also minus two).
A product of thirty and four! is six! ■

## SUPERVOCALIC AND EURYVOCALIC NUMBERS

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A supervocalic word is one containing just one each of the five vowels AEIOU. Familiar examples include EDUCATION, HOUSEMAID and SEQUOIA. A euryvocalic word has one each of AEIOUY. Again, familiar examples include AUDIOMETRY, EQUIVOCALLY and FACETIOUSLY. [Sometimes euryvocalics are also called supervocalics, but we'll distinguish them to minimize confusion – Ed.] Over the years, the *Journal*'s predecessor *Word Ways* published many articles about supervocalic words, with the earliest way back in 1969. (All the articles can be found online at digitalcommons.butler.edu/wordways/.)

There is a Facebook group, Supervocalics (found at www.facebook.com/groups/12347124452), with around 550 members. Members post words, names, and terms they have come across which are supervocalic and euryvocalic. Posts are usually accompanied by a photo of the item being posted about. Posts aren't restricted to dictionary words and terms—they can be about anything which catches a poster's attention. Some recent examples include:

SUPER RABBIT BOY (an early reader book)
MAVERICK COUNTY (a county in Texas)
SPINY SQUAT LOBSTER (a North Atlantic lobster).

The investigation of supervocalic items has also explored those with a double helping of AEIOU(Y), and even triple and quadruple helpings of the 5 (or 6) vowels. For example:

ULTRAREVOLUTIONARIES (2 x AEIOU)
HIROSHIMA PEACE CULTURE FOUNDATION (3 x AEIOU)
WILLIAM A. BOOTLE FEDERAL BUILDING AND U.S. COURTHOUSE (4 x AEIOU)

For the remainder of this article, let's explore number names which are supervocalic and euryvocalic. And by "number names," I mean cardinal numbers.

It has often been noted that the lowest number to use the five vowels is FIVE THOUSAND. But the number TWO HUNDRED AND SIX is much lower. Which you prefer as the lowest supervocalic number depends on your view about the use of the word AND in number names. Purists tend to avoid using the word AND in number names, preferring forms such as TWO HUNDRED SIX, but that isn't how most people would speak or write the number 206, preferring TWO HUNDRED AND SIX. Using AND in number names allows for much greater flexibility in seeking out supervocalic and euryvocalic numbers.

Finding very large supervocalic and euryvocalic numbers without using the word AND is fairly challenging because the letter A only occurs in numbers such as THOUSAND, QUADRILLION (1015), QUATTUORDECILLION (1045), QUATTUORVIGINTILLION (1075) and so on. And there is a

problem with attempting to introduce these last two large numbers: the occurrences of the letters I and O will always exceed those of the letter A. It is possible to find additional supervocalic and euryvocalic numbers by using even larger numbers with more than one A, such as QUADRAGINTILLION (10123), UNQUADRAGINTILLION (10126), DUOQUADRAGINTILLION (10129), and QUATTUORQUADRAGINTILLION (10135).

[This paragraph is a bit of a mathematical aside but is important in identifying the names of very big numbers which are supervocalic and euryvocalic. Several different systems have been devised for extending the names for powers of 10 beyond the "dictionary names" up to vigintillion. The method used most often nowadays is the Conway-Wechsler system with the Makinen modification—that's what I'll use here. An extensive list of large number names in this system can be found at: www.olsenhome.com/bignumbers. This list has names for numbers up to 103012. Pretty big, huh! A description of how the names are constructed is at: www.mrob.com/pub/math/largenum.html#conway-wechsler.]

Let's begin by looking at some fairly modest supervocalic numbers which don't use the word AND. I am indebted to Mike Keith, who helped discover many of the supervocalic numbers.

**AEIOU without AND**
Here are those which have just one occurrence of the vowels AEIOU:

Five thousand
Six thousand ten
Eight thousand
Nine thousand
Ten thousand six

**2 x AEIOU without AND**
And for two occurrences of each of the vowels, there is:

Ten quadrillion ten thousand

**3 x AEIOU without AND**
Let's offer some supervocalic numbers with three occurrences of each of the vowels. There's a set of supervocalic numbers using the number name quadragintillion—the smallest and largest of these are:

Two quadragintillion three hundred thousand
Seven hundred quadragintillion two thousand

Larger still are sets of supervocalic numbers using the number names unquadragintillion, duoquadragintillion and quattuorquadragintillion—here's a few examples of these:

One unquadragintillion three thousand

Two unquadragintillion eleven thousand
Seven duoquadragintillion ten thousand
Ten duoquadragintillion seven thousand
One quattuorquadragintillion three
Two quattuorquadragintillion eleven

This short list can be added to by various permutations—for example, *three, seven,* and *twelve* are interchangeable; one and three can be interchanged with two and eleven; and so on. Readers are encouraged to discover others.

**4 x AEIOU without AND**

Mike Keith has found 172 related solutions for this case using quattuorquadragintillion. The smallest of these is:

One quattuorquadragintillion three thousand five

and the largest is:

Nineteen quattuorquadragintillion ten thousand two

**5 x AEIOU without AND**
Anyone care to offer any numbers with this multiple of AEIOU?

Now let's now expand the vowels to include a Y, but still not allowing the use of AND …

**AEIOUY without AND**
Here's a complete listing:

Six thousand twenty
Ten thousand thirty
Ten thousand fifty
Ten thousand sixty
Twenty thousand six
Twenty-six thousand
Thirty thousand ten
Fifty thousand ten
Sixty thousand ten
Eighty thousand
Ninety thousand

**2 x AEIOUY without AND**
Here's another complete listing:

Twenty quadrillion twenty thousand

**3 x AEIOUY without AND**
Anyone care to offer any numbers with a triple helping of AEIOUY? Or even larger multiples of AEIOUY?

Now let's take a look at supervocalic numbers which may use the word AND, but don't necessarily have to.

**AEIOU with AND**
This looks like the complete set of these supervocalics:

Two hundred and six
Six hundred and two
Five thousand
Eight thousand
Nine thousand

**2 x AEIOU with AND**
Here are the supervocalics less than 10,000:

One thousand six hundred and six
Two thousand five hundred and six
Two thousand six hundred and five
Two thousand six hundred and eight
Two thousand six hundred and nine
Two thousand eight hundred and six
Two thousand nine hundred and six
Five thousand two hundred and six
Five thousand six hundred and two
Six thousand one hundred and six
Six thousand two hundred and five
Six thousand two hundred and eight
Six thousand two hundred and nine
Six thousand five hundred and two
Six thousand six hundred and one
Six thousand eight hundred and two
Six thousand nine hundred and two
Eight thousand two hundred and six
Eight thousand six hundred and two
Nine thousand two hundred and six
Nine thousand six hundred and two

Mike Keith comments on the numbers above: “These 21 are really just 4 numbers (1606, 2506, 2608 and 2609) with, respectively, 3, 6, 6 and 6 permutations applied.”

Here are some more much larger numbers:

Three quadrillion and four
Four quadrillion and three
Four quadrillion and seven
Four quadrillion and twelve
Seven quadrillion and four
Ten quadrillion ten thousand
Twelve quadrillion and four
Two hundred quadrillion and ten
Two hundred and ten quadrillion

**3 x AEIOU with AND**
Here’s what is probably the smallest triple AEIOU number:

Four million six hundred and ten thousand and ten

But as Mike Keith notes: “The numbers four, six, ten and ten can be permuted in 12 ways. Also, million can be billion or trillion.” That makes for 36 different 3xAEIOU supervocalic numbers.

Mike commented further: “Besides these, there are about 250 more solutions, almost all based on quadrillion, but a few based on quattuordecillion.”

The smallest 3xAEIOU number using quadrillion is:
One quadrillion six hundred thousand and ten

Readers are encouraged to find the largest 3xAEIOU number using quadrillion.

And the smallest 3xAEIOU number using quattuordecillion is:
Two hundred and six quattuordecillion and ten

Readers are encouraged to find the largest 3xAEIOU number using quattuordecillion. And how about even larger numbers?

**4 x AEIOU with AND**
At this elevated level, 4xAEIOU solutions abound. As Mike commented: “Surprise! I found no less than 3809 solutions. The numerically smallest is …”

One hundred and four million six hundred and six thousand and ten

Readers should feel free to discover some of the other 4xAEIOU numbers.

**5 x AEIOU with AND**
Mike found over 1750 of these numbers, most of them based on quadrillions. The smallest is:

> One hundred and one quadrillion two hundred and six thousand six hundred and six

**6 x AEIOU with AND**
Mike found a whole bunch of these, with the smallest being:

> One hundred and one quadragintillion two hundred and four quadrillion six hundred and ten

**7 x AEIOU with AND**
Mike found some of these, too. The smallest is:

> One hundred and one quattuorquadragintillion one hundred and one quadrillion six hundred and six

**8 x AEIOU with AND**
Anyone care to offer any numbers with this multiple of AEIOU? Or higher multiples? A succeeding article will offer a supervocalic number with 240 occurrences of AEIOU!

Now let's switch to searching for supervocalic numbers using the letter Y—thus, AEIOUY.

**AEIOUY with AND**
This is a complete list:

> Two hundred and thirty
> Two hundred and fifty
> Six hundred and forty
> Twenty-six thousand
> Eighty thousand
> Ninety thousand

**2 x AEIOUY with AND**
Mike commented that: "There are 171 of these supervocalics with the form X THOUSAND [AND] Y, where X and Y are between 1 and 999 and the AND is there depending on the value of Y. Here are the first 10 smallest ones:"

> Twenty thousand two hundred and thirty-six
> Twenty thousand two hundred and fifty-six
> Twenty thousand two hundred and sixty-six
> Twenty thousand six hundred and thirty-two
> Twenty thousand six hundred and forty-six

Twenty thousand six hundred and fifty-two
Twenty thousand six hundred and sixty-two
Twenty-two thousand six hundred and thirty
Twenty-two thousand six hundred and fifty
Twenty-two thousand six hundred and sixty

Mike also offered this much larger number:

Twenty-four quadrillion and twenty

**3 x AEIOUY with AND**
Mike found many of these, the numerically smallest being:

Twenty million four hundred and twenty thousand and thirty

And here's a much larger number:

Sixty quattuordecillion twenty thousand and twenty

Even larger numbers exist—go find some!

**4 x AEIOUY with AND**
Mike and I aren't offering any 4xAEIOUY numbers, but some (many?) probably exist. Readers are invited to find at least one of them.

(The best and most extensive list of names for large numbers can be found at www.olsenhome.com/bignumbers/). ■

## A SUPERVOCALIC NUMBER WITH 240XAEIOU

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My thanks to Mike Keith for his astonishing supervocalic find, the subject of this article.

I had commented to Mike that it'd be cool to find an extreme example of a supervocalic number using one of the big number names from the Olsen website—www.olsenhome.com/bignumbers/. Mike didn't let me down. He responded: "I made a quick and dirty algorithm to search for high multiplicities and found a 240xAEIOU (with AND) example!" What follows describes that supervocalic number with 240 occurrences of each of the vowels A, E, I, O, and U. First, check this out, deliberately printed in the Courier New font:

Mike explains: "It's all one number (just read the lines from top to bottom). Each line consists of a single number prefix (1 to 999) followed by a single power of 10, except for the last line which is just the final 606 (hence the "---" in the power index column). The first column gives the number prefix as a number, and the second column is the "index" of the power of 10 in the list on the Olsen site (first column in their table). Since the indices go from high to low and are all different, this is a valid number. I used all the number names up to 999 to find this, but a fairly simple algorithm, so I'm pretty sure that there exist examples using more different powers of 10 than I was able to use here—even if we keep the restriction of index 999 or less."

```
 10   974   ten quattuorseptuagintanongentillion
405   964   four hundred and five quattuorsexagintanongentillion
400   946   four hundred sesquadragintanongentillion
214   945   two hundred and fourteen quinquadragintanongentillion
400   943   four hundred tresquadragintanongentillion
413   942   four hundred and thirteen duoquadragintanongentillion
 14   941   fourteen unquadragintanongentillion
210   874   two hundred and ten quattuorseptuagintaoctingentillion
410   864   four hundred and ten quattuorsexagintaoctingentillion
404   847   four hundred and four septenquadragintaoctingentillion
304   842   three hundred and four duoquadragintaoctingentillion
214   841   two hundred and fourteen unquadragintaoctingentillion
414   840   four hundred and fourteen quadragintaoctingentillion
410   794   four hundred and ten quattuornonagintaseptingentillion
202   774   two hundred and two quattuorseptuagintaseptingentillion
204   764   two hundred and four quattuorsexagintaseptingentillion
404   749   four hundred and four novenquadragintaseptingentillion
104   742   one hundred and four duoquadragintaseptingentillion
405   694   four hundred and five quattuornonagintasescentillion
  2   674   two quattuorseptuagintasescentillion
  4   664   four quattuorsexagintasescentillion
200   642   two hundred duoquadragintasescentillion
110   594   one hundred and ten quattuornonagintaquingentillion
102   564   one hundred and two quattuorsexagintaquingentillion
104   549   one hundred and four novenquadragintaquingentillion
304   548   three hundred and four octoquadragintaquingentillion
101   542   one hundred and one duoquadragintaquingentillion
```

```
404   497   four hundred and four septenonagintaquadringentillion
304   492   three hundred and four duononagintaquadringentillion
214   491   two hundred and fourteen unnonagintaquadringentillion
414   490   four hundred and fourteen nonagintaquadringentillion
204   479   two hundred and four novenseptuagintaquadringentillion
410   478   four hundred and ten octoseptuagintaquadringentillion
102   472   one hundred and two duoseptuagintaquadringentillion
404   469   four hundred and four novensexagintaquadringentillion
104   462   one hundred and four duosexagintaquadringentillion
405   394   four hundred and five quattuornonagintatrecentillion
  2   374   two quattuorseptuagintatrecentillion
  4   364   four quattuorsexagintatrecentillion
200   342   two hundred duoquadragintatrecentillion
  3   294   three quattuornonagintaducentillion
210   291   two hundred and ten unnonagintaducentillion
410   290   four hundred and ten nonagintaducentillion
202   270   two hundred and two septuagintaducentillion
  1   264   one quattuorsexagintaducentillion
202   261   two hundred and two unsexagintaducentillion
204   260   two hundred and four sexagintaducentillion
200   249   two hundred novenquadragintaducentillion
413   248   four hundred and thirteen octoquadragintaducentillion
413   194   four hundred and thirteen quattuornonagintacentillion
410   191   four hundred and ten unnonagintacentillion
  1   174   one quattuorseptuagintacentillion
202   171   two hundred and two unseptuagintacentillion
204   170   two hundred and four septuagintacentillion
200   164   two hundred quattuorsexagintacentillion
204   161   two hundred and four unsexagintacentillion
404   160   four hundred and four sexagintacentillion
400   149   four hundred novenquadragintacentillion
 14   142   fourteen duoquadragintacentillion
210    64   two hundred and ten quattuorsexagintillion
410    49   four hundred and ten novenquadragintillion
204    47   two hundred and four septenquadragintillion
104    46   one hundred and four sesquadragintillion
101    44   one hundred and one quattuorquadragintillion
104    43   one hundred and four tresquadragintillion
110    42   one hundred and ten duoquadragintillion
101    41   one hundred and one unquadragintillion
214    40   two hundred and fourteen quadragintillion
101   4     one hundred and one quadrillion
606   ---   six hundred and six
```

Here is that number written out without the first two columns of numbers:

> Ten quattuorseptuagintanongentillion four hundred and five quattuorsexagintanongentillion four hundred sesquadragintanongentillion two hundred and fourteen quinquadragintanongentillion four hundred tresquadragintanongentillion four hundred and thirteen duoquadragintanongentillion fourteen unquadragintanongentillion two hundred and ten quattuorseptuagintaoctingentillion four hundred and ten quattuorsexagintaoctingentillion four hundred and four

septenquadragintaoctingentillion three hundred and four
duoquadragintaoctingentillion two hundred and fourteen
unquadragintaoctingentillion four hundred and fourteen
quadragintaoctingentillion four hundred and ten
quattuornonagintaseptingentillion two hundred and two
quattuorseptuagintaseptingentillion two hundred and four
quattuorsexagintaseptingentillion four hundred and four
novenquadragintaseptingentillion one hundred and four
duoquadragintaseptingentillion four hundred and five
quattuornonagintasescentillion two quattuorseptuagintasescentillion four
quattuorsexagintasescentillion two hundred duoquadragintasescentillion one
hundred and ten quattuornonagintaquingentillion one hundred and two
quattuorsexagintaquingentillion one hundred and four
novenquadragintaquingentillion three hundred and four
octoquadragintaquingentillion one hundred and one
duoquadragintaquingentillion four hundred and four
septenonagintaquadringentillion three hundred and four
duononagintaquadringentillion two hundred and fourteen
unnonagintaquadringentillion four hundred and fourteen
nonagintaquadringentillion two hundred and four
novenseptuagintaquadringentillion four hundred and ten
octoseptuagintaquadringentillion one hundred and two
duoseptuagintaquadringentillion four hundred and four
novensexagintaquadringentillion one hundred and four
duosexagintaquadringentillion four hundred and five
quattuornonagintatrecentillion two quattuorseptuagintatrecentillion four
quattuorsexagintatrecentillion two hundred duoquadragintatrecentillion three
quattuornonagintaducentillion two hundred and ten unnonagintaducentillion
four hundred and ten nonagintaducentillion two hundred and two
septuagintaducentillion one quattuorsexagintaducentillion two hundred and
two unsexagintaducentillion two hundred and four sexagintaducentillion two
hundred novenquadragintaducentillion four hundred and thirteen
octoquadragintaducentillion four hundred and thirteen
quattuornonagintacentillion four hundred and ten unnonagintacentillion one
quattuorseptuagintacentillion two hundred and two unseptuagintacentillion
two hundred and four septuagintacentillion two hundred
quattuorsexagintacentillion two hundred and four unsexagintacentillion four
hundred and four sexagintacentillion four hundred novenquadragintacentillion
fourteen duoquadragintacentillion two hundred and ten quattuorsexagintillion
four hundred and ten novenquadragintillion two hundred and four
septenquadragintillion one hundred and four sesquadragintillion one hundred
and one quattuorquadragintillion one hundred and four tresquadragintillion
one hundred and ten duoquadragintillion one hundred and one

unquadragintillion two hundred and fourteen quadragintillion one hundred and one quadrillion six hundred and six

You can verify that the vowel count is correct by using www.dcode.fr/frequency-analysis. Paste the words into the "Text To Analyze" box, then a bit further down click on "Count Appearances," then hit "Launch analysis" and you'll get a count for each letter. Here is the result, confirming all the vowels occur 240 times each:

| A | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | L | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 240 | 36 | 231 | 240 | 54 | 100 | 67 | 240 | 138 | 442 | 240 | 20 | 66 | 184 | 51 | 265 | 240 | 10 | 29 | 17 |

Finally, here is the 240xAEIOU number written out as a number. The use of ooo instead of 000 is deliberate, to make it easier to spot the non-zero triplets in the number display.

