The Journal of Wordplay

#8 · Feb 2025

Best SHAZAM Acronyms
Dictionaries' Last Words
Anagrammatic Analysis
Crosswords' Wild Youth
A New Scrabble Record
Nested Animal Names
Four Vowels in a Row
Constrained Poetry

Plus: Presidential Wordplay
Funny Typos · Offbeat Puns

THE JOURNAL OF WORDPLAY

Editor:

T Campbell

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INTRODUCTION

T Campbell, editor

Part of playing around is accepting that not everything you do is going to work out the way you hope.

I developed a number of ideas for this issue, some of which got pretty far into the planning stage. Chances are good that those ideas will appear in future issues after more development—but they're not ready yet.

I spent some time trying to improve on the elegance of the five-L-in-a-row sentence, "Jill'll love me." *Subpoena AAA archives? Hammurabi III identified? Fax XXX xeroxes?* No dice there.

In a discussion on pair isograms—words that contain two of every letter they contain, no more and no less—Tyler M wrote, "M-W and OED [Merriam-Webster and the Oxford English Dictionary] both contain the word CONTRAVINDICATE, a legal term meaning to make a counter-claim. If a lawyer has performed this action excessively, might it be said that he has OVERCONTRAVINDICATED?" That would be a twenty-letter pair isogram. Notable!

Unfortunately, I couldn't figure out how to build anything larger than that around Tyler's observation. So I ended up using it here, just as an example of the sorts of things that don't always lead to an article. Another of my examples didn't even please my editors, so out it went!

Our predecessor *Word Ways* had a couple of spaces for quick little sketches that didn't merit the full article treatment like this, the regular features *Kickshaws* (short, independent work) and *Colloquy* (reactions to published articles—and reactions to the reactions). I've thought about implementing something like that, but I'm not sure it'd work outside of an online space these days—and I'm not sure I'd have it in me to monitor such a space.

Still, other wordplay communities are worth noting. Several of the features in this issue have emerged from such communities—the Crosscord Discord group, the SymmyS, and the OMGWords Scrabble community. There are lots more communities out there, many more than we can even track, but the best of their observations tend to filter upward.

We're releasing this issue on President's Day, and Richard Lederer has a series of presidential name observations to celebrate. Michael Keith offers a constrained-writing exercise that has to be seen to be believed. And Anil explores the many nestings animal names can make within one another.

I've got a few items to share, including the start of a new year-by-year history of crosswords, an essay on the evolving language of science-fiction fandom, and an exercise in backronyming that might just save the universe—if the canon of Shazam is to be believed, that is. A few of my ideas didn't make it this time, but I'm glad these did.

Along with further studies in anagrams, beheadments, typos, word oddities—and a new form of play we can only call "headbutts"—we've found, once again, that a lot of play works out even *better* than one could hope!

THE MUSIC FILM FESTIVAL

Louis Phillips

Look Bach in Anger
Satie Night Fever
Mildred Peerce
Franckenstein
The Adventures of Robbins Hood
Twelve Angry Mennin
Falla The House of Usher
On A Clear Day You Can See Fauré Ever
Fritz Lang's Mitropolous
The Liszt of Adrian Messenger
Haydn Seek ■

ONE ON ONE

Louis Phillips

1. Robert Browning but Amy Tan
2. Robert Frost but Jonathan Winters
3. Claude Rains but Ethel Waters
4. Blanche Sweet but John Candy
5. Ellery Queen but Alan King
6. Horton Foote but Legs Diamond
7. Joan Rivers but Veronica Lake
8. Louise Penny but Jack Nicholson
9. William Hurt but John Payne
10. Barbara Bush but Herbert Beerbohm Tree ■

FRIENDS & RELATIVES

Louis Phillips

Willy Wonky: Willy Wonka's twin brother. Wonky also has a chocolate factory but nothing in his factory works properly.
Cyranose de Bergerac: Cyrano's father. His nose could pick up odors from miles away.
Tallulah Blankhead: Tallulah's stepdaughter whose acting career failed because she could not remember lines.
Pal Capone: Very friendly gangster.
Basil Wrathbone: Basil Rathbone's angry younger brother (angry because his older brother got all the better roles).
Isaac Bashevis Sanger: Noted Jewish writer who wrote many books advocating birth control.
Doily Parton: Dolly's aunt who made exquisite, small lace ornaments.
Franks Sinatra: Singing hot-dog vendor. ■

“SIX-LETTER” WORDS

Jeff Grant

This is a follow-up to “More ‘Five-Letter’ Words” in the last issue. Once again, the shortest candidate has not always been chosen. Some of these terms have previously been noted.

A: TARAMASALATA: A Greek fish pate. [OED]

B: HUBBUBBUBBOO: Variant of “hubbub,” a tumult, turmoil. [OED]

C: CLACK-CLACK-CLACK: A repeated clacking noise. [OED]

D: DIDDLE-DADDLE: To dawdle. [Web2]

E: DEGENERESCENCE: The process of degeneration. [OED]

F: FIFFLE-FAFFLEMENT: Trifling and unnecessary work. [EDD]

G: WAGGER-PAGGER-BAGGER: Slang for a waste-paper basket. [OED]

H: HEH-HEH-HEH: Representing a cynical laugh.
“**Heh-heh-heh**. What’s so funny?” [*Something Happened*, J Heller, 1997]

I: INDIVISIBILITY: The quality of being incapable of division. [OED]

J: JEE-JUJJUJJU: In-flight call of the Japanese murrelet (bird). [Wikipedia (Net)]

K: KNOCKKNOCKKNOCK: A repeated knocking sound.
“So a short while later I heard **knockknockknock** again.”
[*Breathing in the Fullness of Time*, W Kloefkorn, 2019]

L: BALLILLILLY: A lullaby. [*Chambers’ Scots Dictionary*, 1952]

M: MAXIMUM-MINIMUM: Designating a thermometer that records the highest and lowest temperatures since it was last set. [OED]

N: NONANNOUNCEMENT: Something not announced. [Web2]

O: MONOGONOPOROUS: Having a single genital opening for both male and female organs.

P: PIPPLE-PAPPLE: To do something with a sudden noise. [EDD]

Q: QUASI-QAWIQSAQQESQUE: Appearing to be similar in some way to Qawiqsaqq, an Alaskan bluff. [C]

R: STRAWBERRY-RASPBERRY: A prickly Japanese plant of the rose family. [RHD]

S: POSSESSIONLESS: Having no possessions. [OED]

T: TATTARRATTAT: A palindromic knock at the door. [OED]

U: UMUTURUTURU: Local name of a tropical African tree of the Aralia family. [www.fao.org (Net)]

V: LUVVY-DUVVY-WUVVY: excessively "lovey-dovey"; overly affectionate.
"Mark Ronson production, chirpy post-pop guitars, **luvvy-duvvy-wuvvy** heart-on-sleeve lyrics about pretty girls…"
[www.nme.com (Net)]

W: WOW-WOW-WOW: British catchphrase of the 1890s, denoting quiet contempt of an adversary's contempt. [DCP]

X: EX-XIXAX-MAXXED: Formerly stoned in Xixax, German singer Nina Hagen's fictional city. [C]

Y: YAYYAYYAY: An expression of extreme delight.
"He asked me to marry him. **Yayyayyay**!!!" [*Building Forever*, K: Harper, 2017]

Z: ZENZIZENZIZENZIC: The square of a squared square. [OED]

References

C coined term
DCP *Dictionary of Catch Phrases*, E Partridge, 1977
EDD *English Dialect dictionary*, J Wright, 1970 ed.
Net Internet, using Google search program
OED *Oxford English Dictionary*, online 2024
RHD *Random House Dictionary*, 1987
Web2 *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1961 ■

THE SYMMYS 2022

With thanks to Mark Saltveit, organizer

The SymmyS is the world's foremost palindrome-writing competition. Last time, we presented 2023's winners. Working our way back, here are the 2022 SymmyS winners for best new palindromes in every category.