10,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,405,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,400,214,ooo,400,413,014,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
210,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,410,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,404,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,304,214,414,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,410,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
202,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,204,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
404,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,104,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,405,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
002,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,004,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,200,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,110,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,102,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
104,304,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,101,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,404,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,304,214,414,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,204,410,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,102,ooo,ooo,404,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,104,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,405,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
002,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,004,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,200,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,003,ooo,ooo,210,410,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,202,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,001,ooo,ooo,202,204,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
200,413,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,413,ooo,ooo,410,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
001,ooo,ooo,202,204,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,200,ooo,ooo,204,404,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
400,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,014,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,210,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
410,ooo,204,104,ooo,101,104,110,101,214,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,101,ooo,ooo,ooo,ooo,
606

## STEVE GOODIE: THE COMEDY MUSIC INTERVIEW

T Campbell

*Comedy music's a unique type of wordplay, mimicking a specific song's structure or turning the tropes of other musical genres to unexpected effect. The FuMP —the Funny Music Project—has been promoting the form for nearly two decades. Full disclosure: my wife Janice has been involved in the FuMP since its origins. Many of its luminaries—including the two featured in this issue—are among our friends. They're also brilliant musicians overdue for more recognition.*



*Show, STEEEEEVE GOODIE!*

*First up is Steve Goodie, whose off-the-cuff, stand-up-inspired rhythms have made me reevaluate what comedy music can do. As our interview began, I figured I'd start with the most basic question possible.*

**T:** What is this comedy music thing?

**Steve:** When you listen to a tune, and rather than starting to dance a little bit, you start to chuckle, you're probably listening to comedy music, and it might be really stupid, or it can be very clever, or it can be both. And although some people think of it as novelty music and relegate all of it into the corner with the Chipmunks and that annoying Christmas song, there's a lot of nuance to it. And if you like music and you like comedy, and you're not sure if you'd like to put them together, I bet you *will* like it if you put them together. But there's lots of flavors to choose from. It's like going to Baskin Robbins. They have a lot of different ice cream and now they have a lot of different kinds of cones, the ones that are bigger or smaller or have chocolate on them. You can put them together however you like.

**T:** What got you into the field?

**Steve:** My first memorable encounter with somebody making comedy out of music was in *Mad* Magazine. *Mad* was mostly satire and funny sketches and things. But they also occasionally would print lyrics to a parody song. They wouldn't bother recording it. They would just take a famous song and change the words. They took the song "Yesterday" and changed it to be about a kid wanting to be in the school band, but thinking he'd be playing the electric guitar, but they give him a flute, and he doesn't like that. And if you knew the song "Yesterday," which, of course, everybody does, you can hear it in your head when you're reading the lyrics, and it's funny. I thought that was really clever. And then I think it was around then that I also discovered the Dr. Demento show, which was on late at night on Sundays in my area, which I was not supposed to be able to hear because I was supposed to be asleep. But I would listen and sometimes record, and that's when I really started hearing funny songs.

It occurred to me. *I can do this.* Usually what I do is pretty stupid, but occasionally something was actually funny enough they would make my friends laugh and then even possibly make an adult laugh. *Wow, that was really something.* So in my last year of high school and then into college, I started spending an awful lot of time changing the words to absolutely everything in the hope that some of it would be funny. And it continues to this day.

**T:** I listened to some of your first album, and you were marketing yourself at the time as a standup comedian who occasionally did music. When would you say that you transferred over to being a being a musician?




*Not Steve's first, actually.*

**Steve:** Well, I don't know that I ever transferred. I just wobbled from this side of the line to that side of line and then back. Because I've always liked doing both. I think my favorite thing is to do both at the same time. But I will do comedy without music and I will do music without comedy. I think you're thinking of my record, *Self-Portrait of the Artist as an Angry Young Man*, something like that. But I released a couple things before that that weren't on CD. They were on cassettes, and they were even more rudimentary, shall we say, rough, juvenile, ridiculous.

You know how it is in life: whatever you're doing, people will tend to say, "Okay, I like that, but can you do it this way," or "I like that, but can you add this or subtract that?" And club owners would sometimes say to me, "We think you're funny. Can you do it without the guitar?" So I tried to do it without the guitar. And because I run a recording studio, and I record other people's music as well as my own, very often I master record music that has nothing funny about it whatsoever. And I enjoy that as well. Usually when I'm listening to music as background, I don't want it to be funny, because if it's funny, it will no longer be background. So often I work to hear music that has nothing funny about it. So I'm in all the camps, depending on what time it is.

**T:** You were in a band briefly before going solo—

**Steve:** Several bands. Which one are you thinking?

**T:** Several bands? I'd heard Two Live Jew—

**Steve:** No, that's a different band that we often got confused with. Our band was called the Two Jew Revue. Okay, yes, indeed I was, and that was fun. It shouldn't have ended, but it ended. Thanks for bringing up a painful memory, T!

**T:** I'm terribly sorry. Was your style fairly similar at the end of your time with the band to how it is now? Or was it something you honed further as you moved to doing more stuff on your own?




*First self-titled album.*

**Steve:** Well, it's always being honed. But yes, that project, which was from 1998 to 2001, was the strongest collaboration I've ever been part of. And

possibly some of my strongest stuff came out of it. Jacob Kantor was the other half of that. And we both had a very similar sensibility about comedy, and we just started writing songs like crazy. And this is in Los Angeles, and we go out and perform them at open mics and other venues, comedy venues, music venues, and get a little bit of a following going. And I made a music video that took a lot of energy and was very exciting and expensive. And then we stopped, because Jacob didn't want to do it no more, which was sad. But we did get two albums out of it, and I still do some of the songs from them.

They're very much my sensibility, because, as I said, he and I have a very similar sensibility. We like clever and we like stupid, and we like some stuff to be gross and some stuff to be mildly poignant. You never know.

**T:** It's an album! You want emotional range on there somewhere. I was wondering if you could tell me about the process of creating songs—I'm sure you have more than one process, so let's say the process of creating several songs you have stories about.

**Steve:** Usually, I think of an idea I think is funny, and I'll jot it down, and then later I look through my file of purportedly funny ideas and if one of them jumps out and says, *Okay, that's clever. I like that. I must write that.* That's got a good chance of turning out to be funny. I get a lot of ideas which seem funny at the time, and then later on, I think, *I'm not that crazy about that,* or it's about something that was current when I thought of it but is no longer current.



*Good vibes.*

I've always wanted a set of vibes. I don't know if you know what vibes are. The full name is *vibraphone.* It's like a xylophone. But they're called vibraphones because there's a mechanical thing that rotates under each of the bars that makes a note through a pipe. And when the disc within the pipe rotates, it makes the sound go, not *wah-wah,* but it makes the volume up and down and up and down in a in a pattern. It's a very cool sound. Lionel Hampton made them very famous in the 1940s, and I always wanted a set of them. I have the fake ones in the synthesized modules. And every now and then, if I need some vibes, I will call those up, push the button, and trigger that. But I said to myself, someday I'm gonna get a set of real vibes. And about two years ago, I finally did.

I found a set of vibes for sale on reverb.com and ordered them. It was a long ordeal. Vibes are enormous. This thing arrived in six giant boxes that I had to pick up from UPS. And the guy said, "There's no way you're gonna fit all this in your car." And I said, "You haven't seen my car." And I shoved it all into the Toyota, got it home, and opened all six boxes in the living room, and parts of vibes scattered everywhere. And of course, no instruction manual whatsoever. I had to figure it out as I went. I've never put vibes together. I look on YouTube to see if I could find something similar to the model I've got. I couldn't even find the model number of what I have, but I eventually get it all stuck together. I'm making some sound on it, and then I think, Okay, I gotta take it all apart and put it in the vocal booth in my studio. So I took it all apart again, and then, piece by piece, carry it into the vocal booth and stick it back together again.

And eventually it's working. And I'm like, *Okay, it's done. Let's play something.* And the first three notes I hit went, and I thought, *That sounds like "Close to You" by Burt Bacharach, done by Karen Carpenter.*

*Huh, that's fun. I should just record something with that.* I wasn't trying to play that, but apparently, I know how. And then I remembered 30 years before, I'd had an idea for a parody of that song that I never finished, but I really liked the opening line, which was, "Why do birds suddenly explode every time you reload?" And that was as far as I got. Exploding birds is funny to me.

So now I've got these vibes, and I like the sound of them, and I'm playing this melody, and I said, *Okay, let's take this idea that's 30 years old that still makes me laugh. It must have some potential, if it's still funny to me.* And I finally wrote it, and then I started tracking it, and used the vibes, and "Why" came together. It's not a song I perform very often—there's a lot of elements that make a song work for an audience, and one of them, in my opinion, is energy. And it's a very mellow song. It's hard to be funny playing a really mellow song. But for people who are in my lane, as far as politics and right and wrong, and guns good or bad, blowing things up haphazardly good or bad—those guys seem to enjoy the song, and I will still do it on occasion, and I still like it. I think it was worth doing, and I probably never would have finished it if I hadn't bought that set of vibes.

> Why do birds suddenly explode every time you reload?
> With the magazine on your AR-15, they're blown into smithereens
> Why do geese fall down from the sky, every time you drive by?
> Because your Glock, it went off half-cocked, just like you
>
> *From "Why."*

Then there was the song "Extra," which I wrote as part of the Two Jew Revue. Back in '98, I think it was, or '99, Jacob and I would frequent an open mic that was called Everything's. It was called Everything's because you could do whatever you want. We had singers, we had poets, we had dancers, we had spoken word. We had people trying out sketches. One of the people who frequented this was a fellow named Eric. Now Eric was—we called them transvestites at the time. Eric always showed up in a very short skirt and a little halter top, and he brought a big box of poems, a big book of poems, a huge binder that probably had 1,000 poems that he had written. We only ever heard Eric do one of three poems to the point where we'd all memorized all three of them, and we didn't really understand why he felt the need to bring this book as we all know them.

So one day, he was doing one of his poems, and I happened to be sitting at the coffee bar, which was behind the stage. When you walked in, it was the audience area, then the stage area, and then beyond that, the coffee bar, where you have to get your coffee and your snacks. And I happened to be sitting at the bar, and Eric starts doing this poem that we've all heard a million times, and for whatever reason, I start writing down the opposite of it. It went like this, *I'm a star. I'm a star because I say I am,* which is very empowering and emboldening and good for you, Eric, and it's inspiring to the rest of us, yeah. I started writing down the opposite. Instead of *I'm a star,* I wrote down *I'm an extra. I'm an extra in the movie my life, because they say I am.* And I just jotted the whole thing down. His poem wasn't that long, so my parody of it wasn't that long. And later that evening, I read my version of it.

I can't remember if Eric was still in the room, but everybody else got a big kick out of it, because they knew. I didn't have to set it up at all. They got it. They picked up on it right away.

And it sat as a poem for a very long time, until finally, Jacob said, "Hey, we should do something with that 'Extra' poem of yours." So we did. We wrote a song, and the poem never rhymed, and so the song doesn't rhyme and it's on paper. It's one of the shortest songs I've ever written. It really is just two four-line couplets, but we sing it very slowly, and it's quite touching as a song, if I may say, it's got some serious elements to it, as well as being a comedy thing. And it is still requested by some of my theater friends when I visit Los Angeles, where Jacob lives. Last year, we actually sang "Extra" for the first time in

at least 10 years, maybe more, and without rehearsing it at all, and pretty much nailed it. So I will invite him again this year.

**T:** You sometimes do one song parodying multiple different songs, like "Mobile Trash Unit." Was there a point where you said, *Okay, one song just isn't enough for this. I need to do clips from four or five different ones?*

**Steve:** I don't know that I'd set out to do that, but yeah, it is quite a little hodgepodge of songs stuck together. I like doing that. I've done that a few times, and it's usually pretty successful, but it just happens. It does make it harder to memorize: that's a lot of rapid-fire lyrics and some transitions that have no logic to them. You just have to know when you're done singing *this,* then you're going to sing *this.* They don't go together, but they do eventually, if you practice.

Her apartment is pristine, every room is clean, clean, clean
Everything is in its place, perfect use of perfect space
She's organized and functional, fastidious and punctual
So it's incredible, though she's obsessed with cleanliness
What a nightmare of disgusting crap her purple Prius is

It's her mobile trash unit
It's a dump on wheels
It's an oil spill in a landfill
It's roadkill on an anthill
It's her mobile trash unit

Coffee cups, Slurpee cups, Dr. Pepper, 7-Up
Mascara, lipstick, eyeliner, cover-up
Glitter glitter glitter glitter glitter glitter glitter glitter
Glitter

Sports bra, tennis shoes, yoga pants, cowboy boots
Phone charger, ice scraper, community college psych paper
Hairbrush, sunscreen, *Seventeen* magazine
Candy wrappers, gum wrappers, Triscuits and Ritz crackers
A gallon of hand sanitizer
Her favorite coconut avocado watermelon tangerine mango moisturizer

*From "Mobile Trash Unit." The rhythm switches from stanza to stanza, which mirrors the chaos the song itself describes.*

**T:** I had not considered that, but in retrospect, it's obvious. That would be much more challenging to perform.

**Steve:** "Mobile Trash Unit" didn't set out to be an ADHD nightmare. It just happened to do that. But "The Sleep Disorder Song" is trying to describe what my brain feels like when I can't sleep. I'm trying to get my brain to shut down, and it won't. So it's *meant* to turn the corners and make sharp lefts and rights all over the place, and it does it pretty successfully.

Yeah, very, very difficult. It was like two and a half years after writing it that I finally got it together and memorized it because it was nominated for an award and I was gonna have to sing it. I think you were there last year, and I think that was the second time I ever did it on stage, after trying and trying and trying and failing many times to get it right without

I can't sleep, I can't sleep
I close my eyes, can't find no sheep
So I don't count sheep, I count shepherds
Bo Peep, Jesus, Samuel L. Jackson in *Pulp Fiction*

Astronaut Alan Shepard
When I was a kid, I wanted to be an **astronaut**
So I **asked** and they said, **"Not!"**
Wait, I'm supposed to be counting sheep

Sheep apnea, ba ba ba baaaas
Lamb chops, they sure do taste good
So good, so good, so good

My stupid brain goes round and round
Round and round, round and round
Wouldn't it be great if you could win an award for this?
I'd like to thank my mother, and Alan Shepard
And my pharmacist who is no help at all
You hate me, you really really hate me

*From "The Sleep Disorder Song." The last two stanzas parody "Sweet Caroline," "The Wheels on the Bus," and Oscar acceptance speeches.*

reading it off the page, because reading a song like that just doesn't work. Reading most songs doesn't work. I can't connect with an audience the same way if I'm looking at the page.

There's only one exception to that, which is "The 12 Days of Christmas Sweaters" [with 88 verses, each unique]. Nobody expects me to memorize that. It's actually funny if I have to read it. I work that into it. But for everything else, it's important it be delivered. It just has to come out. It's a bit, right? I don't see polished stand-up specials where they're reading it. You have to appear to be just saying it, or, in this case, just singing it. And, yeah, those are very, very difficult. I don't know that there's a name for it, but I have to watch out when I write those, because if it's funny, if it comes out good, I'm gonna have to devote a lot of time to learning this thing.

Some things that I write are just as funny and much easier. I was actually challenged to write a comedy song that was actually funny, that only had two words, and I did. It's called Jerry Lewis sings Led Zeppelin, and I just play the opening to "Over the Hills and Far Away." And then where they would say, "Hey, lady," I go [Jerry Lewis style] "Hey LADY!" And that's a song I came up with in a sec. I think this might become a little montage, a medley of Jerry Lewis singing because I did do the same thing with "Stairway to Heaven." I did the opening grip on the guitar, which everybody recognizes, and [Jerry Lewis style] "There's a nice lady."

**T:** It gets the job done. That ties into another sub-theme I wanted to touch on with you. You do a lot of short pieces. The music field has caught up to that a little with TikTok, but it seems like when songs were standardized on the radio at 3:30, you'd be under more pressure to go along with that.

On the tenth Christmas sweater
my true love gave to me were
Ten pounds of tinsel
Nine sprigs of holly
Eight bags of glitter
Seven chains of popcorn
Six rolls of ribbon
Five ho ho hos
Four flying squirrels
Three Care Bears
Two kissing sharks
And a purple box full of Plan B

On the eleventh Christmas sweater
my true love gave to me were
Eleven strippers stripping
Ten pins for bowling
Nine babies dancing
Eight reindeer mating
Seven llamas pooping
Six wrestlers sweating
Five golden retrievers
Four-letter words
Three Trump wives
Two camel toes
And Beyonce twerking Jay-Z

*From "The Twelve Christmas Sweaters." Note the lack of repetition!*

**Steve:** But how long a song is and how long it feels are not necessarily the same thing. People are surprised to find that the song "Yesterday," which I was just mentioning, is only two minutes long. Quite a few of the Beatles songs are well under three, and some under two. Back in the '60s, songs were not very long, if they were on the radio generally. And then, of course, "Stairway to Heaven" came along, and everybody decided to make them all long. These things come and go, but I just trust my instinct. Monty Python wrote the book on not only keeping things short, but making them so they don't have an ending, they just go into something else and it's fine. It's fine to just shift gears for no logical reason. That in itself is funny. Why not do that?

And so when I'm writing funny songs, not only am I thinking about this song in itself, but I'm thinking about sticking it in the act somewhere, and there it might just end very suddenly, and then I go into something else, and that's fine. That's just how that goes. Some ideas are funny, but only in one burst. I have quite a few songs that are regular length, but when I do them live, I do one verse and one chorus and that's it. Because it's just not going to sustain itself in a live environment. But then you want to hear the whole thing sometimes, if you're just listening, because it has a whole production and everything, it sounds like the original song, and you're used to the original song's beginning, middle, and end, so that's good, too.

**T:** How has your process changed in the span of time you've been doing this?

**Steve:** I don't really keep track of how it used to be, but early on, if I heard a song I liked, I would just do everything I could to come up with a parody, just because I wanted an excuse to play that song, and very often it wouldn't be that good. I think I've learned that's not a good enough reason to spend a lot of time on something. So I wait for an idea that's really strong and a song that I really like to perform—or that I really hate, and it would be fun to make fun of it, either one is fine—and wait to put them together. So I think maybe that has changed to some degree, just because I've wasted an awful lot of time making stuff that wasn't worth making.

Time is our most valuable commodity, so wasting it is not a good idea, You only have so much time, and you also have only so much energy, and you wear yourself out on beating your head against a wall on an idea that is just never going to pay off the way I think it should. It takes away from all the other ideas that might actually have some reward if I'm just wiped out from trying to work on this thing for reasons that are not justifiable. I think the older you get, the grumpier you get about wasting time and wasting energy, and you just want to focus on things that really have some legs.

**T:** Since the days of the pandemic, you've been doing a regular comedy show on Zoom—

**Steve: I**ndeed I have, and it invades your house almost every week. Whether you like it or not!

**T:** I am often listening in the next room [as Janice plays it], so I'm familiar, but I'd be interested to hear your take about how doing that weekly in front of a sympathetic audience helps you come up stuff.

**Steve:** It doesn't really help me come up with stuff. It makes me come up with stuff. It just means you must come up with something, or at least a little something, or an excuse for why you *didn't* come up with it.

You're referring to *The Virtual Comedy Show*, which I am one of the co-hosts of, with my friend Brad Tassell. As you say, we started during the pandemic because Brad, as a full-time comedian, all of a sudden could not do any work at all, just completely shut down. I still run a recording studio, and so a lot of my clients don't come in anyway. We do all our work remotely. I record all these tracks for them, and then they record their vocals somewhere else in their own home. So that work kept going for me. In fact, it picked up because lots of people had nothing else to do, and I lowered my rates. I had pandemic rates, so I was still working.



The Virtual Comedy Show, *with Brad Tassell (not pictured) and Steve Goodie (not pictured).*

Brad and I had worked on a few things in the past, and he said, "Hey, why don't we do a Zoom show?" And he'd already had Zoom. He'd been using Zoom for a long time before the rest of us ever heard of it because he does educational stuff, and a lot of school systems require that he do it over Zoom. He already had a Zoom account. He added me to it, and our first Zoom show, which I still wish we had a recording of, because I'm sure it was a nightmare. We had no music for it: it was just, *Hey, we're here. Let's tell*

*some jokes. Do a song, daddy. Daddy, what do you got?* And I think the original episode was maybe 20 minutes long. We didn't have Patti Vasquez, I think we may have had a guest comedian, but I don't think we had a musical guest. Now the show, we're lucky if we get out under an hour. We have intro music for each segment, for musical guests, for our headliner, for Patti and her "Patti Melt," and we have headliner musical guests we and as you say, we have little segments that we try. You probably are along for the ride.

I think it was in 2022 I started doing a little segment called, "When Did Gilbert Come In?" We play a clip of some audio and see if you can identify when Gilbert says something. And obviously, it's stupid, because everybody knows when Gilbert starts talking. He's got a very distinctive voice, and that was fun, until, tragically, Gilbert died, and we weren't gonna do that anymore because it was too sad, although I may try it again. I'm sure there's some old audio somewhere I could try.

We have a new segment called The Amateur Minute where somebody can try for do comedy for a minute, and then as soon as the minute's up, you're done. Thanks very much. And I do the top 10 list, and I've done 200, almost 250 of those. That's 2,500 punch lines. I never really thought that would be the thing I do every week, but I do it every week because it's a format I'm comfortable with. It's like writing a song parody, because you know exactly the grid is laid out, prices, all the blanks you need to fill in. You just need a subject, and then 10 punch lines. And I like working like that, because I get to pick the stuff but not the structure. I like that balance, and we're still doing it almost five years in now, and we could have stopped three years ago. We seem to like doing this. It makes us feel like we have a TV show.

**T:** Well, hey, that's sometimes a valuable feeling. And side note, I think that Gilbert would like to be remembered.

**Steve:** Maybe. I might bring that back.

**T:** You mentioned earlier that sometimes you jotted down ideas and the times just moved to a point where the idea was no longer timely. I do find that to be an interesting part of the process. Because a good deal of comedy music is about either current events or current circumstances, How do you decide when something is going to be around long enough for you to be concerning yourself with it?

**Steve:** I don't know that I have a method. One song that occurs to me was 10 years ago, when the brothers bombed the Boston Marathon. That in itself didn't spur a song, but then *Rolling Stone* put the surviving brother on the cover. That pissed me off so much and—"The Cover of *Rolling Stone"* by Shel Silverstein was an obvious parody choice. It took very little time to write that, and it was a lot of fun to record it, because it's a song I've always liked. Shel Silverstein, you can't go wrong. And I finished it, and I realized a few weeks ago, I'd never released it. It's not on any album, and it was fun to perform for maybe a week, and then everybody forgot about it. Whatever happened next, happened next, and nobody cared.

And so I'd also forgotten about it. I just happened to stumble across it, however many weeks ago, and I thought, *That has to go on the new album, even though it's ten years later now, and it makes no sense.* But there's enough voiceover in the song explaining the circumstance that I think it'll still work. The one or two times that I performed it, my fellow performers in the audience or on stage with me, said, "Man, that is dark. Wow." They weren't amused. They thought, *That's just dark.* I'm like, *Yeah, okay, I'll TAKE that.* Because as mad as terrorists make me, people glamorizing them makes me even madder. As a

musician, my chances of ever being on the cover of *Rolling Stone* are very, very slim. But the guy who killed some people? *He* got on there!

I don't know if you remember, in the mid-'90s, Marv Albert, sportscaster, got in trouble because apparently he'd been a little rapey with some of his lady friends. I was listening to some Paul McCartney that day, and the song "We're So Sorry, Uncle Albert," came into my head like, *Okay, they're both Albert. Let's see what we can do.* And that is an incredibly difficult song, because it's five songs stuck together. And I made it all about one of the first people to be canceled before we called it being canceled. But nobody remembers that anymore. There's no way I would be trotting that one out. Plus, a lot of the humor has not aged well. It's on the side of the good guy, but some of the jokes, they go too far.

I was a total nobody
My face was pretty spotty
Got ignored wherever I was

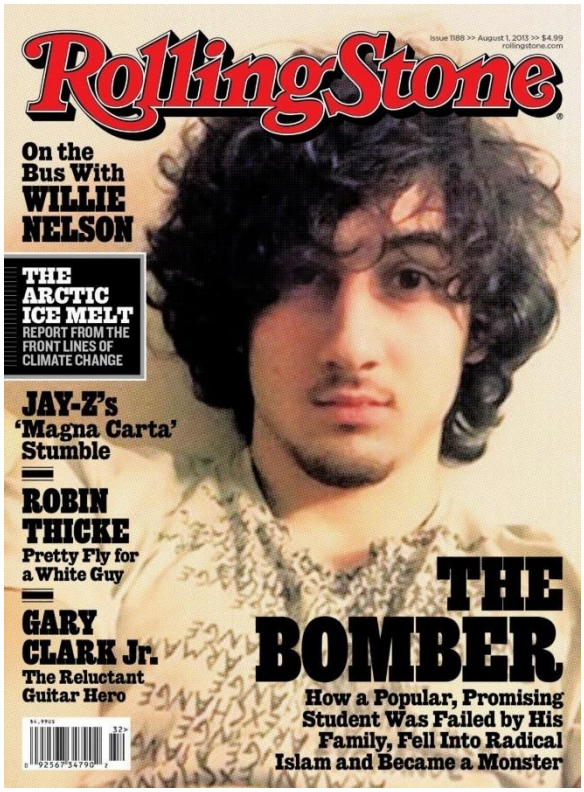
So I got me a big ol' crockpot
Stuffed it full of explosives

Then I put my hoodie on
Went to the marathon
Where everybody's mind got blown

They said, "Boy, we're gonna getcha"
And then they put my picture
On the cover of the *Rolling Stone*

**T:** That's another aspect of the moving target that is comedy.

**Steve:** Though sometimes it's the opposite. Sometimes it's not. How long will this subject be memorable? Is it worth writing a song? Sometimes it's the opposite, and the prime case of that is Trump. Nobody's going to forget him. But we're all sick to death of hearing jokes and songs about him. And I keep writing them, knowing that nobody's going to want to hear this. But every now and then I'm either so mad or something clever enough comes to me that, *Okay, got to do this, even though everybody's sick to death of it.*



*From Goodie's "Cover of Rolling Stone" and the cover that inspired it.*

Barry—Dr. Demento—has made it pretty clear he's not interested in playing any more Trump songs, just because his audience doesn't want to hear them. But I still send them in, and every now and then he might play one, and he's got one right now, about which I'm hoping he'll change his mind, because I'm really quite pleased with it. I think I put it on the FuMP. Yeah, I did. "Old McDonald."

Part of why it's fun is because it's a parody of a classic old song, a nursery rhyme practically, and at first it's about AI, and then it's about Roseanne, and then it's about Elon, and thus Trump. Hopefully Barry will play that one. I think it's relevant, and I think it's got legs.

**T:** How has the comedy music field changed since you've become part of it?

**Steve:** Well, there's certainly a lot more people doing it. That's the biggest thing I can think of off the top of my head. There's a lot of very, very clever people doing this stuff, and I think the definition of good or bad taste is more and more refined. There's some people who can just get away with everything, and then there's some people who can't, and it's hard to know exactly why those rules are the way they are, but the public seems to embrace very, very naughty things from some people and very strongly reject them from others, at least from the limited sample I've seen. Yeah, I think what's probably thing that has changed is just like it's changed for everybody's political correctness and how the greater our collective consciousness has decided this is acceptable and that's not acceptable, that has changed, but I don't think it's a problem. I expect sensibilities to change, and you make fun of what you can make fun of within those parameters.

Old dick Donald has a billionaire friend
Elon, Elon blows
And when he gets excited, he does a Nazi salute
'Cause he's a big a-hole
With an oligarchy here and an ethnic cleansing there
And deporting lots of people who pick tomatoes and build houses and put out fires for the love of crap, and taking away rights of everyone who isn't straight an white and male and Christian 'cause that is exactly what Jesus would do…even though that nasty Bishop lady says we have to be nice to everyone…that is not the gam plan…we need to raise the price of insulin…now that eggs are so cheap…
Here a heil, there a heil, everywhere a seig heil
Certified, out of his mind, head way up his behind
In Germany, with the AFD, riling up the Nazis
Henry Ford, anal wart, he's the one to deport
Old Dick Donald has a billionaire friend
Seig heil seig heil bros
Coming for DEI amigos
OMG this blows

It's just so very obvious that very very very
Old dick Donald shat the farm
Gee I sure miss Joe

*From Goodie's "Old McDonald."*

A joke that I could tell a 5-year-old is not the same joke that I could tell a 15-year-old, and I don't get mad at the 5-year-old for being someone I can't tell this very funny joke to. It's not appropriate. It's not that it needs to be defined. Everybody feels it. We just keep playing in with different goal posts. And that's fine. ■

# AEIOUY: EURYVOCALICS BY PERMUTATION (PT. 1)

Eric Chaikin
BeyondWordplay.com



Holy Grail quest

In Unsociable Housemaid's Continuable Numeration (June, 2024), T Campbell reignites a legendary challenge—or at least, a **pseudomythical** one—sparking the completion of a decades-old quest. Read on for an adventure in the land of **aeiouy words**, aka **euryvocalics**.

## Background (Briefly)

In 1968, *Word Ways* editor A. Ross Eckler initiated a challenge to find words containing each of the 120 possible orderings of **aeiou** exactly once, filling 104 slots from **aeiou** (**facetious**) to **uoiea** (**duoliteral**), with help from wordplay luminaries Darryl Francis and Dmitri Borgmann. Later, others such as Susan Thorpe and this very author, fleshed out similar lists using various dictionaries.

In 2000, I introduced the term **supervocalic** to broadly include *multi-word phrases*, *known human beings*, *bucolic places*, *fun coinages*, and *popular items***.** So: **Chuck Mangione** is a **jazz flugelhornist** (and possibly a member of **Hair Club for Men**). Suffice to say, these proved fun at parties, Facebook groups launched, and hilarity ensued.

Items with **aeiouy** were considered separately and termed **euryvocalic** (from *eury-* meaning *wide*). To be clear: you get ***one y or none***. More y's (as in "mysterious ways") is "y-abuse."

Back in 2000, Susan Thorpe had also made a stab at finding entries for all 720 **aeiouy** permutations (6x5x4x3x2x1), filling 403 slots. And while many euryvocalics were noted over the years, completing the list remained elusive… until T Campbell—who revived the *Word Ways* legacy with the *Journal of Wordplay*—reinvigorated the pursuit, and we took up the gauntlet.

We are proud to declare we have met the challenge and filled all slots. Results of this effort are detailed below, with full list published in Part 2. These can also be found online at BeyondWordplay.com, here and here.

## Starting Up My Process



Ruby & the Romantics

To begin, a master list of almost 5,000 euryvocalics was aggregated from computer-based and manual searches of multiple sources. The list includes words, phrases, & proper nouns containing **aeiouy** exactly once each, whether or not **y** is actually used as a vowel, with a supportable dictionary listing or online reference.

Note the "friendly ampersand rule": we allow "**&**" or "**and**" as needed to make the vowels work. So, both "**Ruby & the Romantics**" and "**Ruby and the Rockits**" are allowed. Leading "A" and "The" may also be included—or not—as needed. (Don't stress—this is wordplay, not homework.)

***Transitory Results***



**salmonberry pudding**

The first goal was to fill all 720 **aeiouy** slots with *something* of reasonable quality. After the initial master list was cleaned and sorted, over 100 slots remained to be filled. Significant hunting and pecking gradually chipped away at the empty ones, much of it stumbling on fortuitous pairings ("Buck Rogers + -i-y-a-…oh, look—a Buck Rogers Piggy Bank!"). Eventually, all slots fell.

Next, one entry was chosen to represent each slot. The goal was simply to make the results as lively as possible—a combination of people, places, and things notable for some attribute or accomplishment, minimizing obscurity and duplication.

Initial results were heavy on unfamiliar people and genuses. More searching surfaced interesting items not necessarily in dictionaries or wordlists. With some persistence, a menu of **hazelnut soymilk**, **salmonberry pudding**, and **maple syrup frosting** presented itself.

Final searching was done to reduce duplication of certain constituent words like *City, County,* and *Yukon* so that in the final results list, no individual word besides short connectors appears more than 3 times (well—we made an exception for **flying**).

So while computer searches supplied the bulk, elbow grease provided the finesse.

***Best Quality Slots***



**Emmylou Harris**

In the end, some slots offered many choices, while others had but the dry bones of one result.
A variety were supplied by **aeiouy** itself—from the familiar **abstemiously**, to the subtler **attention-hungry**. While we could have settled on the common **facetiously**, we preferred its near-synonym **half-seriously**. (Official t-shirt: *Euryvocalists Take Things Half-Seriously*.)

The most fertile order was **aieouy,** with 73 entries (lots of "county"s), bowing to 14-letter isogram **ambidextrously**. As expected, slots with **you** in their vowel pattern offered many options.

This selection was not always so easy: for **eyouai**—should we listen to **Emmylou Harris** or Billy Joel's **The Nylon Curtain**? For **iyouae**—**mind your manners, pick your battles**, or **Sign Your Name?** (Final: **thickly-populated)**. Work as a **yogic masseur** or file a **Wyoming tax return?**

Selection standards were entirely subjective. Many slot-winners are dictionary-sanctioned, while others are just phrases that caught our eye ("**chemistry run amok**," "**I am Krusty the Clown**").

Next, we highlight many euryvocalics of interest which made the Results List.

**Results on Display**




**Syncopated music**

Like a **ray of sunshine**, an elegant euryvocalic is a **thing of beauty**.

Our list includes profound works like Gershwin's **Rhapsody in Blue** and Kendrick Lamar's **To Pimp a Butterfly.** It also has everyday locutions, camouflaged in our linguistic landscape, like:

**Music to my ears**
**Upwardly mobile**
**Oh, the humanity!**

While **presorting laundry**, you might hear ***Jeopardy* music** or answer a **Daily Double**. Need a **home-buying grant** for a **gated community** or a **five-story walk-up**? If you write a **syndicated column** or catch **yellowfin tuna**—you just may be a **euryvocalist**. For each slot, **take your pick** or **change your mind**, but don't be a **dysfunctional mess**. **Any questions**?

***Enjoy a Quiz***

Identify the euryvocalic. Enumeration and vowels are given. Answers at end (and in results list).

1. Richard Dawson or Steve Harvey, for example (6 4 4) **aiyeuo**
2. Leaving out certain people or groups (12) **euioay**
3. Talking Heads and Tom Tom Club bassist/vocalist (4 8) **iaeyou**
4. Canadian PM from 1984 to 1993 (5 8) **iauoey**
5. They may be missed by a "deadbeat dad" (5 7 8) **iuoaye**
6. Legendary film producer and MGM studio head (5 1 5) **ouiaye**
7. Cryptic and cringeworthy actor, writer/director of *The Room (*5 6) **oyieau**
8. The only US President to fit this category (7 7 5) **uyeioa**
9. Incapable of "going under," in a sense (14) **uyoiae**
10. High-end GMC vehicle with Canadian/Alaskan naming pedigree (5 6) **yuoeai**

***Uncanny Descriptors***




Some euryvocalics can be described by another:

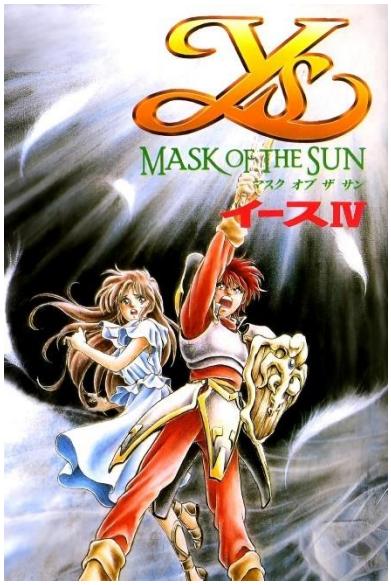
> The **Quiet Dynamo** is a model of **air hockey puck**.
> ***I am Burt Reynolds*** is a **documentary film**.
> the **Egyptian pound** is a **monetary unit**.