Short Palindromes

1. "English Teacher's Lament," Win Emmons
In word salad, alas, drown I.

2. "At the Fruit Stand," Kenneth Kelbrook
Emily, nab an apple. Help Pa nab any lime.

3. "Lights off, please," Titus Meyer
Dim it, Miss. I'm timid.

Medium Palindromes

1. "Nightlife," Anthony Etherin
Nightlife's a boozy zoo: base filth, gin.

2. "Fast Art," Martin Clear
Draw a deep snowy Alp-side: display won speed award.

3. "Brusque," Peter Sabra
No, I suffered no fondness. To idiots send no fonder effusion.

Long Palindromes

1. "A Regal Bar," Anthony Etherin

Regal. A bar. Gin is evil. "O, to help martini gin, I trample hot olives in." I grab a lager.

2. "Catnap," Lori Wike

I'm a wonder.
I, to span taciturn rut, I catnap.
So tired now am I.

3. "Ustinov's Legacy," Martin Clear

One film I held a lot. No televised old lost film—lift it in. I see Peter Ustinov on it. Sure, tepees in it. It—film—lifts. Old lodes I've let on to ladle him life, no?

Palindromic Poetry

1. "The Palindromist's Lament (a palimerick)," John Falcone

Loop an ode reversed, o fool!
As midnight nets mirth, sad, I rule.
Lurid ash trims;
Tenth gin dims
Aloof odes revered on a pool.

Palindromic Poetry (cont'd)

2. "Film Noir," Anthony Etherin

Prepare trope:
Resume mad,
arid antihero.
Man in a motel,
at a femme fatale,
to man in a more hit nadir.
A dame,
muse,
reporter—
a perp.

3. "The Bard Grows Old (Palindrome-Sonnet)" by Anthony Etherin

Emit a null
lore. Mirth gilts all.
Like rule, we dull,
as, drab, we fall.

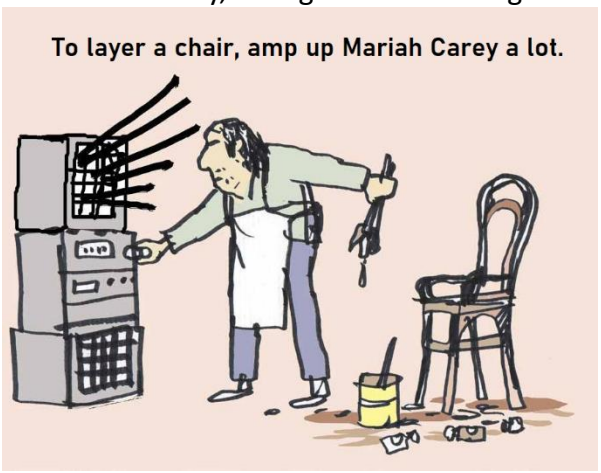
Eye rust. Eye bold.
Rage, regal law:
A rose so old—
eyed loose, so raw.

All age regard—
Lo! Be yet sure.
Yell! A few bards
allude we lure.

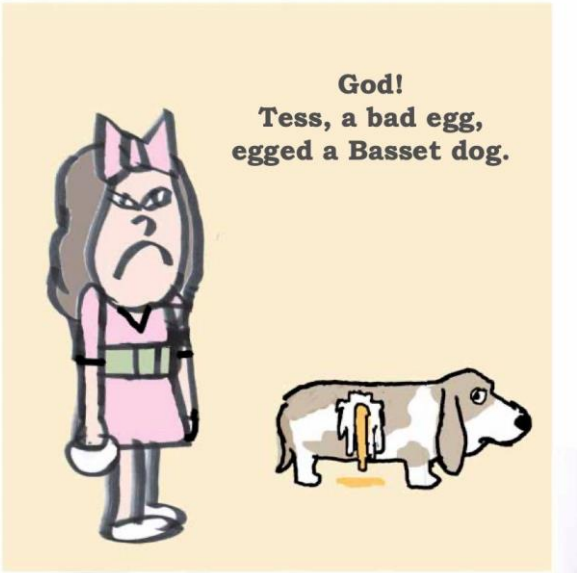
Kill last, light rime—
roll Luna, time.

Visual Palindromes

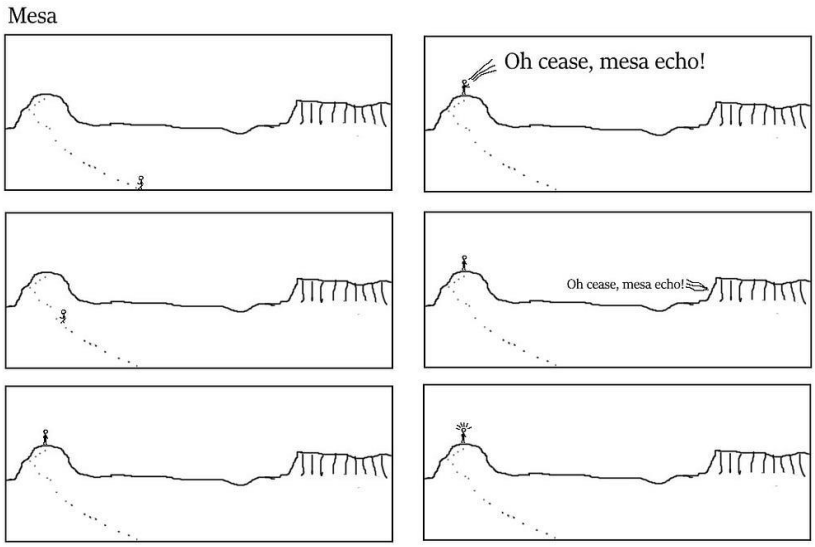
1. "Mariah Carey," Doug Fink and Jon Agee



2. A Bad Egg, Jon Agee



3. "Mesa," Martin Clear and Jon Agee ■



DOUBLE-DOUBLES

T Campbell

A double-double is a set of words or phrases with two parallel aspects that make them *look* more related than they actually *are.* They usually look like synonyms but not always: DEATH SPIRAL looks like it should mean the same thing as MORTAL COIL, but DECADENT just looks like it should be a ten-point version of a TRIDENT.

The set is usually a pair, but again, not always. When paired, sometimes one phrase looks like a pun on the other one's straightforward meaning, and sometimes they *both* look like puns on some unstated other phrase.

I've assembled these examples from a subpage on Crosscord. This is only from the first few months of it—if this goes over well, I might gather more. I've done my best to credit everyone involved below. (Fair warning, a few of these are on the racy side, including the last one. If you're reading out loud to your kids, might want to skip those.)

"Synonyms":

1. ACTING COACH / STAGECOACH
2. AMERICAN GRAFFITI / YANKEE DOODLE
3. BAD COOKING / GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT
4. BREATHING ROOM / LIVING SPACE / LIVING ROOM / BREATHING SPACE
5. CARRY / VANISH
6. CLEAN AND JERK / GOOD AND EVIL
7. COLD MEDICINE / CHILL PILL
8. CORE WORKOUT / ABUSE
9. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT / MAJOR PROBLEM
10. CROSSWORD / ANGRY LETTERS
11. DISEMBOWEL / DELIVER
12. DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME / I'M YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE
13. ECHO CHAMBER / SPEECH BUBBLE
14. FAT CHANCE / BIG SHOT
15. FLYING CARRIAGE / FLYING COACH
16. FREEZER BURN / ICY HOT / ICE SPICE / ARCTIC CHAR
17. GRANDFATHER / K-POP
18. GUY PEARCE / MANDRILL / CHAPSTICK
19. HONDA FIT / CARJACKED
20. I THINK I'LL PASS / GUESS I'LL DIE
21. JOHN DEERE / JOHN DOE / DEAR JOHN
22. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS / PORNHUB
23. MAGIC JOHNSON / WIZARD STAFF
24. MAGNIFYING GLASS / INSPECTOR GADGET
25. MARE / HORSE GIRL
26. MASSAGE PARLOR / RUBBER ROOM
27. MILF MANOR / OEDIPUS COMPLEX
28. MT. RUSHMORE WORKER / GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