Coming up with such apt descriptions is a worthy challenge:

| | |
|---|---|
| **plead not guilty** | Me? It's not my fault! |
| **social butterfly** | My, she flits about. |
| **Praise You** | Fatboy Slim tune |

***Just Exactly Six Words***

A rare set of specimens we call "perfect 6's" contain exactly six words with one vowel each. Japanese video game Ys IV: Mask of the Sun is the highest-quality of these, with its own Wikipedia entry. Others of varying provenance include:




> ***Band on the Run*** **by Wings**
> **"Why must it be so hard?"**
> **"Just don't mess with my man"**
> **"Get my ducks in a row"**

The first of these we call a "by-formation"—an item of the form: "*Title* by *Artist"*—and we note its general usefulness in wordplay exercises. Note that "**Get my ducks in a row**" is a rare 15-letter isogram (no repeated letters).

***Popularly Cited***

Our results include people and popular items from various realms of culture and entertainment.



US Women's Gymnastics

In sports… the 2024 Paris **Summer Olympiad** featured matches at Stade **Yves du Manoir**, with the **US Olympic Team** including basketballers **Jrue Holiday** and **Jackie Young**. MLB, NHL, and NFL rosters have featured **Michael Young**, **Sylvain Turgeon**, and **Richard Seymour** respectively—the latter facing off against last-name euryvocalic Osi **Umeniyora**.

On the charts, two euryvocalic artists have had US Hot 100 #1 hits: **Danny & the Juniors** with "At the Hop" (#1, 1957), and the forementioned **Ruby & the Romantics**, whose "Our Day Will Come" (#1, 1963) contains an extra **O**, sadly. **Usher Raymond IV** (aka "Usher") has had an impressive 9 Hot 100 #1 hits. One euryvocalic song has hit #1—**"I'm Your Angel**," by the **questionably** paired Céline Dion & R. Kelly—while George Michael's **"I Want Your Sex"** hit #2. Others like Tone Loc's **"Funky Cold Medina"** and the Black-Eyed Peas' **"Don't Phunk With My Heart"** adorn our list.

Pairings of euryvocalic artists and work are rare. One such example is the 2005 album **Haughty Melodic**, by Soul Coughing's **Michael Doughty**. Anagram fans will note the game afoot here.

In the **ayioue** slot, we have musical artist **Danny Minogue**—no, not Kylie's sister (she's "Dannii," of course), but the Western New York country singer, no doubt cursed by this association.

At the box office, the longest euryvocalic film title is 1997's ***Deconstructing Harry*** (19 letters). But the highest grossing is 2018's ***Mary Poppins Returns***, featuring Lin Manuel Miranda as **Emily Blunt's costar.** With 15 different letters, ***Crazy, Stupid, Love*** is the longest isogrammatic film title.

On TV, you might see ***Rocky and Bullwinkle***, ***CBS News Sunday Morning***, or popular *Happy Days* character **Pinky Tuscadero**. On Broadway, a **musical comedy** may feature choreography by **Julie Taymor,** or an **Actors' Equity** member playing **Schuyler Hamilton**.

Lastly, we salute the puzzle world's **Robyn Weintraub**, creator of fine **NYT cruciverbal forms**.

***Touristy Places***




Our results include many euryvocalic locales. Of these, special tribute is due Hungary's **Morichelypuszta**, noted in *Word Ways* as far back as 1977 as a solid 15-letter place with no repeated letters. The venerable isogram hamlet **South Cambridge, NY** exceeds it only by one letter (and its letters are a "bank" for *Random House Unabridged Dictionary,* but we digress). Other international euryvocalic isograms include **Jurby, Isle of Man** (14), **Dovbysh, Ukraine** (14), and **Quy Hop, Vietnam** (13).

The most populous euryvocalic place of all must be China's **Yunnan Province**, home to almost 47 million people. The most populous global cities with and without countries are **Ciclayo, Peru** (552,508), and Chile's **Coyhaique** (54,575). The most populous US places of various formats include the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| US county+abbr. | **Gwinnett County, GA** | 990,879 |
| US county | **Pinellas County** (FL) | 961,596 |
| US county+state | **Smith County, Texas** | 248,423 |
| US city+state | **Ogden City, Utah** | 84,316 |
| US city+state | **Utica, New York** | 63,607 |
| US city+abbr. | **Taylorsville, UT** | 60,448 |
| US village | **Huntingdon Valley** (PA) | 21,148 |
| US city or town | **Garden City South** (NY) | 4,024 |

By letter count, the longest global and US euryvocalic places are **Pont-Landry, New Brunswick** (22) and **Dawson Springs, Kentucky** (19), respectively. Long examples of various types include the following (most are in the results list):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 22 | Place+Region | Pont-Landry, New Brunswick |
| 21 | World Place | Lyminster and Crossbush |
| 21 | US City+State | Dawson Springs, Kentucky |
| 20 | US Place | Mundy Charter Township |
| 19 | World City+Country | Commugny, Switzerland |
| 19 | Fictional | Duchy of Grand Fenwick |
| 19 | US Place+State Abbr. | Shrewsbury Township, PA |
| 19 | Forest | Frankfurt City Forest |
| 19 | Bridge | Krasnoluzhky Bridge |
| 17 | Hyphenated | Hussigny-Godbrange (France) |
| 16 | Isogram | South Cambridge, NY |
| 16 | Solid | Polligautcherry (India) |
| 16 | US village | Huntingdon Valley (PA) |
| 15 | US city or town | Bradley Junction (FL) |
| 15 | Solid isogram | Morichelypuszta (Hungary) |
| 15 | Lake | Chukchagirskoye |
| 15 | Aeiouy in order | Raleigh County, NC |

***My Favorite Stuff***

Having covered people and places, we are left with an assortment of interesting things. **April Twenty-Fourth** is the only "naturally written" euryvocalic calendar date (though other forms such as **first of February** can be found). The largest euryvocalic number is **ninety thousand.** The only euryvocalic element is **praseodymium**. While one could drive a **Plymouth Reliant,** is there an "ev EV" (a euryvocalic electric vehicle)? Not that we could find.

***We Try Running A-to-Z***

Our results list includes at least one entry beginning and ending with each letter of the alphabet. Solid, uncapitalized words are used where available.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | ambidextrously | cyberutopia | A |
| B | benzylammonium | daisy-cutter bomb | B |
| C | courtyardlike | hydropneumatic | C |
| D | dysregulation | multikeyboard | D |
| E | exclusionary | unhypnotizable | E |
| F | facetiously | Pillsbury Bakeoff | F |
| G | goldquarryite | counterrallying | G |
| H | hyperfunctional | Mahmoudiyeh | H |
| I | icthyocentaur | Yousefzai | I |
| J | journeymanship | Kearny Junction, NJ | J |
| K | Kugarchinskoye | air hockey puck | K |
| L | lymphoreticular | pseudomythical | L |
| M | microaneurysm | cyberjournalism | M |
| N | neurodynamics | underhydration | N |
| O | oxymuriate | Liuyedao | O |
| P | praseodymium | subattorneyship | P |
| Q | questionably | hundred-and-forty IQ | Q |
| R | radiosurgery | cylindrocellular | R |
| S | supermajority | hyperanxious | S |
| T | tautonymies | semibuoyant | T |
| U | uncopyrightable | Nyoiseau | U |
| V | ventriculography | Usher Raymond IV | V |
| W | WeOurFamily | cadmium yellow | W |
| X | xylulokinase | Royamieux | X |
| Y | youthanize | immunotherapy | Y |
| Z | Zugodactylites | Rio Yaguez | Z |

***The Long and Short of It***

The word **"ouaiye"** is a French colloqualsm for "yeah," which uses all six vowels with no interloping consonants. Clearly, no euryvocalic could be shorter. 7-letter examples include **Xiaoyue**, a Chinese name meaning "little moon."

At the other extreme, the longest euryvocalic found so far comes courtesy of New South Wales Australlia, via Rod Evans of the Supervocalics Facebook group. It is the 24-letter sign seen below:




Other long euryvocalics across various categories include the following:

| Longest… | Solid | Isograms |
|---|---|---|
| 24 Left Turn Watch For Cyclists (*sign)* | 18 hydrometallurgists | 18 Deborah Glupczynski |
| 24 Harry Cummings McPherson, Jr. (*person)* | 18 nonunderstandingly | 18 jukebox playwrights |
| 23 "All God's Chillun Get Rhythm" (*song)* | 18 Hemirhabdorhyncus | 17 upholstery backing |
| 23 Burchell's glossy-starling (*thing, 3 wds)* | 17 subdermatoglyphic | 17 Rumblepad Joystick |
| 23 *Rhythms del Mundo: Classics* (*album)* | 16 Kushnarenkovskiy | 17 subdermatoglyphic |
| 23 St. Mary's Church, North Leigh (*venue)* | 16 ventriculography | 16 Stefan Kurylowicz |
| 22 Pont-Landry, New Brunswick (*place)* | 15 uncopyrightable | 16 South Cambridge, NY |
| 21 Dawson Springs, Kentucky (*US place)* | | 16 Locking Up My Heart |
| 21 Charles Minthorn Murphy (*person, 3 wds)* | | 16 get my ducks in a row |
| 21 spotband butterflyfish (*thing, 2 wds)* | | 15 five story walk-up |
| 20 Konstantin Sluchevsky (*person, 2 wds)* | | 15 Morichelypuszta |
| 19 Commugny, Switzerland (*city+country)* | | 15 uncopyrightable |
| 19 *Deconstructing Harry* (*film)* | | |

The isogram list includes findings by Dave Shukan, Jenna LaFleur, and John O'Laughlin.

Having completed a recap of our **holy grail quest,** we refer you to the full Results List in Part 2 of this exercise. Signing off, we quote Pepsi's farewell, filling the **iyouae** slot: **SIP YOU LATER.** ■



# AEIOUY: EURYVOCALICS BY PERMUTATION (PT. 2)

Eric Chaikin
BeyondWordplay.com

Below is a list of **euryvocalics** - words, phrases, people, places, or things spelled with **aeiouy** exactly once each - chosen to represent each of the 720 **aeiouy** orderings, with links to supporting references. It fulfills a longstanding wordplay challenge. These results are summarized in Part 1, and can be found online at BeyondWordplay.com, here and here.

| A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **aeiouy** half-seriously | **aeioyu** Hammermill Copy Plus | **aeiuoy** Shake It Up! Boy! | **aeiuyo** Make it Funky Now | **aeiyou** Dance With You | **aeiyuo** take pity upon |
| 2 | **aeoiuy** Age of Industry | **aeoiyu** Ampelozizyphus | **aeouiy** gated community | **aeouyi** space-occupying | **aeoyiu** praseodymium | **aeoyui** Catch the Phony Lupin! |
| 3 | **aeuioy** Master Quizboy | **aeuiyo** Walter Quincy Scott | **aeuoiy** aneuploidy | **aeuoyi** hazelnut soymilk | **aeuyio** Canterbury Prison | **aeuyoi** Tadeusz Myslowski |
| 4 | **aeyiou** Aegyptiorum | **aeyiuo** safety instructor | **aeyoiu** Haskell Symposium | **aeyoui** Change Your Mind | **aeyuio** Strawberry Studios | **aeyuoi** maple syrup frosting |
| 5 | **aieouy** ambidextrously | **aeiouy** Alice Fong Yu | **aieuoy** Machine Gun Molly | **aieuyo** Claire Guyot | **aieyou** April twenty-fourth | **aieyuo** Walt Disney's Dumbo |
| 6 | **aioeuy** Transit of Mercury | **aioeyu** air hockey puck | **aiouey** radiosurgery | **aiouye** fashion buyer | **aioyeu** Malik Joyeux | **aioyue** Matrimony Blues |
| 7 | **aiueoy** mandibulectomy | **aiueyo** landing surveyor | **aiuoey** Marius Pontmercy | **aiuoye** A Fistful of Yen | **aiuyeo** cadmium yellow | **aiuyoe** Salisbury Cove |
| 8 | **aiyeou** Saint-Cyr-en-Bourg | **aiyeuo** Family Feud host | **aiyoeu** family-owned pub | **aiyoue** Daily Double | **aiyueo** daisycutter bomb | **aiyuoe** hairy jugflower |
| 9 | **aoeiuy** Charlotte Tilbury | **aoeiyu** Astromerit, Cyprus | **aoeuiy** Actors' Equity | **aoeuyi** Band on the Run by Wings | **aoeyiu** Apostle Tychicus | **aoeyui** salmonberry pudding |
| 10 | **aoieuy** Dawson Springs, Kentucky | **aoieyu** 5 gallon whiskey jug | **aoiuey** All God's Chillun Get Rhythm | **aoiuye** Anthonius Rycke | **aoiyeu** Atomic Cyberpunk | **aoiyue** majority rule |
| 11 | **aoueiy** pass-through entity | **aoueyi** Absolutely Still | **aouiey** Sans Souci Ferry | **aouiye** Mahmoudiyeh FC | **aouyei** A Country Wedding | **aouyie** backcountry skier |
| 12 | **aoyeiu** apodyterium | **aoyeui** Anthony DeCurtis | **aoyieu** Annoying Jesus | **aoyiue** Rhapsody in Blue | **aoyuei** Anthony Turkevich | **aoyuie** Clamoxyquine |
| 13 | **aueioy** Haunted History | **aueiyo** Claude Binyon | **aueoiy** Basque policy | **aueoyi** Samuel Goldwyn Films | **aueyio** Audrey Griswold | **aueyoi** Wamsutter, Wyoming |
| 14 | **auieoy** Aussie Floyd | **auieyo** Maurice Byblow | **auioey** capuchin monkey | **auioye** Gran Turismo Spyder | **auiyeo** Tranquil Yellow | **auiyoe** A. Quincy Jones |
| 15 | **auoeiy** "autobesity" | **auoeyi** stand-up comedy bit | **auoiey** Paul Morrissey | **auoiye** authoring system | **auoyei** autosyndesis | **auoyie** tautonymies |
| 16 | **auyeio** Naughty Neighbors | **auyeoi** Haughty Melodic | **auyieo** A Study in Terror | **auyioe** bankruptcy risk score | **auyoei** Warburg hypothesis | **auyoie** Cauchy noise |
| 17 | **ayeiou** Party's Getting Rough | **ayeiuo** Players Liquor | **ayeoiu** Pansy Methodist Church | **ayeoui** Mayer of Munich | **ayeuio** Danny & The Juniors | **ayeuoi** Wayne Muloin |
| 18 | **ayieou** Ma Ying Jeou | **ayieuo** Crazy Mixed Up World | **ayioeu** Baby I Love U! | **ayioue** Danny Minogue | **ayiueo** pay tribute to | **ayiuoe** Anything But Love |
| 19 | **ayoeiu** Army of the Isthmus | **ayoeui** Say Wonderful Things | **ayoieu** Mary Poppins Returns | **ayoiue** asymptotic curve | **ayouei** Raymond Kurzweil | **ayouie** ray of sunshine |
| 20 | **ayueio** Any Questions? | **ayueoi** Mary Luke Tobin | **ayuieo** Harry Cummings McPherson, Jr. | **ayuioe** Crazy, Stupid, Love | **ayuoei** Fay-Usborne Mill | **ayuoie** Brady Bunch Movie |

**Notes** **aeiouy** also **facetiously**, **attention-hungry**, etc. | **aeioyu** Ben Bass | **aieouy, aoyiue, ayuioe** 14-letter isograms | **aoeuyi** "perfect 6"—6 words, one vowel each | **aoieuy** longest US city+state (21) | **aoiuey** longest song title (23) | **ayoieu** highest-grossing aeiouy film | **ayuieo** longest euryvocalic (24, tie)