29. NUMBER OF THE BEAST / ANIMAL TRANQUILIZER
30. PET NAMES / LOVE HANDLES
31. POLICE SHOWS / COPPER CABLE
32. POULTRY FARMERS / CHICKEN TENDERS
33. PROCTOLOGIST / ASSIST
34. QUICKIE / HIGH-SPEED RAIL
35. RING OF FIRE / FLAMINGO
36. SODA JERK / POP PUNK / WINE SNOB / BEER BRAT
37. SPELL CHECKERS / MAGIC SQUARES
38. STEAL A KISS / MAKE OUT LIKE A BANDIT
39. TELEPROMPTER / PILOT EPISODE
40. THE BEAVER STATE / DAMNATION
41. TRANSPORT / STARBOARD
42. TRIP-HOP / FALL-SPRING
43. UNAIRED PILOT / GROUNDED PILOT
44. UNCLICKING / DEPRESSING
45. WEE HOURS / SMALL-TIME
46. WHERE DO YOU GET OFF? / WHAT'S THE STRANGEST PLACE YOU'VE EVER MADE WHOOPEE?

And a few that look more related than synonymous:

47. BEARS REPEATING / TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN
48. FIREFLY / WATERFALL
49. GI JOE / GI BILL
50. K-9 / K-12

Contributors to entries I considered (by screen name): Assorted-Interests, John Kugelman, Ken Stern, heywhatsupitsbob, FRISCOSEVENTEEN Jay “JayLow” Low, jenna lafleur, hughesovka, GammaMage157, POOOOPmaster, carter, Will Nediger, jackofallspades98, Boaz Moser, and Quiara, Megalopapologist [comma is part of the name]. ■

OCTANAGRAMS

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This is the eighth edition of *The Journal of Wordplay*! And we all know that **oct-** is a combining form meaning "eight," being derived partly from Latin and partly from Greek. Words beginning with **oct-** invariably designate something with eight members. To celebrate this eighth edition of the Journal, I thought I would offer anagrams of eight **oct-** words. To start with, here are eight **oct-** words and their anagrams, all fairly short with lengths of 6 to 9 letters.

Oct- Word	**Anagram**
octane: a hydrocarbon with eight carbon atoms	**one-act:** designating a play or other production consisting of only one act
octave: a musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees	**avocet:** a wading bird & **vocate:** an advocate
octanol: an alcohol derived from octane	**coolant:** a liquid used to cool and lubricate a cutting tool
octopus: a creature with eight tentacles	**cop-outs:** instance of taking an easier course of action than that expected or required of one
octuple: something with eight parts	**couplet:** a pair of successive lines of verse
Octavian: one of eight members of a finance committee appointed by King James VI of Scotland in 1596 to have control of the royal exchequer	**vacation:** a holiday
octireme: an ancient ship with eight rowers to each oar	**meteoric:** relating to meteors
octillion: 10 to the power of 27, 10^{27}	**cotillion:** a dance

Then I decided to be more adventurous and to search for a further eight **oct-** words and their anagrams, but this time with lengths of 10 to 12 letters. Here are my finds:

Oct- Word	**Anagram**
Octacnemus: a genus of deep-sea creatures found in the south Pacific ocean	**contumaces:** resistances, disobediences, stubbornnesses & **customance:** customary use
octandrian: a botanical term, having eight stamens	**dracontian:** pertaining to a dragon
octarchies: governments each formed of eight people	**escharotic:** a caustic drug

Oct- Word	Anagram
octastrophic: consisting of eight strophes or stanzas	**postthoracic:** situated behind the thorax
octenidine: an antiseptic agent used to treat wounds and skin infections	**noneidetic:** not pertaining to mythology and symbolism
octennials: eight-year periods	**nonelastic:** inelastic, inflexible, fixed
octonarian: consisting of eight feet	**anticorona:** an optical phenomenon consisting of circles visible around a bright celestial object such as the Sun or the Moon
octonarius: a verse of eight feet	**acutorsion:** the twisting of an artery with a needle to arrest hemorrhage

Here's a challenge to end with: find an **oct-** word with 13 letters or more with a dictionary-sanctioned anagram. The best I have been able to find is the 16-letter specimen **octingentenaries**. This is the plural of **octingentenary**, an eight-hundredth anniversary or the celebration of this. This anagrams to the two-word term **gene interactions**. Googling this will throw up a multitude of hits. The term even appears in *The Oxford English Dictionary* in its definition of **paragenetic**: "Designating or relating to chromosomal changes or gene interactions that result in heritable alterations in the phenotypic expression of genes." But it's a two-word term. I would much rather find a single-word anagram. So the challenge can be sharpened to … find a dictionary-sanctioned single-word anagram of an **oct-** word with 13 or more letters. ■

NEW THEORETICAL HIGHEST [SCRABBLE] PLAY DISCOVERED!

César Del Solar

The following is reproduced from a public blog entry at https://blog.woogles.io/posts/2024-05-27-new-theoretical-highest-play-discovered/, in hopes of sharing Del Solar's achievements with a wider audience.

The OMGWords world was set abuzz two weeks ago when Woogles Discord user @bob (Bob Lucassen) found a new theoretically highest-scoring play of 1,786 points with the NWL23 lexicon. For many years, the record has inched upwards; the last documented record was 1,784 points as shown here: http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/SCRABBLE_Trivia#:~:text=The%20highest%20scoring%20legal%20play,and%20Eric%20—%20Highest%20Play%20Board. Scrabbler Alec Sjoholm (@jellomochas) mentioned that the record was actually 1,785 points and showed us the construction for it. I don't know where he obtained it from.

But for this new record, Lucassen used something called a "Boolean Satisfiability Solver" (BSAT Solver). A BSAT Solver is a tool that helps solve problems where you need to determine if there exists an arrangement of variables that satisfies a set of logical constraints. Essentially, it answers the question: "Can these conditions be met?" In the context of OMGWords, the solver checks all possible board configurations to find the one that maximizes the score while adhering to the game's rules.