# AEIOUY: Euryvocalics by Permutation (E)

| E | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | **eaiouy** tenaciously | **eaioyu** Welsh Badminton Cymru | **eaiuoy** death in custody | **eaiuyo** The Salisbury Post | **eaiyou** Texas in My Soul | **eaiyuo** The Daily Rundown |
| 22 | **eaoiuy** The Catholic Guy | **eaoiyu** Metagonistylum | **eaouiy** plead not guilty | **eaouyi** DeKalb County, IL | **eaoyiu** Melancholy Circus | **eaoyui** thermal bodysuit |
| 23 | **eauioy** The Apu Trilogy | **eauiyo** Lean Juicy Pork | **eauoiy** The Authority | **eauoyi** The Laugh Olympics | **eauyio** Beach Bully Bingo | **eauyoi** Stefan Kurylowicz |
| 24 | **eayiou** Me and My Big Mouth | **eayiuo** pregnancy instructor | **eayoiu** Treaty of Pittsburgh | **eayoui** Spread Your Wings | **eayuio** The Baby Unicorn | **eayuoi** The Asylum Choir |
| 25 | **eiaouy** The Piano Guys | **eiaoyu** Hemirhabdorhynchus | **eiauoy** Shelia Mulloy | **eiauyo** Zeitakubyo | **eiayou** Devil's Playground | **eiayuo** specialty churros |
| 26 | **eioauy** Kevin Thomas Duffy | **eioayu** The Flight of Wally Funk | **eiouay** Senior Cut Day | **eiouya** Precious Bryant | **eioyau** Echinonyctanthus | **eioyua** Jedi Bodyguard |
| 27 | **eiuaoy** gesticulatory | **eiuayo** Beirut's mayor | **eiuoay** ventriculography | **eiuoya** semibuoyant | **eiuyao** medium-dry Chandon | **eiuyoa** Edinburgh Yoga |
| 28 | **eiyaou** Cedric Yarbrough | **eiyauo** Emily Caruso | **eiyoau** The Phil Lynott Album | **eiyoua** Eli Young Band | **eiyuao** chemistry run amok | **eiyuoa** Emily Kuroda |
| 29 | **eoaiuy** personal injury | **eoaiyu** personality cult | **eoauiy** Jethro Q. Walrustitty | **eoauyi** Deborah Glupczynski | **eoayiu** zero-day virus | **eoayui** *Jeopardy!* music |
| 30 | **eoiauy** presorting laundry | **eoiayu** Erotic Papyrus | **eoiuay** Theophilus Danzy | **eoiuya** exotic pussycats | **eoiyau** The Horribly Awfuls | **eoiyua** responsibly frugal |
| 31 | **eouaiy** WeOurFamily | **eouayi** bedrock quarrying | **eouiay** Deconstructing Harry | **eouiya** export subsidy ban | **eouyai** petrous pyramid | **eouyia** DeCourcy Island |
| 32 | **eoyaiu** endolymphatic duct | **eoyaui** Estoy Aqui | **eoyiau** The Boy's King Arthur | **eoyiua** The Non-Flying Dutchman | **eoyuai** pteroylglutamic | **eoyuia** Gregory Buckingham |
| 33 | **euaioy** Etruscan history | **euaiyo** Equality Now | **euaoiy** exculpatorily | **euaoyi** Left Turn Watch For Cyclists | **euayio** The Sunday Mirror | **euayoi** CBS News Sunday Morning |
| 34 | **euiaoy** denunciatory | **euiayo** Edmund Dick Taylor | **euioay** exclusionary | **euioya** Eulipotyphla | **euiyao** security patrol | **euiyoa** Red Bull Simply Cola |
| 35 | **euoaiy** Return to Sanity | **euoayi** *eruv* for carrying | **euoiay** euphorically | **euoiya** celluloid crystals | **euoyai** neurodynamics | **euoyia** pseudomythical |
| 36 | **euyaio** Century Radio | **euyaoi** Fleury's algorithm | **euyiao** The Lucky Diamond | **euyioa** Kentucky Kingdom Park | **euyoai** Century 21 World's Fair | **euyoia** Westbury, Long Island |
| 37 | **eyaiou** Reykjavik Nordur | **eyaiuo** The Dynamic Duo | **eyaoiu** benzylammonium | **eyaoui** cherry clafoutis | **eyauio** penny auction | **eyauoi** Kelly AuCoin |
| 38 | **eyiaou** grey tinamou | **eyiauo** Egyptian Bulldog | **eyioau** Nelly Ciobanu | **eyioua** Sexy Prison Guard | **eyiuao** ferrying squadron | **eyiuoa** The Flying Dutchwoman |
| 39 | **eyoaiu** Terry Fox Stadium | **eyoaui** Peyton Spaulding | **eyoiau** New York Friars' Club | **eyoiua** embryonic bursa | **eyouai** Emmylou Harris | **eyouia** Beyond Survival |
| 40 | **eyuaio** Grey Cup champions | **Eyuaoi** They Just Can't Stop It | **eyuiao** get my ducks in a row | **eyuioa** Henry Sturgis Morgan | **eyuoai** Henry Hudson Trail | **eyuoia** Venyukovia |

**Notes** **eaoyui** Adam Cohen | **eiaoyu** longest solid euryvocalic (18, tie) | **eoauyi** longest isogram name (18) | **eouiay** longest film title (19) | **euaoyi** longest euryvocalic (24, tie) Rod Evans | **euyoai** also ***euryvocalic*** itself | **eyuiao** isogram (16), "perfect 6"

# AEIOUY: Euryvocalics by Permutation (I)

| I | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 41 | **iaeouy** Night at the Roxbury | **iaeoyu** Big Bang Theory mug | **iaeuoy** Dismal Euphony | **iaeuyo** Michael Guymon | **iaeyou** Tina Weymouth | **iaeyuo** Richard Dreyfuss's dog |
| 42 | **iaoeuy** Chicago Mercury | **iaoeyu** Island Tower Sky Club | **iaouey** Distant Journeys | **iaouye** Shiva Soundsystem | **iaoyeu** China Molybdenum | **iaoyue** Xiaoyue |
| 43 | **iaueoy** immature boy | **iaueyo** I Am Burt Reynolds | **iauoey** Brian Mulroney | **iauoye** Ikarus Shock Flyer | **iauyeo** "I am Krusty the Clown" | **iauyoe** in a fury over |
| 44 | **iayeou** Knightshayes Court | **iayeuo** binary neuron | **iayoeu** Ciclayo, Peru | **iayoue** I Want Your Sex | **iayueo** infantry blue cord | **iayuoe** primary tumor cells |
| 45 | **ieaouy** Miss Jealousy | **ieaoyu** Triceratorhynchus | **ieauoy** illegal custody | **ieauyo** T-Bills vs Treasury Bonds | **ieayou** children's playground | **ieayuo** Princess Mary Tudor |
| 46 | **ieoauy** Isle of Man rugby | **ieoayu** middle frontal gyrus | **ieouay** single-occupancy | **ieouya** Gwinett County, GA | **ieoyau** five story walk-up | **ieoyua** Hieronymus Hass |
| 47 | **ieuaoy** Dieulafoy | **ieuayo** give full play to | **ieuoay** interpulmonary | **ieuoya** Dilectus Dottyback | **ieuyao** Midwest Furry Fandom | **ieuyoa** Midcentury Woman |
| 48 | **ieyaou** Vineyard Sound | **ieyauo** Sidney Haughton | **ieyoau** Kingsley Moghalu | **ieyoua** ninety thousand | **ieyuao** r/MissNellyFurtado | **ieyuoa** livery cupboard |
| 49 | **ioaeuy** microaneurysm | **ioaeyu** Lincoln at Gettysburg | **ioauey** Wings of a Butterfly | **ioauye** Binot Paulmyer | **ioayeu** cricopharyngeus | **ioayue** Rio Cayures |
| 50 | **ioeauy** thing of beauty | **ioeayu** wild rosemary bush | **ioeuay** Big Brother Hungary | **ioeuya** fit for the junkyard | **ioeyau** insolvency fraud | **ioeyua** Siboney, Cuba |
| 51 | **iouaey** Sioux Valley | **iouaye** Viscount Dalrymple | **ioueay** without delay | **ioueya** Lincoln Tunnel bypass | **iouyae** isobutyrate | **iouyea** Clifford Bundy Stearns |
| 52 | **ioyaeu** History Channel UK | **ioyaue** Rio Yaguez | **ioyeau** Jim Molyneaux | **ioyeua** Hippolyte Lucas | **ioyuae** Victory Square | **ioyuea** Sikorsky Superhawk |
| 53 | **iuaeoy** virtual memory | **iuaeyo** insular grey fox | **iuaoey** scriptural prophecy | **iuaoye** Prikubanskoye | **iuayeo** Bill Murray record | **iuayoe** Cri-Du-Chat Syndrome |
| 54 | **iueaoy** six hundred and forty | **iueayo** influenza symptoms | **iueoay** Tribune Company | **iueoya** Pictures On My Wall | **iueyao** Sir Humphrey Stafford | **iueyoa** diffuse lymphoma |
| 55 | **iuoaey** Drigung Monastery | **iuoaye** child support payments | **iuoeay** immunotherapy | **iuoeya** ibuprofen crystals | **iuoyae** Circus Royale | **iuoyea** Illusory Dream |
| 56 | **iuyaeo** Pillsbury Bake-Off | **iuyaoe** Blissfully Alone | **iuyeao** Liuyedao | **iuyeoa** industry technocrats | **iuyoae** Liturgy of St. James | **iuyoea** Bigbury-on-Sea |
| 57 | **iyaeou** Highly Dangerous | **iyaeuo** Slingsby Tandem Tutor | **iyaoeu** lightly armored truck | **iyaoue** High Synagogue | **iyaueo** Jimmy Arguello | **iyauoe** Ilya Muromets |
| 58 | **iyeaou** six year old rum | **iyeauo** Jimmy Beaumont | **iyeoau** King Yeonsangun | **iyeoua** Fifty Cent soundtrack | **iyeuao** bicycle squadron | **iyeuoa** bicycle pump for cars |
| 59 | **iyoaeu** Iggy Pop and Jesus | **iyoaue** Billy Goat Curse | **iyoeau** ichthyocentaur | **iyoeua** City of Enumclaw | **iyouae** thickly-populated | **iyouea** Wild Young Hearts |
| 60 | **iyuaeo** Pinky Tuscadero | **iyuaoe** Lily Luna Potter | **iyueao** divvy up the labor | **iyueoa** Tiny Supernova | **iyuoae** Simply Unstoppable | **iyuoea** icy clutch of dread |

**Notes** **iaoyue** 7-letter euryvocalic | **ieaoyu** solid (17) | **ieoyau, iyouea** isograms (15) |**ieyoua** biggest aeiouy number| **iyouae** also **I'm Your Angel** (Celine Dion & R. Kelly - only aeiouy #1) | **iyuaeo** isogram (14)

# AEIOUY: Euryvocalics by Permutation (O)

| O | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 61 | **oaeiuy** John Sargent Pillsbury | **oaeiyu** Commander Ginyu | **oaeuiy** Roxanne Quimby | **oaeuyi** workplace bullying | **oaeyiu** Scotts Valley Virus | **oaeyui** Oakley Curtis |
| 62 | **oaieuy** organic mercury | **oaieyu** DRDO artillery gun | **oaiuey** Konstantin Sluchevsky | **oaiuye** Constantijn Huygens | **oaiyeu** non-dairy menu | **oaiyue** Rockabilly Blues |
| 63 | **oaueiy** Donna Summer vinyl | **oaueyi** spotband butterflyfish | **oauiey** Joan Quigley | **oauiye** Dong Fang Zhu Li Ye | **oauyei** Donald Tully Elkins | **oauyie** North Paluxy River |
| 64 | **oayeiu** Thomas Hybernicus | **oayeui** Pont-Landry, New Brunswick | **oayieu** Cold Day In The Sun | **oayiue** contrary virtues | **oayuei** Mornay Duplessis | **oayuie** John Barry Humphries |
| 65 | **oeaiuy** Protestant liturgy | **oeaiyu** One Family Fund | **oeauiy** Modern Maturity | **oeauyi** Project Laundry List | **oeayiu** Codex Zacynthius | **oeayui** monetary unit |
| 66 | **oeiauy** Bohemian ruby | **oeiayu** Joseph Smith Papyrus | **oeiuay** Connecticut Navy | **oeiuya** Cornelius Ryan | **oeiyau** Forest Hills Yacht Club | **oeiyua** Ogden City, Utah |
| 67 | **oeuaiy** Oh, the humanity! | **oeuayi** molecular physics | **oeuiay** Bonne Nuit Bay | **oeuiya** one cubic yard | **oeuyai** consensus dynamics | **oeuyia** home-buying grants |
| 68 | **oeyaiu** Women's Gymnasium | **oeyaui** Slovensky Skauting | **oeyiau** Jocelyn Thibault | **oeyiua** grocery circular | **oeyuai** property dualism | **oeyuia** Lonely Guitar |
| 69 | **oiaeuy** Scoring a Century | **oiaeyu** Colin Stanley Gum | **oiauey** To Pimp a Butterfly | **oiauye** social subsystems | **oiayeu** holiday menu | **oiayue** solitary number |
| 70 | **oieauy** Scorching Beauty | **oieayu** proprietary drug | **oieuay** Gorlim the Unhappy | **oieuya** Wojciech Kurtyka | **oieyau** online syllabus | **oieyua** Morichelypuszta |
| 71 | **oiuaey** Dobrilugk Abbey | **oiuaye** sodium layer | **oiueay** Wombling Summer Party | **oiueya** obliquely drawn | **oiuyae** Crossing Muddy Waters | **oiuyea** Locking Up My Heart |
| 72 | **oiyaeu** florist's chrysanthemum | **oiyaue** Comity Clause | **oiyeau** Ogilvy Renault | **oiyeua** policy-neutral | **oiyuae** Loisy-sur-Marne | **oiyuea** John Cirby Sturtevant |
| 73 | **ouaeiy** mouthwateringly | **ouaeyi** Boguslaw Leszczynski | **ouaiey** South Cambridge, NY | **ouaiye** Ford Quadricycle | **ouayei** occupancy permit | **ouayie** goldquarryite |
| 74 | **oueaiy** nonunderstandingly | **oueayi** counterrallying | **oueiay** consumer privacy | **oueiya** southern prickly ash | **oueyai** journeymanship | **oueyia** countercyclical |
| 75 | **ouiaey** conducting artery | **ouiaye** Louis B. Mayer | **ouieay** Louise Hay | **ouieya** So Much Like My Dad | **ouiyae** community garden | **ouiyea** Don't Phunk With My Heart |
| 76 | **ouyaei** Two Guys Named Chris | **ouyaie** courtyardlike | **ouyeai** Roughly Speaking | **ouyeia** Mount Hygeia | **ouyiae** County Kildare | **ouyiea** Commugny, Switzerland |
| 77 | **oyaeiu** Sonny Grandelius | **oyaeui** royal penguin | **oyaieu** Loyalist feud | **oyaiue** Coyhaique | **oyauei** Royaumeix | **oyauie** Rocky and Bullwinkle |
| 78 | **oyeaiu** Now My Heart Is Full | **oyeaui** Soy de San Luis | **oyeiau** Robyn Weintraub | **oyeiua** Johnny Penisula | **oyeuai** Holy Eucharist | **oyeuia** Joyce Bulifant |
| 79 | **oyiaeu** Holy Infant Jesus | **oyiaue** Copyright Clause | **oyieau** Tommy Wiseau | **oyieua** Rocky Ridge, Utah | **oyiuae** polylingual text | **oyiuea** Sony Pictures hack |
| 80 | **oyuaei** smoky quartz men's ring | **oyuaie** polyglutamine | **oyueai** rosy-rumped waxbill | **oyueia** Olympus Festival | **oyuiae** oxymuriate | **oyuiea** Sony v. Universal |

**Notes** **oaiuey** longest 2-word name (20) | **oaueyi, oiyaeu** longest 2-word phrases (21) | **oayeui** longest place (22) | **oeiyua** most populous US city+state | **oieyua** longest solid place isogram (15) | **oiuyea** longest song name isogram (16) | **ouaiey** longest place isogram (16) | "**ouaiye**" French slang, shortest euryvocalic | **ouyiea** longest city+country (19) | **oyaiue** most populous city (solid)

# AEIOUY: Euryvocalics by Permutation (U)

| U | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81 | **uaeioy** human prehistory | **uaeiyo** Sulawesi python | **uaeoiy** U.S. trade policy | **uaeoyi** uraeotyphlid | **uaeyio** Quarley Hill Fort | **uaeyoi** Sundance, Wyoming |
| 82 | **uaieoy** unpraiseworthy | **uaieyo** Bugatti Veyron | **uaioey** But Dad, It's Smokey! | **uaioye** Kugarchinskoye | **uaiyeo** Quality Records | **uaiyoe** plurality vote |
| 83 | **uaoeiy** ultramodernity | **uaoeyi** subattorneyship | **uaoiey** plural society | **uaoiye** Urban Moving Systems | **uaoyei** Pusa Polytechnic | **uaoyie** Husbands & Trophy Wives |
| 84 | **uayeio** Murray Feingold | **uayeoi** subarytenoid | **uayieo** Sunday Night Sex Show | **uayioe** Huayi Brothers | **uayoei** Kurgan hypothesis | **uayoie** upwardly mobile |
| 85 | **ueaioy** Uncertain Glory | **ueaiyo** Unreality Show | **ueaoiy** supermajority | **ueaoyi** hundred-and-forty IQ | **ueayio** USS LeRay Wilson | **ueayoi** Usher Raymond IV |
| 86 | **ueiaoy** Kung Hei Fat Choy | **ueiayo** purple giant hyssop | **ueioay** questionably | **ueioya** Quentin Coryatt | **ueiyao** Culver City Car Show | **ueiyoa** Umeniyora |
| 87 | **ueoaiy** supernormality | **ueoayi** Sturgeon Bay, WI | **ueoiay** Jrue Holiday | **ueoiya** Plush Hello Kitty Bag | **ueoyai** Burchell's Glossy-Starling | **ueoyia** Summer Olympiad |
| 88 | **ueyaio** underhydration | **ueyaoi** turkey pardoning | **ueyiao** Dudley Diamond | **ueyioa** Huxley, Iowa | **ueyoai** Huey Tzompantli | **ueyoia** muscle dysmorphia |
| 89 | **uiaeoy** Hurricane Floyd | **uiaeyo** Utica, New York | **uiaoey** musical comedy | **uiaoye** Julian Coryell | **uiayeo** unitary method | **uiayoe** luminary of sect |
| 90 | **uieaoy** fusible alloy | **uieayo** Julie Taymor | **uieoay** suffice to say | **uieoya** USS Princess Royal | **uieyao** Quiet Dynamo | **uieyoa** multikeyboard |
| 91 | **uioaey** Huntingdon Valley | **uioaye** multiform layer | **uioeay** running commentary | **uioeya** Quick Joey Small | **uioyae** Curtis "Cocky" Warren | **uioyea** music to my ears |
| 92 | **uiyaeo** publicly traded stock | **uiyaoe** quiirkyalone | **uiyeao** Juli Lynne Charlot | **uiyeoa** unit hyperbola | **uiyoae** puliyogare | **uiyoea** Quincy Coleman |
| 93 | **uoaeiy** Church of St James, Grimsby | **uoaeyi** Hudson Valley Knights | **uoaiey** turbomachinery | **uoaiye** Sukhothai Style | **uoayei** pulmonary vein | **uoayie** Zugodactylites |
| 94 | **uoeaiy** bulldog tenacity | **uoeayi** quote vs.saying | **uoeiay** unpoetically | **uoeiya** Buck Rogers Piggy Bank | **uoeyai** upholstery backing | **uoeyia** hush money trial |
| 95 | **uoiaey** subordinately | **uoiaye** supporting player | **uoieay** quodlibetary | **uoieya** Duckhorn Vineyards | **uoiyae** Zhukovskiy crater | **uoiyea** Mull of Kintyre farm |
| 96 | **uoyaei** Guoy phase shift | **uoyaie** buoyancies | **uoyeai** Tucson Chrysler Classic | **uoyeia** Uptown Rhythm Festival | **uoyiae** uncopyrightable | **uoyiea** U.S. Olympic Team |
| 97 | **uyaeio** Rudy Valentino | **uyaeoi** Mundy Charter Township | **uyaieo** July Manifesto | **uyaioe** fully fashioned | **uyaoei** Lucky Star: Moe Drill | **uyaoie** Pussy, Savoie |
| 98 | **uyeaio** Schuyler Hamilton | **uyeaoi** Thury-en-Valois | **uyeiao** Funky Terminator | **uyeioa** Ulysses Simpson Grant | **uyeoai** Ruby & The Romantics | **uyeoia** SUNY Fredonia |
| 99 | **uyiaeo** Gruffydd Hiraethog | **uyiaoe** buying a vowel | **uyieao** Ruby Ridge standoff | **uyieoa** Jurby, Isle of Man | **uyioae** Murphy's Bistro Cafe | **uyioea** UCS Hybrid Scorecard |
| 100 | **uyoaei** Fully Loaded Clip | **uyoaie** Guyot Glacier | **uyoeai** shrubby horsetail | **uyoeia** Funky Cold Medina | **uyoiae** unhypnotizable | **uyoiea** Duchy of Friedland |