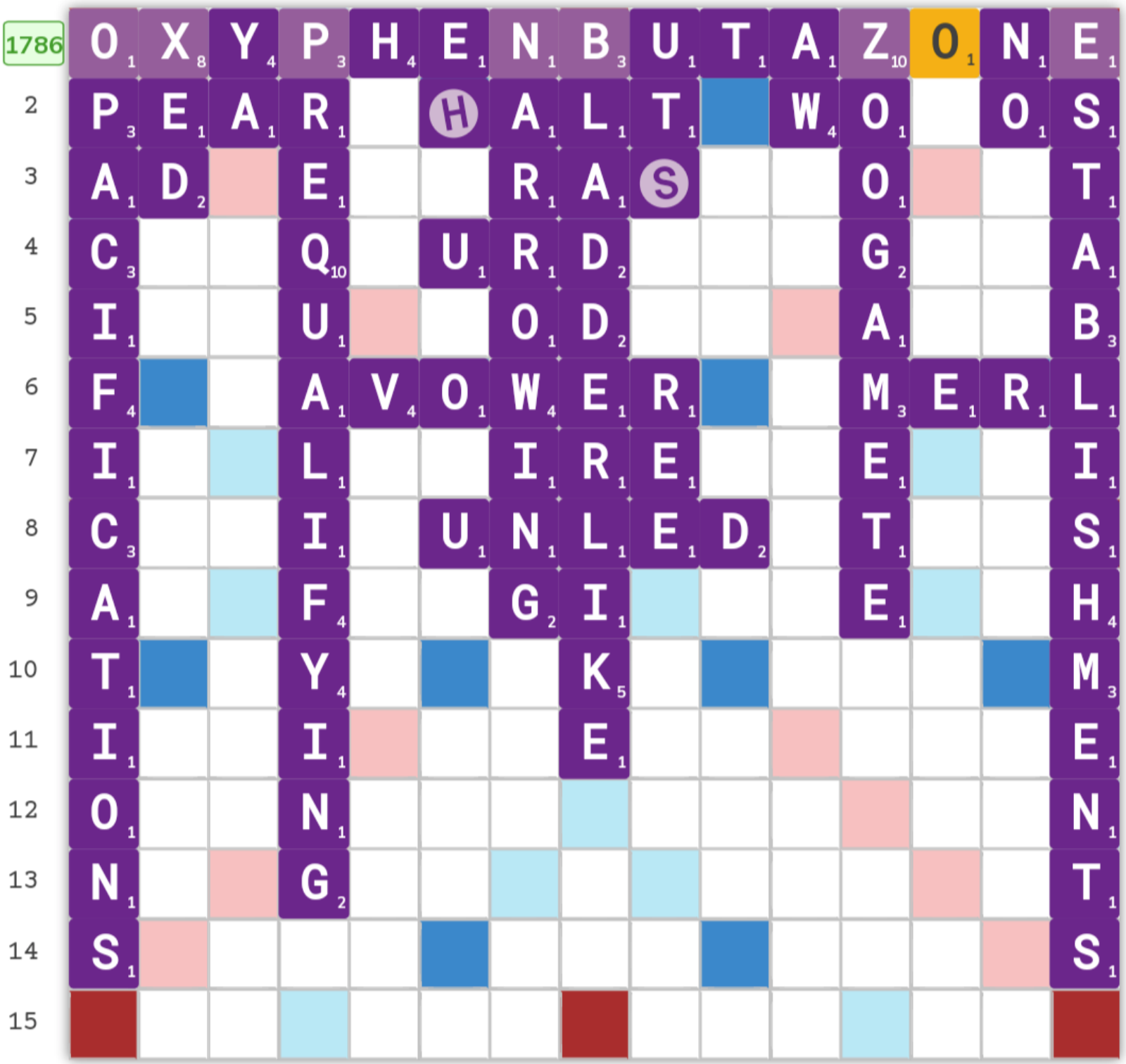
Here's a simplified breakdown of how it works: imagine each tile and its position on the board as variables in a giant logical puzzle. The constraints are the rules of OMGWords—like placing words only horizontally or vertically, connecting to existing tiles, and ensuring valid words. Mathematically, the problem is expressed using Boolean logic, where each variable can be true (the tile is placed) or false (the tile is not placed).

The BSAT Solver processes these variables and constraints through an algorithm designed to handle such logic puzzles efficiently. What makes a BSAT Solver particularly powerful is its ability to systematically explore vast numbers of possibilities. It does this by breaking down the problem into smaller, manageable parts and using advanced techniques to prune paths that won't lead to a solution, thereby saving time.

When the solver finds a valid configuration that yields the highest score, it provides proof that no other configuration can produce a better result under the given constraints. In essence, Lucassen's use of the BSAT Solver allowed him to rigorously explore all potential OMGWords board setups to confirm that his 1786-point configuration is indeed the best possible solution.

Of course, the solution does involve **OXYPHENBUTAZONE,** like many other previous high-scoring plays, but as seen in the image below, there are some new words and hooks we haven't seen used yet. The rack is also slightly different—**BENOPXZ** in this new construction vs **ABEOXPZ** from previous constructions.

Construction of new 1,786-pt OXYPHENBUTAZONE play. Thanks to Discord user ddrkanine for providing the above image (using the Woogles board editor) and verifying it can be played with no phonies. Here you can see **LADDERLIKE** with the B hook, **ARROWING** with the N hook, **STABLISHMENTS** with the E hook. And of course, **OPACIFICATIONS**$+—new in NWL23, this word made this new 1-pt higher construction possible.

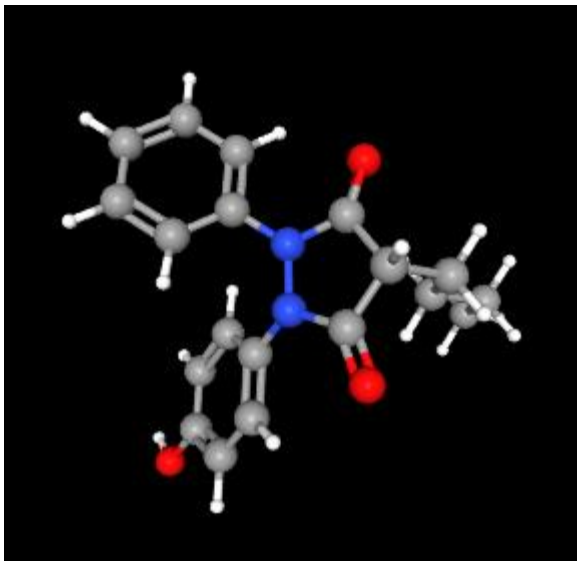


The 1786-point play.

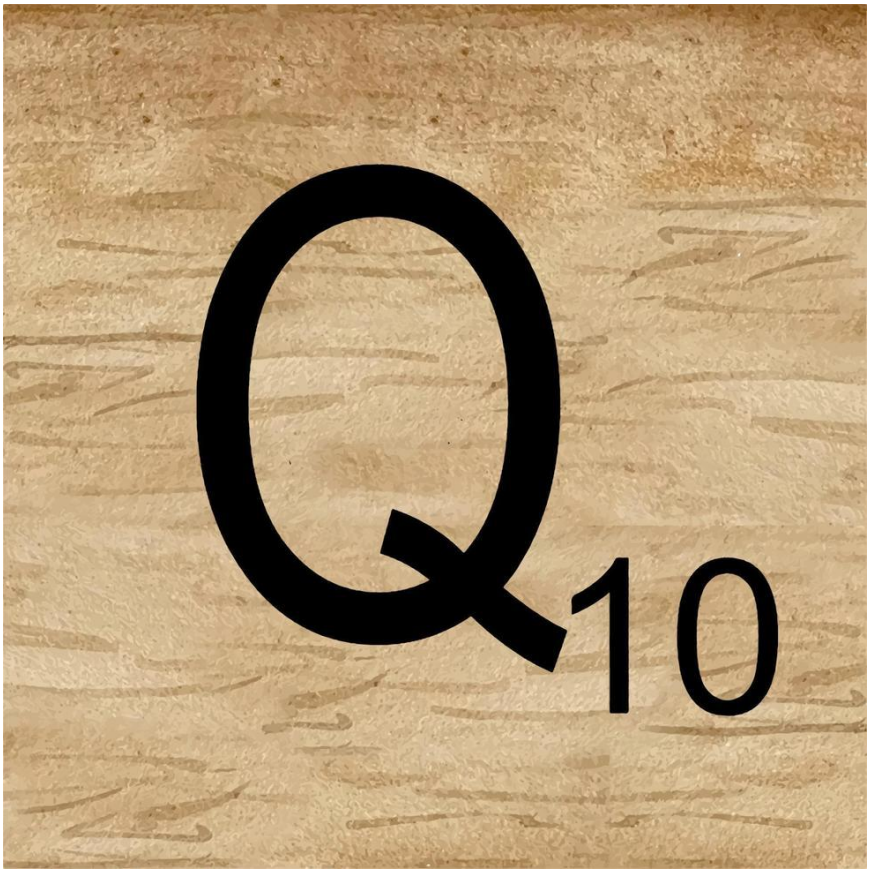
What is OXYPHENBUTAZONE anyway?

OXYPHENBUTAZONE is a chemical compound. According to Wikipedia, it is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that was withdrawn from markets worldwide in the 1980s due to some pretty gnarly side effects. Don't give up on Advil yet.