**Notes** **ueaoyi** also **subdermatoglyphic** - longest solid isogram (17), **Rumblepad Joystick** isogram (17) John O'Laughlin | **uoeiya** also **"just don't mess with my man"** (Irma Thomas lyric) "perfect 6" | **uioaey** most populous & longest US town (16) | **uiyeao** Laura Demanski | **uoeyai** isogram (17) Jenna LaFleur | **uoyiae** longest solid dictionary isogram | **uyaeoi** longest US place (20) | **uyaoie** sister city of Fücking, Austria? (alleged) |**uyeioa** only aeiouy US president | **uyoaei ...by Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson**

# AEIOUY: Euryvocalics by Permutation (Y)

| Y | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 101 | **yaeiou** sympathetic sound | **yaeiuo** Gryazev-Shipunov | **yaeoiu** Ryan Pretorius | **yaeoui** crystal meth tourism | **yaeuio** Chrysanthemum Kingdom | **yaeuoi** Yale tutoring |
| 102 | **yaieou** cyanide group | **yaieuo** Nyadiew Puoch | **yaioeu** Pyramid of the Sun | **yaioue** Hydra Vizor Huez | **yaiueo** Sylvain Turgeon | **yaiuoe** dynamic quotes |
| 103 | **yaoeiu** sycamore ficus | **yaoeui** Hyangto eumsik | **yaoieu** My Favorite Duck | **yaoiue** thylakoid lumen | **yaouei** Yakov Smushkevich | **yaouie** Lynn-Avon United |
| 104 | **yaueio** hydrarch succession | **yaueoi** Ryan Nugent-Hopkins | **yauieo** Yasushi Endo | **yauioe** hydraulic power | **yauoei** Yasu Kohei | **yauoie** Lyapunov time |
| 105 | **yeaiou** Chrysler bailout | **yeaiuo** year in humor | **yeaoiu** Systema Cosmicum | **yeaoui** Hyde Park, St. Louis | **yeauio** cyberauction | **yeauoi** hypergranulosis |
| 106 | **yeiaou** Sky Media Group | **yeiauo** MySQL Technical Support | **yeioau** Rhydderch I of Alt Clut | **yeioua** Mysterious Art | **yeiuao** ytterbium atom | **yeiuoa** Type I U-boat |
| 107 | **yeoaiu** myelobrachium | **yeoaui** hyperlocal music | **yeoiau** Gyeonggi Gwangju | **yeoiua** yellowfin tuna | **yeouai** Type Four Chassis | **yeouia** System of Survival |
| 108 | **yeuaio** dysregulation | **yeuaoi** Yves du Manoir | **yeuiao** Yehudit Naot | **yeuioa** ThyssenKrupp Nirosta | **yeuoai** Rhythms del Mundo: Classics | **yeuoia** cyberutopia |
| 109 | **yiaeou** syndicated column | **yiaeuo** Hryvnia vs Euro | **yiaoeu** Ys IV: Mask of the Sun | **yiaoue** ”My mic was on mute” | **yiaueo** typical gudgeon | **yiauoe** Yip Harburg poems |
| 110 | **yieaou** Lyminster and Crossbrush | **yieauo** Sylvie and Bruno | **yieoau** Flying Pterosaur | **yieoua** mystic espousal | **yieuao** Wylie Gustafson | **yieuoa** dying neutron star |
| 111 | **yioaeu** Lysis of Tarentum | **yioaue** dying of laughter | **yioeau** Tryin' to Get a Buck | **yioeua** cylindrocellular | **yiouae** cycling of substances | **yiouea** flying mousetrap |
| 112 | **yiuaeo** Flying Buddha Records | **yiuaoe** yttrium atom shell | **yiueao** Phyllis Summers Abbott | **yiueoa** lying under oath | **yiuoae** hybrid turbocharger | **yiuoea** yttrium-doped glass |
| 113 | **yoaeiu** mycobacterium | **yoaeui** syncopated drumming | **yoaieu** psychoactive drugs | **yoaiue** zygomatic muscle | **yoauei** crypto-laundering | **yoauie** Yohaulticetl |
| 114 | **yoeaiu** Cyclone Stadium | **yoeaui** hydrometallurgists | **yoeiau** thyrocervical trunk | **yoeiua** lymphoreticular | **yoeuai** hydropneumatic | **yoeuia** hypogeusia |
| 115 | **yoiaeu** yogic masseur | **yoiaue** Nykoping Banquet | **yoieau** Nyoiseau | **yoieua** Yorkshire Hussars | **yoiuae** Symposium Cafe | **yoiuea** synth rock instrumental |
| 116 | **youaei** You and Me Kid | **youaie** Youthanize | **youeai** Yousefzai | **youeia** Plymouth Reliant | **youiae** My Cousin Rachel | **youiea** Young, Gifted & Black |
| 117 | **yuaeio** Yuan period | **yuaeoi** Yucateco Grill | **yuaieo** Hyundai Presto | **yuaioe** Cyprus Air Force | **yuaoei** Zygmunt Latoszewski | **yuaoie** Yunnan Province |
| 118 | **yueaio** spy numbers station | **yueaoi** Cyrus-Beck algorithm | **yueiao** D.G. Yuengling and Son | **yueioa** MyBulletinBoard | **yueoai** Yuen Long Plain | **yueoia** Yumenoshima |
| 119 | **yuiaeo** try turning back the clock | **yuiaoe** Yulia Townsend | **yuieao** Dry-Humping the Cash Cow | **yuieoa** Cyrus, Minnesota | **yuioae** dysfunctional mess | **yuioea** Yu-Gi-Oh! Zexal |
| 120 | **yuoaei** Yugoslav Chetniks | **yuoaie** Lyutoga River | **yuoeai** Yukon Denali | **yuoeia** Ryuzo Sejima | **yuoiae** xylulokinase | **yuoiea** syrup of ipecac |

**Notes** **yeuoai** longest album name (23) | **yiaoeu** ”perfect 6” | **yiaoue** Eli Shear-Baggish | **yieaou** longest place name (21) | **yoeaui** longest solid (18, tie) | **youiea** Aretha Franklin album | **yuaoie** most populous aeiouy place | **yuieao** …**by Alice Donut** | **yuioae** Ben Zimmer | **yuoiea** also **Yukon River Flats, phylum Porifera**, **phylum Rotifera**

## LUKE SKI: THE COMEDY MUSIC INTERVIEW

T Campbell

*Luke Ski is a cartoonist, caricaturist, and storyboard artist, but he's best known in the field of comedy music, writing and performing hits like "Fake Adult" and "What's Up, Spock (Can We Rock)?"*



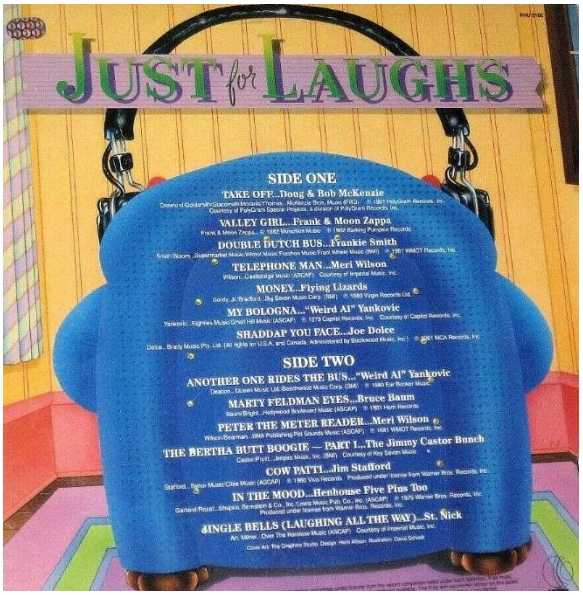
*Look out! It's Luke Ski!*

**T:** Let's start with the origin of Luke Ski, the comedy musician. What reached out to you and said comedy music was a thing you might be interested in doing?

**Luke:** Well, when I was a very little kid, my mom raised me on the shows of Jim Henson—so, *Sesame Street, The Muppet Show,* eventually *Fraggle Rock.* All of them had great, funny songs. I also was a huge fan of Walt Disney. And films like *Mary Poppins* all had songs in them, and typically a lot of them were funny songs.

I always gravitated toward songs that were funny. At some point, when I was pretty young, my mom played for me the song from one of Steve Martin's albums, called "King Tut." That was the first comedy song that was aimed at an adult audience that I ever heard. I just really got hooked in and fascinated by that song in around 1980 or 81. Then a friend of our family lent my older sister a K-Tel album called *Just for Laughs,* a dozen songs that were just funny or weird or whatever. It had "Valley Girl" by Frank Zappa, "Take Off" by Bob and Doug Mackenzie, and that album was the first time I ever heard of Weird Al Yankovic.

The two tracks of his included the original studio bathroom recording of "My Bologna." The original version was recorded in the bathroom at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where Al was going to college. They just like, wheeled the recording equipment in there and recorded in there for the echo effect of the bathroom.




Just for Laughs, *with "Valley Girl," "Take Off," and "My Bologna."*

I almost got booked for a caricature gig recently in San Luis Obispo. It didn't go through, but I told them "I really want this gig." And they're like, "Oh, did you go there?" And I'm like, "Actually, no, Weird Al went there, and he recorded a song in this bathroom, and now they have a plaque there commemorating where he recorded his first big hit."

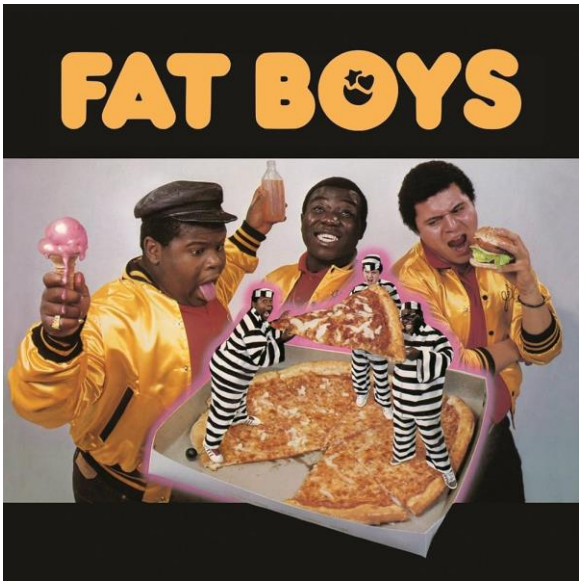
Anyway, "King Tut" and *Just for Laughs* said to me, "Here's these songs that are comedy songs that they're aimed at adults. They aren't aimed at little kids." I also remember being fascinated by "Pac-Man Fever," and then "Eat It" happened, and I learned "Oh, so, Weird Al Yankovic actually has his own full *albums* worth of stuff!" And I had *Weird Al in 3-D* and

then *Dare to Be Stupid,* which was the first album I bought with my own money as a kid. There was no internet, no way to easily access this information when you live in rural Wisconsin, but I was just always trying to grab all these comedy songs. So that was origin point number one.

After that, I started hearing certain types of songs that weren't comedy music, but they certainly grabbed my attention because they were so different. I know at some point early on in my life, I heard the song "Rapper's Delight" by Sugar Hill Gang, not that I knew what the title of it was at the time. I just heard it, and I was like, *Oh, that's interesting. There's this groove, and these guys are just talking rhythmically over it.* Then an album came out, sold in commercials, called *Electric Breakdance,* and that album had a song on it called "Jam on It," but the way the guy says it in the song is "Jamoany," so I thought that's what the title was.

**T:** I've done that a few times.

**Luke:** Run-DMC did "Walk This Way" with Aerosmith, and that's when I really got introduced: *Oh, there's this thing. It's called rap music. This is what hip-hop is. Oh, my gosh, this is incredible.* Shortly after that there were the Beastie Boys and the Fat Boys. The Fat Boys grabbed my attention because they were trying to be funny with a lot of their songs. I noticed a lot of other rappers were also trying that, like they just had a good sense of humor about themselves. I immediately got very fascinated with hip-hop. I soon found out about Public Enemy, Digital Underground—who am I forgetting? There's Third Base, there's just tons and tons of groups out there—Young MC certainly had some very clever lyrics—Biz Markie, just tons and tons of great stuff. So it was syncopatively delivering these clever lyrics that rhyme and just have this groove to them that I found interesting.



*The Fat Boys' self-titled album.*

And on top of that, if the songs themselves weren't super intentionally funny, the lyrics were at least clever or interesting or just thoroughly had a hook to them. So I just grew up being super fascinated with funny songs and super fascinated with hip-hop, and especially when those two would cross over in the Venn diagram. Yeah, that would blow my mind.

**T:** What was your first recorded song?

My friends were always doing goofy, creative stuff, filming videos with my mom's videocamera, or getting a tape recorder out, recording ourselves doing dumb stuff. So me and my friends back in like, junior high in 1987 would record ourselves doing dumb rap songs that we would make up or whatever. And then, in 1993—this is such a weird thing to have decided to do—we took a song by the hip-hop group The House of Pain called "Jump Around," which you've probably heard. At the same time, Bobby Brown had a song called "Humping Around," and *Beavis and Butthead* was on the air. And in their response to the Bobby Brown song, Butthead says, "Is he talking about humping a hound?"

So at some point, me and my best friend, Jason, kept quoting that bit to each other. So I got this idea to do a parody of "Jump Around" called "Humpa Hound," in which, between the verses, I impersonate Beavis and Butthead, talking about the Bobby Brown video, and then just making various references to the show because we loved it so much. The verses were just me and Jason going back and forth, making up whatever weird stuff we wanted that matched the rhyme scheme and the rhythm of the song "Jump Around." And this was the eureka moment of me figuring out what my song parody process, method, my style, I guess.

If you're gonna do a parody of a rap song. It isn't just about having the music and then saying the words and having the words at the end of each pair of lines rhyme. It's about trying your best to match the rhymes when the rhymes happen in the song, because sometimes there's multiple rhymes within the same lines, right? And there're also those syncopated rhythms. If you really want your parody song, to sound like the original song, you need to try to match those syncopated rhythms too, to some degree,

**T:** I've always admired that kind of intricate structure. It's much more difficult to copy that than to copy just the end rhymes.

**Luke:** Okay, here's this lyric from the House of Pain song:

> *Feelin', **funkin',** amps in the **trunk, and***
> *I got more rhymes than there's cops at a **Dunkin'***
> *Donuts **shop,** Sho' nuff, I got **props***
> *From the kids on the Hill plus my mom and my **pops***

So my parody of that ended up being:

> *On Mario **Kart,** when I drive, they all **dart***
> *I smoke more **carts** than there are at a **Walmart***
> *Parkin' **lot,** sure enough, you got **shot***
> *By a heat-seeking red shell, you're suckin' a **brat***

So figuring that out was my eureka moment. This is how you write good hip-hop parody lyrics because—without pulling out a chart and circling things—this is how it needed to be done if we really wanted to be good.

**T:** But that wasn't your real breakthrough.

**Luke:** No. The following summer, "What's Up, Doc (Can We Rock)?" by FU-Schnickens featuring Shaquille O'Neal came out, and that song really hooked me. I was like, *I really want to parody this.* And I had two options in my brain. One was *Star Trek,* and the other was *Animaniacs.* And I went with *Star Trek.* So my song "What's Up, Spock" was almost "What's Up, Dot" and about *Animaniacs.* But *Animaniacs* would come back later when I did a parody of Cypress Hill's "Insane in the Brain" with my Pinky and the Brain song, "Insane and the Brain."

I spent a lot of time on the "What's Up, Doc?" parody. The first verse, I made about classic *Star Trek;* the second verse I made about *Next Generation.* The third verse was about *Deep Space Nine,* and the fourth short verse, that was by Shaquille O'Neal, was about Q. At that time, those shows were all the Star Trek that existed. Voyager hadn't rolled on yet. So, so that was my first major success in writing a song parody for a very high-tempo rap song. There are a lot of lyrics in that song, and I managed to pull it off in a way that I thought matched the original pretty darn well.