Can you find something that scores more in NWL23? B-SAT proves you can't, but let us know! ■



Oxyphenbutazone, molecularly.



Where it all begins.

LONG BODIES, NO HEADS

T Campbell

In "Beheadments," a piece from 1973's *Word Ways* #6.4, Ralph G. Beaman plays with a number of different beheadments. In case that term is unfamiliar, a "beheadment" is an operation on a viable word that leaves another viable word by removing only its first letter. Remove the top of FART to get ART, remove the top of FRIZZ to get RIZZ.

A similar removal of the last letter (turning PRINCESS into PRINCES or FART into FAR) is called a *curtailment.* There's no real widely accepted term for a removal of the middle letter—*disembowelment*, perhaps?

I won't go through all the variations Beaman tried, but I'm intrigued by his first list, which included the longest "beheadable" word he could find for every letter in the alphabet: **a**quintocubitalism, **b**lithesomeness, **c**hemotherapeutics, et cetera. Crossing off the first letter of each word and seeing the new word that remains is left as an exercise for the reader.

Some of these words are pretty obscure to modern eyes (and were probably obscure to 1970s readers, too). When I search for *aquintocubitalism,* for instance, Google at first thinks I mean *anticapitalism* before grudgingly offering up some scientific articles from the late 1800s and thenabouts. *Aquintocubitalism* and its opposite *quintocubitalism* are terms from ornithology. A *quintocubital* (or *quincubital)* bird has five feathers on its wing that roughly correspond to the five fingers of the human hand. Even those who use this term prefer the shorter form *aquincubitalism*.

There's another reason I'm not too fond of *aquintocubitalism* as an example—*quintocubitalism* is just its opposite. The missing *a* here is the *a-* prefix found in words like *asymmetry* and *asexuality.* When composing my list, I elected not to use words that were direct antonyms of each other, which ruled out *asymptomatically,* many other a-words, and any relevant words beginning with *thence* or *never.* I also left out variant spellings and any word that would reduce to a direct synonym, like *denumerabilities.* The M, N, P, and Y pairs in the group below still have *related* meanings, but those meaning seem distinct enough to be interesting.

ATROPHYING → TROPHYING

BLITHESOMENESSES → LITHESOMENESSES

CRAFTSMANSHIPS → RAFTSMANSHIPS

DELECTABILITIES → ELECTABILITIES

EMOTIONLESSNESSES → MOTIONLESSNESSES

FUTILITARIANISMS → UTILITARIANISMS

GASTRONOMICALLY → ASTRONOMICALLY

HAIRLESSNESSES → AIRLESSNESSES

ICONICITIES → CONICITIES

JOCULARITIES → OCULARITIES

KINAESTHETICALLY → INAESTHETICALLY

LIONIZATIONS → IONIZATIONS

MEXPLOITATION → EXPLOITATION

NETIQUETTE → ETIQUETTE

OPACIFICATIONS → PACIFICATIONS

PREADMINISTRATIONS → READMINISTRATIONS

QUINTAS → UINTAS // QATARIS → ATARIS

REVOLUTIONARILY → EVOLUTIONARILY

SELECTIVENESSES → ELECTIVENESSES

TRUSTINESSES → RUSTINESSES

UPREACHING → PREACHING

VIDEOGRAPHIES → IDEOGRAPHIES

WIMPISHNESSES → IMPISHNESSES

XANTHEMIA → ANTHEMIA

YOURSELVES → OURSELVES

ZOOLOGISTS → OOLOGISTS

The B, E, G, K, R, and Y pairings are essentially or exactly the same in both lists. So is one of the Q pairings. Purists may object to the few proper names on the list, especially ATARIS, but I think the Atari consoles are part of modern usage at this point.

A lot of -NESSES here; I could've elected/selected to exclude those too on the basis that they don't show up much in everyday speech while their singular counterparts do. But I think they're gettable. GASTROPHOTOGRAPHY and ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY may be words with intuitively obvious meanings, but they've fallen out of favor as we've developed more advanced imaging technologies we no longer classify as "photography." ■

TYPO BLOOD

More Media Bloopers and Oddities, with Droll Retorts

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The Blooper of the Year award surely goes to the merchandising campaign for the blockbuster family film *Wicked*. "There's a website listed on the toy box, but instead of linking to the webpage for the movie . . . Mattel has mistakenly listed the URL to a pornographic website" (*Variety*, November 10, 2024).

It's an embarrassment of witches! That's tough to beat, but following are my runner-up selections, garnered mostly via print subscriptions to two major daily newspapers. Of the risible specimens I routinely spot and capture, many are typos, especially misspellings that create an unintended meaning. For example, in 2024, I caught the bashful "coy fish" and the model ship equipped with a literary battery of "canons." But my criteria are more expansive, including eccentric items that lend themselves to witty or snarky ripostes. Submitted for your approval. . . .

The New York Times, Corrections, February 27, 2024:

"An article on Saturday . . . misstated the given name of the director of the first two Harry Potter films. He is Chris Columbus, not Christopher Columbus."

- **Also, we apologize for mistaking him for the explorer.**

The Wall Street Journal, letter to editor, August 3-4, 2024:

"[Kamala Harris] will face questions about the coverup hiding President Biden's infirmaries. . . ."

- **And the buildings are so tough to conceal.**

The New York Times, December 25, 2024:

"I think having less students in a class is a better thing for all reasons: socially, emotionally, educationally," said Ms. [name redacted], who has taught in city schools for 28 years."

- **Write it correctly 100 times on the blackboard.**

The Wall Street Journal, August 1, 2024:

"The problem is not the sugar itself [says a Harvard scientist]. The problem is that we eat too much sugar."

- **Now we know why Harvard is regarded with such awe.**

The New York Times, October 20, 2024:

"The two met as infants, and over a relationship that's spanned nearly 80 years. . . ."

- **They still recall those exciting early conversations about philosophy and sports.**

The Spirit, a Manhattan community weekly, January 25-31, 2024:

"[Some people are] at higher risk of cavities on tooth roots exposed by receding gyms."

- **Yes, a lot of them have been closing lately.**

The Wall Street Journal, letter to editor, June 19-20, 2021:

"Most Americans had been chilled and horrified . . . by wonton violence, the burning of businesses and destruction. . . ."

- **Especially Chinese restaurants?**

Headline, *The Texas Tribune,* August 2, 2024:

"Chevron to move its headquarters from California to Texas"

- **Chevron preference?**

The Wall Street Journal, October 25, 2023:

"A Washington state senator was on a flight to Hong Kong from San Francisco when he reached into his bag for a piece of gum. Instead, he found a gun, he said."

- **Forgivable. They're only one letter apart.**

The New York Times, Corrections, November 24, 2024:

"The crossword on Nov. 17 for 34-Down misstated the location of Atlas. The statue is in front of the east entrance to 45 Rockefeller Plaza, not 30 Rockefeller Plaza."

- **Atlas shrugged.**

CREDIT: I thought I had invented "Typo Blood," but a search turned it up as the title of a February 14, 2008 blog post by Mark Evanier, a TV and comic-book writer. Despite being enclosed in quotes, Google produced numerous results for the sanguinary classification. ■

PSEUDO HYBRIDS

Anil
Perth, Australia

Zoological nomenclature gives us hundreds of examples of freaky comical titular "hybrids", such as **turtledove** and **horsefly**. I mention them in passing in a coloring book in preparation of similar but fictitious punny hybrids called *Freaky Pets*. Here I expose my insanity and list uncounted hundreds of examples of such, a complete list of actual "hybrids" (word combos) found in Australian Geographic's *The Concise Animal Encyclopaedia* 2011, controversially including names buried in other words (mostly underlined). Dock also created some amusing non-hybrid animal jokes (**Belugubrious**, **Bird of Paradox**).

Alligator lizard, alpaca, anemone fish, {ant:elope/bird/shrike/wren} parakeet auklet (3)

Bagworm moth, bandicoot rat (3), barbastelle, barramundi perch (3), batfish, bat ray, bearded vulture (3), beard-fish, {bee: fly/beetle}, "bee wolf" wasp (3), bird cherry ermine, bittern, budgerigar, buffalo fish, bull ant, bulldog bat (3), bullfrog, bull shark, burbot, {burrowing asp/python/skink/snake/toad/tree frog (3s)}, {butterfly: fish (3)/ray (3)}

Caiman lizard (3), camel cricket, camel spider, capelin, cape tortoise, capuchinbird, carpet python, caterpillar, {cat:bird/fish/shark/snake}, chinchilla-rat (3), clam shrimp, cockroach (3: bird,fish,insect), codling moth (3), cooter, coral snake, cowbird, cowfish, {crab plover,/spider}, crane fly, {crocodile: lizard/monitor/newt/tegu (3s)}, crowned eagle, crown squirrelfish (3), {cuckoo: bumblebee/hawk/roller/-shrike/wasp}, curassow, curer toad

Damselfly, dassie rat, {deerfly/mouse}, dogfish shark (3), dormouse, dorsal-band whale (fish), {dragon fish/fly3/moray 3}, duckbill platypus (3), duckling

{**E**agle: owl/ray}, {eastern: box turtle (3)/bushbaby}, eel catfish (3), {elephant: fish/seal/shrew}, elephant tusk (cod; chiton) (4), emu wren, (eyed) hawk moth

Falconet, fawn hopping mouse, firefly, fish louse, flea beetle (3), flycatcher (3), {flying fish/foxes(fish/bat)/lemur}, foxhound, froghopper (spittlebug), frogmouth (bird)

Galliwasp lizard (3), gar characin (3). garden dormouse (3), gnatwren, goatfish, goat moth, goosefoot starfish (3), guanaco, guinea pig

Hare-wallaby, harrier hawk, hartebeest (3), harvestman, {hawk: eagle/owl}, hawksbill turtle, hedgehog, hippopotamus, hogdeer, {horse:botfly/-fly},{horseshoe bat/crab/worm}, huchen, human whipworm (all human parasites)

Iguana, inchworm moth

Jackass penguin (3), jack-knife fish, jackrabbit (hare; 3), jellyfish, jerboa, jewel wasp (3)

Kangaroo rat (3), kingfisher, Komodo dragon (monitor/agamid)

Ladybird spider (3), lemuroid ringtail possum (3), {leopard: frog/cat/gecko/lizard/seal/tortoise}, lionfish, lion tamarin, lizard buzzard,lizardfish

Magpie goose/-lark, mammoth, {man:-akin/atee/drill/gabey/-of-war fish/ta ray}; mantispid fly (3), {mantis:fly/shrimp}, manx shearwater (3), {marsupial: frog/mole}, menhaden, midshipman (fish), minke whale, {mole cricket/-rat/skink/viper/-vole}, mongoose lemur (3), monkey lizard, mosquitofish, moth butterfly (3), {mouse:bird/deer/lemur/opossum}, mudpuppy, mule deer, murrelet, muskellunge/muskox(3), muskrat (3), mussel shrimp (3)

Numbat

Octopus, ostracod, opossum shrimp, {otter cat/shrew (3s)}, {owl: butterfly/fly/moth}, {owlet: moth/-nightjar}

Pacarana (3), panther, paper wasp, {parrot:bill (passerine)/crossbill/finch/fish}; pea:cock/fowl, pelican eel, pheasant-tailed jacana (3), picarel, picathartes, pickerel frog, pictus cat (fish), pigeon tick (3), pig frog, pike characin, polecat, porbeagle, potoroo, poultry red mite, prairie dog, pricklenape, *Pseudorca*, *Pseudoryx*

Quail/buttonquail

Rabbit fish, raccoon dog, {rat: fish/-kangaroo (3) [≠kangaroo rat]/snake}; ratel, ratite, rattlesnake, {rhinoceros: auklet/beetle(3)/iguana(3)/viper} right-whale dolphin, rock rabbit, roosterfish

Sablefish, scorpion|fish/fly, {sea:/dragon/snail fish/slug}; serpent eagle, sharkminnow, {sheep: blowfly (3)/dog/mite, tick,}/{shrew:-hedgehog (3)/mole,/-opossum/rat}, shrike-thrush, shrimp fish, silverfish, skipjack tuna, sloth bear, slug snake, {snake:fly,/:-lizard/millipede}; sow bug, Soweby's beaked whale, sparrow hawk, {spider: beetle/crab/mite/monkey}; sprat, springhare, squirrel monkey, stag beetle, starfish, {sugar:bird/glider}; swallow-tanager, swan mussel, {swift fox/moth/parrot}

{**T**adpole: fish/shrimp}, tapestry moth, termite frog (3), thornbill, {tiger: beetle (3)/cowry (3)/fish/lizard/moth/prawn/rattlesnake (3)/salamander/shark/snail/snake}, titi (monkey), titmouse, toadhead turtle, toddy cat (palm civet), toucanet, trout perch, turaco, turkey vulture (4 w/2 turs), turtledove (3), turtle frog (3)

Unicorn fish (pardon resorting to fictional creatures for my only U)

Vampire:{finch/squid}, viperfish, vole-mole, vulturine guineafowl (3)

Warbler finch, warthog, wasp spider (3), {water: boatman/bear/flea (4)}, weasel cat, weasel sportive lemur, weaver ant, whalefish, whale shark, wheel animalcule (rotifer), whistling duck, wildebeest, wolf-herring, wolf snake, wombat, {worm: lizard (Amphisbaenia)(3)/slug}

Xenopus

Yellowjacket

Zebra: {danio/dove/finch/shark/sole/spider} ■

THE (LOST) LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE-FICTION FANDOM

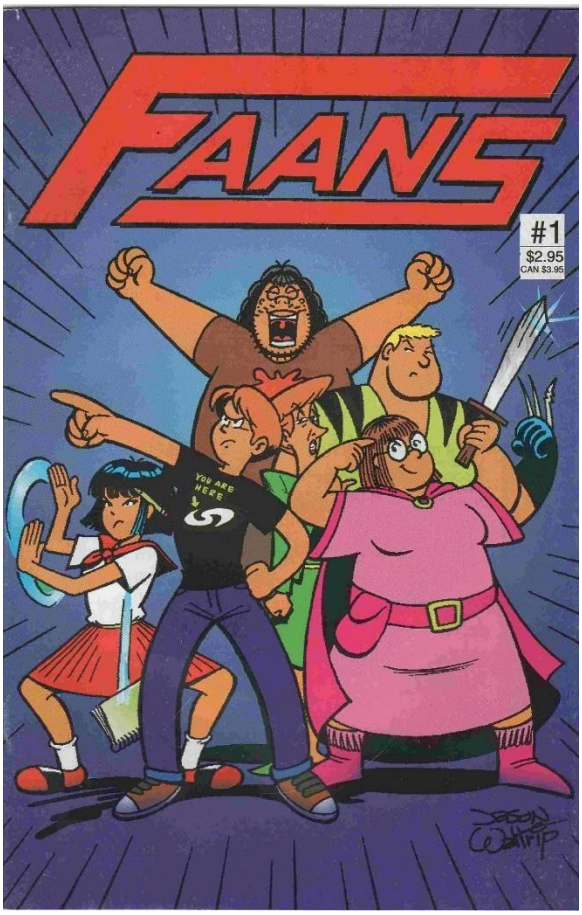
T Campbell

In "Language of Science Fiction Fandom," written fifty years ago, Philip M. Cohen talked about the jargon developed among sci-fi fans of the mid-20th century.

Twenty-six years ago, I based the beginning of my creative career on that jargon, a decision I soon regretted.