I performed it at the Gen Con costume contest in Milwaukee. I made these T-shirts and layered them: the first looked like a classic *Trek* uniform, but after the first verse about classic *Trek,* I pulled that shirt off to reveal a *Next Gen* shirt for that verse, then a *DS9* shirt for that verse, and on the bottom—Shaq was playing for the Orlando Magic or something, but I made it look like a basketball jersey that, instead of a number, just had Q on it. And I wanted to put the word *continuum* over it, where O'Neal's last name would be. You could not find the word *continuum* in a dictionary in 1994, and I didn't have access to the internet at that point, so I wrote it as *continueum.* Later, I learned it was spelled *continuum.* And I was like, *God damn it, so close.*



*Ski performing Verse 2 of "What's Up, Spock?" at Gen Con.*

"What's Up, Spock?" was my first my first big success, and to this day, still one of my favorites of my own songs. And as the years went by, I did a parody of Coolio's "Fantastic Voyage" called "Fantastic Voyager," and I took one of its verses that mentions all the *Voyager* characters and made a version of "What's Up, Spock?" that included that verse. A few years later, I did a parody of the Gorillaz song "Clint Eastwood" about *Enterprise,* which was called "John Archer." And then I took a verse from that that mentioned all the characters and stuck that at the end of "What's Up, Spock?" for another remix so that I could keep doing it. And then, since there weren't any *Star Trek* shows for a long time after that, I stuck with that as my standard version of the song for many, many years. Even when *Discovery* and other new *Star Trek* stuff started coming out, people were asking me, "Oh, you're gonna add more to that song?" And I was like, "No, I feel like it covers that era, and I don't need to keep updating it." But last year, Devo Spice surprised me and decided to bring that song completely up to date. So Devo Spice has a nine-minute-long version of "What's Up, Spock?"

**T:** That leads into something I wanted to talk about. The collaborative community. The FuMP is the backbone of it, but there's a good deal of collaboration within the comedy music community in general. I wanted to get your read on that.

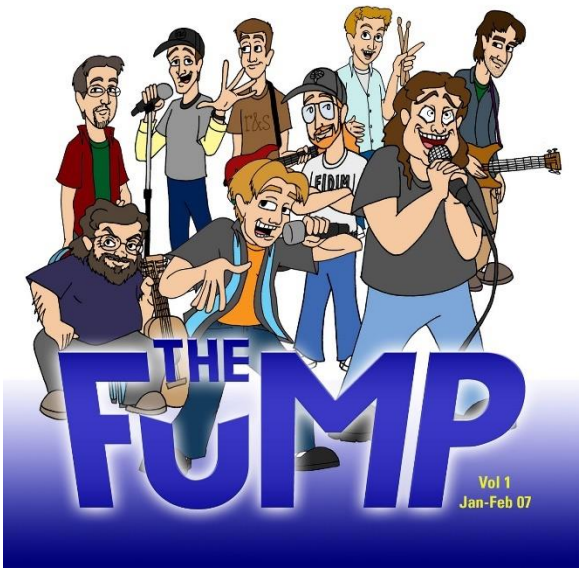
**Luke:** We've gotten to the point where it's not out of rudeness—we all know each other, we all know that we're all down for doing each other's stuff. If one of us is like, *Oh, I want to do this song, but I want this person to be on it,* we'll just email each other like, *Hey, I'm doing a song. I need you to do this, this and this,* and be like, *All right, cool, send me the lyrics, send me the backing track, I'll get it recorded. I'll send it to you*. It's not even like we're asking. *Would you please be on the song? Would you be interested?* We're just like, *Yeah, I need you for a thing.*

This tribute song I did for Dr. Demento, I just started a six-person group chat in Facebook where it was Devo Spice, Shoebox of Worm Quartet, Charisma, Celesta, Saint Ian, and Tony Goldmark. And I just said, "All right, I'm doing a thing. Who wants it?" We figured out Devo and Tony are gonna be the two main people, and then the other three will do the backup stuff. And, yeah, cool.

The FuMP, the community we've built is one of the most meaningful things I've ever been involved with in my life. And I don't have any tattoos, but if I had to get one, it would be the FuMP logo, because that's something I would be proud to have permanently etched on my body forever.

**T:** So how did the FuMP come about? I'm familiar, but the audience is not necessarily familiar, and there're probably things I don't know about the early days.

**Luke:** Uh, *somebody who shall not be named* decided that Jonathan Coulton's thing [putting out a song] a week was pretty darn nifty. And while he did not possess that much songwriting prowess, he knew enough other people that could possibly be each 1/8 of Jonathan Coulton. It was a small group: myself, Devo Spice, Worm Quartet, which is Tim Crist aka Shoebox. Raymond and Scum, Tom Smith, and Jared Ringold of Possible Oscar. The idea was… What if we teamed up? We could release two songs a week, with each of us taking turns, and make it this place where comedy music can grow and be released for free under Creative Commons licensing. We'd just start this archive. And then every two months, we'd release a physical CD of all of the songs we had put out, and then a digital album as well, and sell those at our website. It might have been Tom Smith who came up with the name FuMP, for the Funny Music Project.



*The first FuMP compilation album. The FuMP still releases new albums bimonthly and new MP3s twice weekly, 18 years later. The cover is a Luke Ski design.*

So we started that in January 2007, and we had also this notion of auxiliary members coming in…

*At this point, my wonderful wife Janice, who's been sitting back and letting the interview unfold, stepped forward to chime in.*

**Janice:** You can tag me in on this because I was there for it. The auxiliary members were a bunch of other comedy musicians who heard about this, and were like, *Hey, can we get in on this?* And it was a vote among all the original core members about whether this auxiliary person's song would be accepted or approved. And that's how Power Salad got in. I don't think he was originally part of the core.

**Luke:** Yeah, he wasn't active too much at that time. However, Carrie Dolby was with me doing a lot of tracks for songs I worked on. She was on "Stealing Like a Hobbit," "Grease Wars" and "Vader Boy," my Episode Three song. And she was starting to make her own comedy music. She had at least come out with an EP by then, and so we voted her in fairly early. She was the first female member of the FuMP. So we often refer to her either as the First Lady of the FuMP or as the Carol Cleveland of the FuMP. [Carol Cleveland was the actress most often featured in Monty Python]. As time went on, we brought in

various other acts who most of us knew personally and whom we trusted to make high-quality comedy music. Robert London's stuff was big on the Dr. Demento show, and so he became part of the core group. Eventually we had Insane Ian.

**Janice:** Just go to the FuMP's artists page and sort that chronologically by when you joined.

**Luke:** That would be fun. So I was putting out like one track a month for the first three years, and then I had to slow down to one track every two months. And then with what was going on in my life, it turned into me posting tracks whenever I had the time and the money. So I haven't put out nearly as many songs on a regular basis as I used to, but I try to make at least one or two things a year. There have been a couple of years where I intentionally didn't release any new music just so I could be a Logan Awards juror the following year. [The FuMP gives out the Logan Awards every year, recognizing the best in all comedy music—associated with the FuMP or not.]



*The Logan Whitehurst Memorial Award for Excellence in Comedy Music. Jamie Noguchi fashioned the award in a shape that honored one of Whitehurst's best-known songs, "The Robot Cat."*

**Janice:** Because if it's possible for you to be nominated, you can't be a juror, right?

**Luke:** It's not that you *can't* be a juror. It's just it makes things really awkward. Because, you know…

**Janice:** How do you not vote for your own stuff?

**T: I**t's like, *Don't you believe in this?*

**Luke:** Yeah, it's like that scene from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* sequel where they're trying to vote on who's going to be the new Pirate King, and every pirate lord only votes for themselves, so there's never a consensus. In complete fairness to the artists, the whole point is that we're trying to make the best quality work we can. So in our honest opinions, they are great songs. So why wouldn't we want to vote for our own thing if we genuinely think it's good?

**T:** At the very least, there should be a conflict.

**Luke:** Around 2008 or 2009 we started a page called The Sideshow so that people could post their own songs. They'd have to host the MP3s themselves. But it was a chance for people to post their own songs to an area of the FuMP page so that we could grow a community of people who are mainly beginners at making comedy music, so that they could learn and grow and interact and meet each other. And through that, we found some people we had never heard of before and asked them to become auxiliary members, because after they would post a few songs and we'd think, *Hey, they make high quality work, they should be on the main page.*

So we did that, and then a whole bunch of years later, we decided to add a "Submit a Song" feature to the main page so that people could submit comedy songs for consideration to be a main-page song. And the core members of the FuMP will all listen to it and then vote on it, and if the average amount of votes is a passing grade, we'll add it and have them posted to the main page. And then after they've posted a few songs to the main page, we'll consider them for auxiliary as well. So we've been just trying to grow a place where comedy music can live and thrive and be appreciated. because, you know we all love it and believe in it. Even when I'm not in the process of making songs and I'm out living my life, I'll listen to tracks that my friends have made, and it'll just remind me how much I love this interesting, unique genre of music, which is based more on the intent of the song than the style of the music you're playing.

**T:** I've always really admired that the Logan Awards are not limited to FuMP members, that they're there to recognize what you guys think is best within the field.

**Luke:** Every year at the Logan Awards, there are songs nominated that I had never heard before. And sometimes those songs win, and it just makes me go, *Huh?* Because we have our bubble, our FuMP/Dr. Demento Show bubble of all these people that make comedy music, but there are other bubbles of comedy music all across the country and the world, and I'm sure they have their own equivalent. Like, everyone has their own roster of heavy hitters, right? And none of us have heard of any of the other ones.

So part of the intention of the Logan Awards is to get the word out via social media that there's this place where you can win an award for comedy music. You need to go here. nominate what songs you think should win. And we are genuinely counting on artists to go, *Hey, I make comedy music, and I think my song should win. So I'm gonna submit my thing,* or *I'm gonna submit my friends' things,* so that we at the FuMP can learn about more comedy music acts that exist out there.

I might find somebody I want to book as the guest of honor for Marscon [one of the FuMP's in-person gatherings, along with FuMPFest]. It's like, oh, I never heard of this person. They're amazing. Let's make them part of FuMPFest or Marscon, or ask them to join the FuMP, whatever you know. So, but yeah, it's like and obviously we want to honor and acknowledge the heavy hitters that are legit, famous, and successful like Weird Al or Garfunkel and Oates, or Tenacious D or Flight of the Conchords, the Lonely Island, Rachel Bloom, et cetera. We want them all, you know. We want to acknowledge them all too, because we look up to them and they make amazing work. And we want to throw them into the same playing field as all the rest of us, because we're all doing the thing that we love.

There's also Epic Rap Battles of History. There's Whitney Avalon and her Princess Rap Battles. Tim mentioned Bo Burnham. Just so, so many awesome people.



*Whitney Avalon, from her homepage.*

**T:** Do you have a group of original songs, or are you strictly parodies?

**Luke:** Let me go to my most recently released album on Bandcamp. I was living in Chicago for the beginning of this material, but then I moved to California and started my animation industry career. Making a song parody is easier from a production point of view than making an original song. I can call up one of my friends who makes my backing tracks

and say, “Hey, you know this song by Meghan Trainor? Recreate that music.” And they go, “Gotcha.” And then they recreate that music, and then I write the lyrics for it.

Writing an original song means either I need to get out Garage Band and try to figure out what the song is, the melody and everything, and then have that song be done, you know. And I need to talk to one of those many talented friends of mine who makes backing tracks and try to verbally explain to them what I’m trying to do like, maybe I’ll send them a recording of me singing what I think the song should sound like, just a cappella, and tell them it’s in *this* genre, and then have them come up with something, and then say, “Oh, does this work? Does this not work?”

From 2014 to 2023, my life just turned out so it was much easier for me to do parodies than to do originals, because I didn’t have to put as much mental time and effort into making the song, because somebody else had figured out the whole melody for me already. So for my last album… [does some quick figuring and assessing] I had 7 originals and 14 parodies. So I guess my ratio, based on that, was 1 to 2. My previous albums, I think, might have a higher percentage of originals.

**T:** What’s the difference from the songwriting end of things?

**Luke:** It’s like the difference between working out just your arms or working out just your legs. Parodies have certain restrictions to them. If you want to match up with the original, you have to go under that framework that’s already set up, right? So it’s like, *Working on my legs, working on my legs, working on my legs.* And then I’m like, *Now I’m gonna do an original.* And there’s no framework. That’s kind of walking around, like, *Oh, my gosh, my legs can move all over the place now.* With originals, you can do literally whatever you want, but the downside is, *Oh, crap. I can do literally whatever I want, so I have to figure out what that is now and hope that it’s clever and has a hook, and people are gonna want to listen to it.* Pop hits already have a hook most of the time. I mean, that’s why they’re popular. With original songs, it’s harder to figure out stuff. But sometimes you nail it and get it right. For example, my song “Fake Adult” was a big success, and I actually composed that using GarageBand software. I had a friend of mine help me clean up the music and make the whole thing a bit better. But the overall melody—the song is in the key of C, because that is the easiest key to work in.

**T:** I noticed a number of your songs take an approach I’d call maximalist, or some might say exhaustive. It’s like those illustrations that feature every Hanna Barbera character or the essays where I report every variation on a certain kind of wordplay in a given context…

**Luke:** I tend to write the musical equivalent of the battle at the end of *Avengers: Endgame. On your left. Everybody get in here. You’re ALL in the song. EVERY reference is* in *the song.*

**T:** I wonder how that comes about. Do you begin with a list, or begin with a basic song and then just keep adding more references and stirring them in, ot how does it go?

**Luke:** My most recent example of that type of song—after the aforementioned “What’s up, Spock,” I had many other *Star Trek* songs, but I stopped for a while after *Enterprise* ended. There wasn’t much else to say about that era of *Star Trek*—I did a song for the Chris Pine *Star Trek* movie, but mostly I was doing a ton of songs about *Star Wars,* and, of course, lots of other pop culture-type things. My last song about *Star Trek* had been 2009, and then the show *Star Trek: Lower Decks* started in the year 2020, and by the end of the first season, I’m like*, I have to write a song about this.*



Star Trek: Lower Decks, *with the original main cast.*

I had notions of what it would be and figured I'd make it an original, because *Lower Decks* was the first *Star Trek* show that was meant to be specifically a comedy, my original title for that song was gonna be *"Lower Decks,* Ain't No Joke." That was the working title for a very long time, up until I started actually working on the song. Because after the end of season four, Paramount announced that season five was going to be the last season. And there was a huge campaign to try to save *Lower Decks,* literally #savelowerdecks. And I'm like, *Okay, this is my last chance to do this song and have it be significant, because the show will still be airing, so to speak, on streaming.* And I could try to tie it into the #savelowerdecks campaign and try to use it to help us save *Lower Decks*. And so that's why I gave myself a target release date at FuMPFest in October of 2024, and then a few days after that, it posted to the FuMP. I asked my friend Zach Hurst to edit together a video for it. And it was an original, but the chorus hook of it is a hip-hopified version of the *Lower Decks* theme music, which was put together amazingly by Professor Shyguy.

It had been fifteen years since I had done a song on *Star Trek,* but this was one of my favorite TV shows, period, of the past 10 years. If I was gonna do a song about *Lower Decks,* I was going to go all out and try to entirely encapsulate the awesomeness of the first four seasons of this show and their appearance on [live-action *Star Trek* show] *Strange New Worlds* into one song. So that's what I set out to do. I rewatched the entire series. I took a good paragraph worth of notes on each episode and the significant things that happened in it, making pages upon pages in my notebook. Then I took those notes, and I typed up everything I considered important enough to get mentioned. And I broke that into outline points for each character and for extras, and I ended up with a typed document of twelve pages' worth of notes.

So then I had to decide on the structure of my song, four verses. Thankfully, *Lower Decks* had a built-in hook to it, from episode one, Mariner would try to hype up her fellow lower-decks crewpeople by getting them all chanting, *lower decks, lower decks, lower decks,* whenever they were hanging out and celebrating something. So I'm like, *Well, there's your chorus hook right there.*

I picked the Tribe Called Quest song "Scenario," which had the vibe and the tempo I wanted. It's not a parody of "Scenario," although I did decide to reference that song in the lyrics: *each and every sci-fi scenario.*

So in my notes, I remembered a guy, Lieutenant Dirk, who tells Tendi when she's all excited, "Keep it moving, lower decks." He's just trying to get her to move on to the next thing, but I realized, if I switch that around… *Lower decks, keep it moving…* That's a thing you'd say to a crowd of people who are dancing. And also, the lower-decks people are the cogs in the machine that keep it moving. So, yeah, literally, lower decks *do* keep it moving. So I'm like, *Well, there,*




*Though "lower decks" is an insult here, the characters—and song—will reclaim it as a badge of pride.*

*that's perfect.* And that's when I decided to change the title of the song. "Lower Decks, Keep It Movin'."

So now that I had all that figured out, I realized, *If the choruses with the chanting are going to be this long, if I make it four verses and four choruses with an intro and outro, that'll be about four and a half minutes.* That seemed like a good length. I wanted to hit at least four minutes but not get close to five. Not that I'm afraid of doing long songs. If I want to do a long song, oh, I *do* them. You can look at my tracks like "Grease Wars" and "It's a Fanboy Christmas" and "MC Freberg," if you want to hear me do long-form stuff, sure, but…

**T:** There's an interesting art to knowing how long a certain audience is going to appreciate a song. *Lower Decks* fans would want a thorough approach, but at the same time, they're a popular audience, not an avant-garde audience. You can't pull the real extreme stuff with them.

**Luke:** Dr. Demento would talk about how even in the older days of radio, shorter songs would get more airplay. So if your song is short and has a hook, you're gonna be awesome. Like, look at the song "Lump" by the Presidents the United States of America. That song is literally two minutes long, you know. And which is also why make great fodder for Weird Al to do a parody of it about Forrest Gump.

Dr. D always advised me to have songs with a hook to them, you know. And I think in the early days, me and Devo Spice were the first people to send Dr. Demento parodies of hip-hop songs where we were genuinely trying to be as faithful to the original hip-hop music as possible. He wasn't used to hearing that stuff, because he was used to hearing stuff that came from boomer-aged morning disc jockeys who were like, *Hey, this rap thing is popular. Let's do a rap song about the Green Bay Packers or something like that.* And it would be incredibly cringe.

**T:** Were there people who announced what their names were and what they were here to say…?

**Luke:** And that they were going to do it in some kind of way? Yes, exactly. So me and Devo show up, and it's like, *Oh, no, we're actually doing this for real.* Like, outside of me and Devo Spice, the only two others that really did it balls to the wall like that, where Weird Al and Chris Rock. Weird Al did his parody of Tone Loc's "Wild Thing," he did M.C. Hammer's "You Can't Touch This." Even his original song "Twister" was a pastiche of the Beastie Boys album *License to Ill,* spot-on perfect.

And then there was Chris Rock, who would occasionally do some music stuff on his albums. And he had access to the entire hip-hop industry.

I forgot why I got off on that tangent, but to get back to the structure of "Lower Decks, Keep it Movin'," after I figured out there'd be four verses and four choruses, next was figuring what should be in those verses. So I give the eventually figured out, Okay, first verse will be about setting up the general premise of this show, and introducing the primary bridge crew, the Captain, the First Officer, but at the end of that first verse, we say, "Oh, yeah, but that's not really the main thing. The main thing is the lower decks. That's where the real action is." And that leads into "Lower Decks, Keep it Movin'!" the title and then the first chorus.

Verse two is about the two main characters, Beckett Mariner and Brad Boimler, the real power duo of the series. So I talk about them. I make a reference to their live action appearance in the show *Strange New Worlds.* Being the egotist that I am, I even worked in a reference to my original *Star Trek* parody, "What's Up, Spock?"

Then verse three was about Tendi, Rutherford, and T'Lynn—who joined the series properly in season four—and because *Lower Decks did* do a *Deep Space Nine* crossover and *Deep Space Nine* has always been my favorite *Star Trek* show, the chorus randomly seems to shift. And now we're chanting about *Deep Space Nine,* and how much we love that.

**T:** Reality shifts are par for the course on *Star Trek.*

**Luke:** For that chorus, I asked Shyguy, "Could you also do a hip-hoppified version of the *Deep Space Nine* theme, so that when we switch over to that it's the *Deep Space Nine* music playing in the background, until I switch back to *Lower Decks?"* And he did an amazing job. I'm so happy with his work. He's a well-known person in the nerdcore music community. For you, Professor Shyguy. Look him up. He has great work.

The beginning of the fourth verse is, I name check all of the other *Star Trek* series that have come out since the last time I did a song within the first four lines. I'm very proud of that.

So come on down below and meet the crew, there's quite a lot to see
And you'll make the **Discovery** we're really quite a **Prodigy.**
On our **Short Treks** an epic story unfurls,
And like **Picard,** we're always out exploring **STRANGE NEW WORLDS!**

That's the kind of wordplay that makes me go like, *Yes, I am the goddamn best at this, I rule.* So then the rest of that verse is basically name-checking and describing a whole bunch of the other recurring characters from the show and some of the recurring villains of the show. Something I've always done that nobody was really noticing until Shoebox pointed it out: he said, "Every time you do a song about shows, you always mention like, what network they're on or where you can watch them." It's like, "Well, that's part of the thing." So I added a line:

The Prime Directive is **paramount. Plus…**
You won't be story-bored, that's one thing you can trust.

And *storyboard (story-bored)* is a reference to the fact that it's an animated show. Also, I'm a storyboard artist, and I was hoping maybe the creator of the show would hear the song and want to hire me. Didn't work, but, oh, well, it was worth a shot.

And then we go back to the recurring lines from the show "Cerritos strong" and "Lower decks keep it moving." And then chanting, again, leading to one of the sound bites from the first episode, where Mariner is gassing up Boimler about how she's going to be his mentor from now on.

So all of that research, right? Handwriting notes, retyping up those notes, figuring out what the tempo of the song will be, and what the general vibe and flow and rhythm of the song will be. Length of the song, structure of the song, structure of the choruses and verses. At one point, just when I was coming up on "this has to get done," I did something I hadn't done in years. I went to a Denny's that was open

24 hours in the middle of the night and just sat at a desk with my paper in front of me. *And here's my notes, here's the paper I'm writing the lyrics on, and I'm just gonna sit there and write this song until it's finished, because I had gotten a bunch of the lyrics written, but there was still a lot left that needed to be filled in.* And I'm like, *All right, I know what I have to do. I have to go and sit myself down away from other distractions, out in public, in a place where I can just sit there and be quiet and have my soda and whatever other food thing I'll order and just be here and work on this until it's done.* And I spent three or four hours at a Denny's in Burbank, out by the airport, getting it done so that I could get this thing rolling.

But all that work went into creating an original song versus creating a parody, where the music's already figured out. The structure of the lyrics and the rhyme schemes are figured out. So all that work was already done for me. So now I have to take whatever my subject is and figure out how to fit within that structure in a clever and funny way, right? Which generally is a lot faster of a process. I'm forced to work under the dictation of the structure of that thing that already exists. But that also means all that work was done for me, because, which is why, in the past eight years leading up to my last album, it was a heck of a lot easier just to default to doing song parodies than to try to come up with originals.

Plus, to be honest, doing parodies is fun. I mean, that's part of the reason I came up with the interstitial tracks on my past two albums called "Dumb Parody Ideas," because I would get these ideas for really short things. It's like, Oh, that's such a great dumb idea for a parody. I'll just do, like one line of it, or a couple lines of it or something, just to get the point across, and then have it end and have me as Gilbert Gottfried yell, "No!" Just to point out, *no, that's dumb, don't do that. That's a bad thing to do.*

**T:** And that's what you've been up to lately?

**Luke:** Since my last album came out, I did a remake of one of the songs for my first album, called "Spam (Let the Pork Be Pork)," where I was joined by Devo Spice and Insane Ian, so I updated that song. Oh and Chris Mezzolesta is on that track too. He did great work. Then I did a really quick and dirty parody, because I was on a podcast with the creators of the Disney show *The Ghost and Molly McGee.* So I did a parody of "Me and Bobby McGee" because I'm like, *This is just too freaking easy and simple. I'm just gonna knock this out and perform it for them on this podcast.* And they thought it was cute. And then I'm like, *All right, well, I might as well record this for the FuMP.* So I did.

Then I did my cover of the Tom Lehrer song "Vatican Rag." But I didn't just do it as a cover. I also added a whole other second part of the song. So it's weird because I asked Ian, "Would my version of 'Vatican Rag' qualify for the Logan Awards?" And he said, Yes. I'm like, "Okay, well, do we put it in parody or original? Because technically, I took his song structure and then I wrote new lyrics to that, so that seems more like a parody than the original." And then Ian was like, "No, it counts as an original because the 'Vatican Rag' Tom Lehrer song is an original song." Ian's the chair, if that's the way he wants to interpret it, sure. It didn't get nominated anyway, but it was a weird thing, because in the way my mind went about it is that it's the same process as writing a parody. I'm following Lehrer's structure, you know.

Then I did an original song which was thoroughly silly, called "Chicken," which was inspired by my roommate and the exhaustive weeks-long effort it took to make "Lower Decks Keep It Movin'." Someone said to me, "Why don't you try writing a song the quickest and fastest and simplest way possible? Like, whatever ideas for lyrics you get, just write them down and go with them, and don't worry about being precious about it." Sure.

And so I did something a lot of my other friends have done on social media: post "Somebody give me a title for a song, and then I'll make up the song based on the title." And this chicken thing was an inside joke that my roommate had, where she just shouted the word "chicken" for no reason. Here all my friends come with these excellent, funny, weird song titles, and then my roommate Santana just posted "Chicken," and that just hooked me.

**T:** …Chicken?

**Luke:** Okay, I guess I do need to explain the story. So we were cleaning up the apartment, and I had my little handheld vacuum out, and I had a bunch of accessories. I was putting it away, and there's this bag where all the accessories go. And I'm like, "Oh, hand me the accessories. I want to make sure all these things stay together." And she hands them to me, and she's sitting right there with me, and I put them in the bag, and like a goofy '50s commercial, I just said, "What do you get when you put them all together?"

And then she just goes, "Chicken!"

And that cracked me up, because it just, it sounded like a shake-and-bake commercial or something like that that we had just invented out of nowhere. And the rest of the day, every time I thought about her saying chicken, I couldn't stop laughing. So that was my hook.

First, I had to ask: how many different rhymes for "chicken" can I come up with that are decently clever lead-ins? I came up with nine. So then, I'm like, *Okay, now I have that those nine, I need to go back and write the lines that lead up to that line, the four lines before it, so that I can have each little chorus there.* So I came up with seven verses, and then when I got to that point, I'm like, *You know what? I think I have enough.* The two rhymes that I felt were the weakest, I left out so, so basically that became the song, and it was super fun, and it was super quick to put together.

And it started off just being this weird list song of me naming random stuff. But then as each time the word "chicken" comes in, I bring in a different celebrity impression voice of mine, like Gilbert Gottfried,

An interdimensional turnip named Kevin
The *Freedom Rock* LP from 1987
The lightsabers worn by General Grievous
A big pile of nachos being eaten by Beavis
A cannibal camping out at KFC, doin' some finger lickin'
What do you get when you put it all together?
**Chicken!** ***[Beavis:** I need El Pollo Loco for my bunghole!]*

An Easter bonnet of a rabid raccoon
A Mr. Potato Head of Kim Jung Un
A sentient surfboard catchin' a wave
An autographed lunchbox of Flavor Flav
A chupacabra disguised as an accountant filing taxes using Quicken
What do you get when you put it all together?
**Chicken!** ***[Flavor Flav:** YEAHHH, CHICKEN, BOYEE! (laughs)]*

A luxury condo in downtown San Diego
A working guillotine made entirely of Lego
The Decepticons Soundwave, Laserbeak, and Ravage
A bust of Macho Man Randy Savage
*Sports Illustrated* cover model Ashley Graham eating fudge so her thighs will thicken
What do you get when you put it all together?
**Chicken!** ***[Macho Man:** SNAP INTO IT, ASHLEY! OH, YEAH!]*

*A few nuggets from "Chicken."*

Keanu Reeves, Beavis, Flavor Flav, Macho Man Randy Savage, Kermit the Frog. And then Santana appears on it as herself. But with all those voices, by the end of the song, it basically sounds like a Muppet song. It was super fun. So that was an original song that was quick and stupid and relatively easy, mainly because I had somebody helping me make the music so I could crank out a new fun song that I posted. I premiered the song at my 50th birthday party for everybody in the audience here in Burbank.

I also did a cover of MC Chris's "White Kids Love Hip-Hop," where our guest of honor was Andy Merrill, who appeared as Brak in the original song, ranting about how bored he is with things in the town where he lives. So I asked him if he wanted to come on stage and, like do that part again. So I posted that track to the FuMP with Andy's permission.

Those are the most recent tracks I've done. But yeah, "Lower Decks, Keep It Movin'" was a huge undertaking, versus "Chicken," which was me literally sitting at a Chipotle for two hours thinking of stupid things to write, and like, *Okay, I have a song now. This is it.*

**T:** But that variation is part of the is part of the creative process. I imagine you get a thrill from not doing it the same way twice. Any advice for incoming or hopeful comedy musicians?

**Luke:** I'm pretty sure this isn't a Jim Henson quote, but Disney+ put out a documentary about the life of Jim Henson. *Jim Henson, Idea Man.* And its tagline was, "Never stop creating." And when I saw that phrase, I'm like, That's it. That's what it's always been. If you're a creator, you've got to create.

And life can be really horrendous and bad and sad and frustrating and angering, and it'll make you want to give up hope and just walk away from it all, because you just can't deal with it. But if you're a creator, you need to find some way to get back to making something. Even if it's just for yourself that you don't share with anybody else, just start making something. And if you want to if you want people to see your stuff, then share it. And hopefully you'll find the right people, not people who are just being knee-jerk trolls, who are going to say your stuff is bad because they get off on being negative. Try to find the right group of people who will lift you up, give you constructive criticism and advice that will help you improve. I've certainly gotten a lot of that over the years.

Always be on the lookout for ways to improve yourself, and you too should contribute to that by finding these other people who are like you and lifting them up too. Having a supportive community will really help you out. ■

From Eminem's "Cleaning Out My Closet" (2002):

Now, I would never diss my own mama just to get recognition
Take a second to listen 'fore you think this record is dissin'
But put yourself in my position, just try to envision
Witnessin' your mama poppin' prescription pills in the kitchen, Bitchin'
that someone's always goin' through her purse and shit's missin'
Goin' through public housing systems, victim of Münchausen's Syndrome

From Luke Ski's parody "Stealing Like A Hobbit" (2003):

Now I would never have believed all that's gone down on this mission.
You don't need a magician to see all the facts in this fiction.
Aragorn and Arwen are kissin', while Merry and Pippin
Are hitchin' rides on a treetop. Sam's dissin' you with suspicion, hissin'.
I really gotta pee, can we please have intermission?
But no, we watch you go fishin', wishin' for plot exposition.

lukeski.bandcamp.com

*One last sample of Luke's wordplay! The highlighted slant rhymes match in both verses.*

## 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.

"The Burden of Rhyme: Victorian Poetry, Formalism, and the Feeling of Literary History" by Naomi Levine in *The Review of English Studies* 76(323), February 2025, attunes us to how the Victorians experienced rhyme—filtered through a set of expectations very much tied to their culture. https://academic.oup.com/res/article-abstract/76/323/113/7978835

"History, Structure and Linguopragmatic Features of English Riddles" by Kasimova Ra'no Rahmatulloyevna and Saloyeva Mahbuba Asror qizi from *American Journal of Education and Learning* 3(5), 2025, studies the nature of English-language riddles and the folkloric tradition they inhabit. https://zenodo.org/records/15427346

"The Impact of Semantic Ambiguity on Social Media Jokes: A Study of Wordplay and Relevance Theory" by Ikram Ullah, Maryam Mukhtayar, Kiran Zahir, and Laiba Aziz explores the double-edged sword of wordplay—how it can sharpen humor but also increase confusion, especially when placed before a randomly selected audience. https://policyjournalofms.com/index.php/6/article/view/356/343

"Rhyme Within Reason: An Emotion Analysis Approach to Rhyme in a Historical Corpus" by Pablo Ruiz Fabo and Helena Bermúdez Sabel in *Digital Humanities in Medieval and Early Modern Spanish Texts* discusses the emotional patterns of rhyme words in an individual author's style and across authors. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003393771-5/rhyme-within-reason-pablo-ruiz-fabo-helena-berm%C3%BAdez-sabel

"Stylistic Features of English Social Advertising Texts" by Kim Darya Vladimirovna in *Journal of Universal Science Research,* 3(4), "explores the stylistic features of English social advertising texts…[and] highlights various expressive means and stylistic devices commonly employed in social advertisements, including personification, metaphor, hyperbole, simile and pun." https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/universal-scientific-research/article/view/83939

"The Use of Scrabble for Learning English Vocabulary" by Riska Ramadhani in *2025's Journal of Advances in Linguistics and English Teaching (JALET),* 1(1) is one of several recent studies highlighting the venerable word game's use in adding creative new dimensions to second-level English studies. https://madanipublisherindonesia.or.id/index.php/jalet/article/view/9/18

*Linguistics and Language Play* by Roger Berry (Springer, 2025) discusses phonology, lexis, puns, semantics, morphology, syntax, pragmatics, discourse analysis, genre, graphology, instantiations, advertising and naming, TV and other comedy, jokes and riddles, light verse, popular songs, and more.

Christopher J. Gilbert's *When Comedy Goes Wrong* (Indiana University Press, 2025) analyzes many prominent comedians and practitioners of wordplay and talks about how the comedian's toolset can be misused in a politically divided world. ■

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*The Journal of Wordplay* is a free-to-submit, free-to-read 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.)

We are fine with wordplay that ventures into sex, bathroom humor, and other taboo topics. However, we do not generally accept studies that focus on words that primarily insult genders and minority groups, and we will sometimes edit submissions to remove those terms. This policy helps maintain the playful spirit and long-term health of the publication.

Starting with the next issue, margins will be standardized at 1 inch for top, bottom, and sides. Occasional exceptions can be made for articles with unique design issues: please contact us about those.

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 Jersey City, NJ. He enjoys creating self-referential art, puzzles, and wordplay. Matt is the author of "Autograms" (Issue #4 of *TJoW),* "Puzzle Poetry" (Issue #5), "Goof-Offs" (Issue #7), and "Headbutts" (Issue #8), as well as "Handstands," which appears in this issue. For updates and new puzzles, check out his personal site: https://mattabate.com/.

**Anil** is a preacher turned biologist turned writer of wordplay. Born in Henderson, Kentucky, he was valedictorian and senior class president. He was further educated at Wake Forest (BS) and Johns Hopkins (PhD), with positions at U. Illinois, U. Pittsburgh, and U. Western Australia. Now a dual citizen of the USA and Australia, he lives in Perth.

He has published six books of wordplay humor, with two others in press, four of them award-winning. He published over two hundred articles in the now defunct *Word Ways* and will continue contributing to its successor, *The Journal of Wordplay.*

His major influences were a humor-loving mother and authors Walt Kelly *(Pogo),* Lewis Carroll, Will Cuppy, and Dave Morice.

**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.

**Eric Chaikin** is a creative technologist and co-founder of the site Beyond Wordplay. He's directed the films *Word Wars* and *A Lawyer Walks into a Bar…*

**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.

**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.

**Michael Keith** is a retired software engineer who previously worked at the David Sarnoff Research Center in Princeton and Bell Labs in Holmdel (in the huge Saarinen-designed structure that now stars as the Lumon building in the TV show *Severance).* His abiding interest in recreational mathematics and wordplay is the direct result of religiously reading Martin Gardner's monthly column in *Scientific American* starting in the mid-1960s. He contributed around 40 articles for *Word Ways* and 10 or so for *Interim.* In 2010 his book *Not A Wake* was released, the first (and still the only) book ever published written entirely in Pilish (English but with the letter counts in successive words following the digits of pi).

**Louis Phillips** is a poet and playwright who enjoys wordplay. ■

## ANSWERS

*Handstands, page 6:*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Puzzle 1:** | E L S | less, sell, eel, see |
| **Puzzle 2:** | D O R | odor, door, odd, rod |
| **Puzzle 3:** | E O N | none, one, neon, eon |
| **Puzzle 4:** | L O W | low, wool, owl |
| **Puzzle 5:** | A E S | ease, ass, sea, assess |
| **Puzzle 6:** | A P Y | pay, papaya, yap |

*Euryvocalics Quiz Answers, page 50:*

1. Family Feud host
2. exclusionary
3. Tina Weymouth
4. Brian Mulroney
5. child support payments
6. Louis B. Mayer
7. Tommy Wiseau
8. Ulysses Simpson Grant
9. unhypnotizable
10. Yukon Denali

# SIP YOU LATER




(See p. 56)