My first published webcomic was *Fans* at faans.com (with artist Jason Waltrip and various guests). In 1999, though, it was a print comic book called *Faans.* "Faans" was, at one time, an insidery term for fans *more fannish* than regular fans, in a good way. Some fans also used *fen*—pluralizing the word *fan* like you'd pluralize *man* or *woman.*

The closest equivalent today would be *trufans* (true fans, get it?). Some people might use *stans,* but that's a little scarier and more derogatory out of context. I thought calling the series *Faans* would advertise to a readership that, like me, was passionate about fandom and interested in its history. I did get some readers like that. But I also got so many confused looks that I concluded I'd done the impossible. I had become *too eclectic for modern science-fiction fandom.* In the online relaunch, I used the one-a title.



Faans *#1, the first issue. usina the series' old title.*

I gobbled up Cohen-style "fanspeak" when planning the comic, but much of it wasn't part of my own experience. I did use *mundane* (fan's term for a non-fan) now and then. One of my characters, Will Erixon, used the substitute swears popular in various sci-fi franchises *(flark, frell, sprock, smeg,* etc., see right). For him, such "false" swearing served a psychological need, setting him apart from his foul-mouthed, abusive father.

Will Erixon's "not-swears," from the series' final storyline.

But I could never use "fan words" quite as much as I wanted. Here's one exception that proves the rule.

In the *Fans* story "Out," Shanna and Katherine are facing changes. Shanna used to be the most reluctant *Fans* cast member, drawn to the Science Fiction Club only by her duties as a reporter and by Katherine, her oldest friend. Now, irony of ironies, Shanna's growing closer to the group and fandom, but Katherine's leaving both. Explaining herself to Shanna, Katherine lapses into fanspeak—then corrects herself.

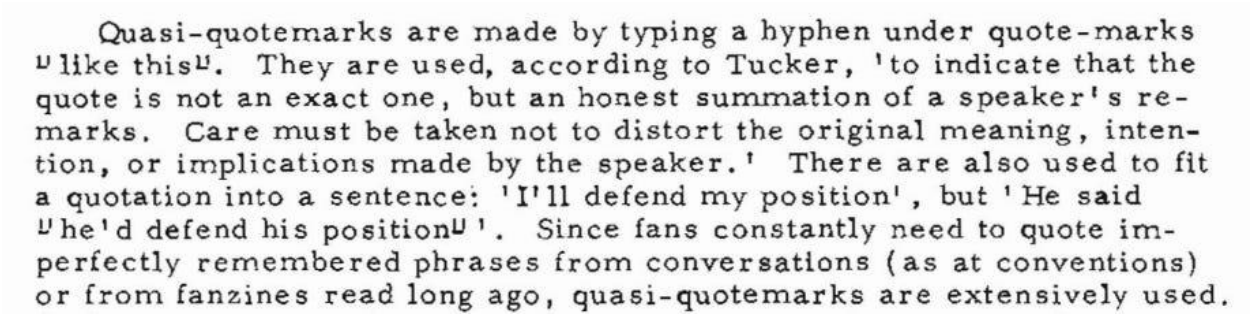
Two old friends moving in opposite directions.

Gafiation comes from **"g**etting **a**way **f**rom **i**t **a**ll," where "it all" is fandom. A gafiation story had been on my to-do list since the series' earliest planning stages. That's right: I liked the word (and its concept) so much, I built a whole *subplot* around it—albeit one furthering Katherine's larger arc.

But "gafiate" was more 1970s fanspeak than 2000s fanspeak, so it's a stretch for Katherine to use it at all—and I had to write the above scene so that unfamiliar readers would grasp its essential meaning right away.

Fans celebrated a subgroup on its way into the mainstream. The comic went online in 2000, the year *X-Men* hit theaters. But as the mainstream got more fannish, fans got more mainstreamish. The language in Cohen's piece revolved around not just fan culture but *fanzine* culture—and Web based storytelling like mine was already displacing fanzines, rendering terms like *nonstoparagraphing* and *ama-writer* (non-stop paragraphing, amateur writer) obsolete.

Never mind the odd *punctuations* you'd find in those zines. While their usage of asterisks and "semi-cancellation" have descendants in *emphasis stars* and strikethrough text, the passage below (from Cohen's piece) is the first time in my life I've seen "quasi-quotemarks":



Quasi-quotemarks are made by typing a hyphen under quote-marks ⸢like this⸣. They are used, according to Tucker, 'to indicate that the quote is not an exact one, but an honest summation of a speaker's remarks. Care must be taken not to distort the original meaning, intention, or implications made by the speaker.' There are also used to fit a quotation into a sentence: 'I'll defend my position', but 'He said ⸢he'd defend his position⸣'. Since fans constantly need to quote imperfectly remembered phrases from conversations (as at conventions) or from fanzines read long ago, quasi-quotemarks are extensively used.

Other terms, though, grew *more* familiar to the mainstream in the 2000s—*con* (for *convention), anime, manga, cosplay, fanart, fanfic.* I could use those freely and happily.

If you ever time-travel to the days before *Star Wars* and meet the sci-fi fans of yesteryear—who dreamed their fandom might be more accepted one day—they'll probably be pleased if you mention you know what *hyperspace* is.

(Don't tell them about the tech bros, though.) ■

FOUR VOWELS, NO WAITING

T Campbell

Word Ways #7.3 includes "Vowel Tetragrams," a Darryl Francis jam dedicated to finding four-letter strings of "pure" vowels (no Y's allowed).

A complete list covering every possibility is out of the question, but naturally, I thought I'd see what interesting words appeared today that *weren't* on Francis' radar. Sometimes I used combos he used when the terms he found had slid out of use or had more than four vowels in a row. I'm a little choosier than Francis in one way: I was only interested in four-vowel chains here—five-vowel stuff like *Aeaea* and *queueing* didn't do it for me.

Braaied and ***braaiing*** refer to a South African tradition similar to the American barbecue.

The **Graeae** are three "gray sisters" who advise Perseus about Medusa. They shared one eye and one tooth between the three of them.

Palaeeudyptes was the largest penguin ever. **Scarabaeoids** are big beetles.

Maieutic is more or less a synonym for "Socratic," a word I would have bet *had* no synonyms.

Caiuajara is a dinosaur discovered eleven years ago.

AFAIUI signifies "as far as I understand it." I avoided most initialisms, but that one was cute.

Laueite is not one of the famous minerals, but it's named for someone who helped us understand all minerals—Max von Laue, the first to verify that minerals had a regular atomic arrangement.

How the caiuajara might have looked.

Plateaued is a common word today, but usage of the word *beauetry* **plateaued** some time ago.

Pompeiian stuff is pretty familiar to modern archeologists. Thanks, Vesuvius!

Neoauthoritarianism and **neoeugenics** are sad fears of modern dystopian thinking—sometimes written with hyphens after neo-, but not always. The **stereoautograph** was an early twentieth-century invention.

I'm skipping over most words that are always hyphenated, like *pie-eating* as in **pie-eating** contest and ***three-eighths***. Likewise most apostrophed words like ***sou'easter*** and ***Xiao'erjing,*** though the latter has an interesting history. I didn't even know there were three different Islamic minorities in China with official recognition as such.

Bioaeration is a useful soil treatment. **Bioaugmentation** is a useful water treatment, even though it sounds like cyborg stuff.

If you're using the word **cardioaortic,** you are probably a heart doctor or need to see one.

Glacioeustacy is—well—the rise in sea levels due to polar ice cap melting. You won't see that in crosswords despite that great *IOEU* pile-up. Bit of a downer.

Gioioso means *joyfully* in Italian, and it's a musical direction I think we should see more of.

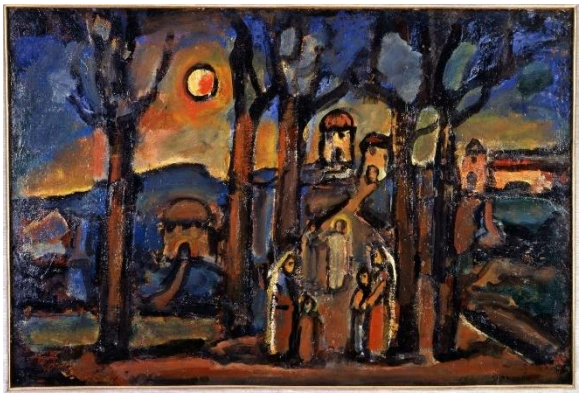
Francis' list has *Siouan,* but not ***Niuean.*** The 2,000 or so residents of Niue demand representation!

Pronoia is the belief that the world isn't out to get you, but is out to *help* you. Arguably more dangerous even than paranoia. The plural is ***pronoiae.***

Adelphopoiesis or **adelphopoiia** was a custom in the Eastern church to unite two men, but don't get too excited, it was more of a symbolic *brother-making* or *church-recognized close friendship* than proto-gay marriage. Or at least that's what they told everyone. *[Knowing clicking noises.]*

Calvin and Hobbes fans may remember the children's story *Hamster Huey and the Gooey* ***Kablooie,*** but the sequel involved an even **gooier** kablooie.

George Rouault is a famous enough painter that I've sometimes seen work called ***Rouaultian.*** See right.



A Rouaultian painting by George Rouault.

Rime couée is what we tend to call *end rhyme.* **Couéism,** though, is the psychotherapeutic approach taken by Émile Coué, involving optimistic autosuggestion.

Joueur is a word for "player" used mainly in French, but occasionally in English as "one who takes a playful approach to life itself."

I'm leaving off some variant forms like ***zaouia*** for *zawiya,* a Muslim place of learning that could be a community, school, or mosque. But I like that one, plus ***louie*** as a variant of *looey,* both short for *lieutenant.*

If you're a certain kind of word nerd, then I hope this list leaves you **squeeing** with excitement. ■

WHAT'S IN A PRESIDENT'S NAME?

Richard Lederer
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Ulysses S. Grant, our 18th president, came into this world as Hiram Ulysses Grant. When his name was mistakenly entered on the West Point register as Ulysses Simpson Grant, he eagerly embraced the error because he detested the initials H.U.G. and loved having the initials U.S., as in "United States," "Uncle Sam," and "Unconditional Surrender."

Try your hand and mind at two short quizzes about presidential names. Using each nickname listed, identify each American president. Answers appear at the end of this article.

1. The Great Emancipator
2. Old Hickory
3. Father of His Country
4. The Sage of Monticello
5. Ike
6. The King of Camelot
7. Tricky Dick
8. Silent Cal
9. Tippecanoe
10. Old Rough and Ready
11. The Gipper
12. The New Dealer
13. The Rough Rider
14. Big Bill
15. The Bachelor President

Presidents have more than their share of intriguing middle names. Two of them—Ronald Wilson Reagan and William Jefferson Clinton—match the last names of two of their predecessors. Using each middle name listed, identify the full name of each POTUS:

1. Abram
2. Baines
3. Birchard
4. Delano
5. Fitzgerald
6. Gamaliel
7. Hussein
8. Knox
9. Milhous
10. Robinette

Anybody can ascend to the presidency of the United States. Jefferson did it, Nixon did it, and Truman did it. So any Tom, Dick and Harry can become president!

What is the most popular first name among presidents? The answer isn't Tom, Dick, or Harry. It's James. Six presidents share that first name—Madison, Monroe, Polk, Buchanan, Garfield, and Carter. Tied for second place are William with four—Harrison, McKinley, Taft, and Clinton—and John with four—Adams, Quincy Adams, Tyler, and Kennedy. Massachusetts is the birth state of three presidents named John—John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and John F. Kennedy.

Despite 14 presidents with the first names James, John, and William, 24 of our chief executives, starting with Thomas Jefferson and ending with Donald Trump, have first names not shared by any other man in the office.

H is the most popular first letter of presidential last names—Harrison, Hayes, Harrison, Harding, and Hoover. S is the most common letter at the beginning of English words, but no president's surname starts with S.

Five pairs of presidents have shared the same last name—Adams, Harrison, Johnson, Roosevelt, and Bush. Only the Johnsons were not related to each other.

Pierce, Grant, Ford, Carter, Bush, Bush, Hoover, and Trump are all common words when uncapitalized.

Five presidential last names consist of four letters. In chronological order they are Polk, Taft, Ford, Bush, and Bush. George W. Bush is the only one among them to have served two terms.

Dwight Eisenhower is the only American president with a four-syllable surname.

Theodore Roosevelt was our first president to be known by his initials, TR. Following in that tradition have been FDR, JFK, and LBJ.

Four presidents have had alliterative first and last names—Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and Ronald Reagan. They all served in the 20th century.

Nine presidents with double letters in one of their names served sequentially—William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, and Harry Truman.

John Quincy Adams is the only president whose name contains a letter that is found in no other president's name. That letter is *q*. ■

certiφied πROOF

Michael Keith

In silence I peramble on Broadway,
A prisoner of palpably ugly times.
Grotesque grievances grab ahold of its young,
Cue twelve Unitarians to kneeling prayers.
Dewy noonday incandescence wanes, as sullen
Winter on cold housecoat defeats elation,
Above haughty or deep-stained hesitation:
  Pasturage for bitter breathing,
  Patchwork frailties' heady endowment.

Moral: debates seem necessary

Bengal is atypical, but a piquancy grabs
the inveterate voyager: a buoyant landscape
among eyesores, police cars, seaweed stalls.

wandering on Forte St., renowned
belfry cleaner Nihode smiles, while
young Europeans, disruption brandished,
foray eagerly toward caffeine-cup amenities.

they now own medieval Krishna, untreated
Oriental matches, hotel guidebooks.

so ostentation begets crap.

A Univac-I computer elaborates for two lifetimes,
Querying mankind's asocial bias, everybody included.
Paperless LEDs disclose this reaction:

GO REGENERATE, SAY'S EARTH.
REAPPEAR, BYGONE YEARNING.
NOW WAKE AND BEWARE SWEET DOINGS,
THE PATENTLY TREASONABLE COMPANY.
THOUGHT IS ACHIEVABLE, THE FOUNDATION WORSENING:
A FATEFUL PROMENADE, UNWORTHY, ENCOUNTERS ALGAE.

Silence. Nobody is startled.

It's a raid, a petty pilfering by corona virus:
Two years' emotions decimated quietly, gradually.
One by one, nowadays, each person in solace
Sees the new possible way of futures described:
Going roundabout by mountain lakebeds, near a riveredge,
Towards a lonely heartbeat for awakening;
Revealing the science among a telepathic ocean:
Starship of wonderment, perpetual changes, then stillness.

A Few Notes on the Text:

This poem was inspired by a combination of two mathematical and textual constraints:

1) In each of the four stanzas, the letter count of successive words represents the first 50+ digits of the decimal value of a common mathematical constant. The first stanza uses the number *e* (the base of the natural logarithms), the second uses τ (= 2π), the third uses φ (the golden ratio), and the fourth uses π. Note that *e*, τ, φ, and π appear in the title.

2) The four stanzas are mutual anagrams, each composed from the same set of 321 letters.

The first constraint is the well-known *word length mnemonic* rule, in which the number of letters in successive words encodes a sequence of decimal digits. Words with 1 to 9 letters represent the digits 1 through 9 and a 10-letter word represents the digit 0. We also permit the *long-word option,* where two consecutive digits can, if desired, be encoded with a single word of more than 10 letters: an 11-letter word represents the digit pair (1, 1), a 12-letter word is (1, 2), and so on.

The digits encoded in each stanza are:

56	*e* = 2.7182818284590452353602874713526624977572470936999595749	312
54	τ = 6.2831853071795864769252867665590057683943387987502**11**64	312
53	φ = 1.6180339887498948482045868343656381177203091798057628	312
60	π = 3.14159265358979323846264338327950288419716939937510582097 49	321

The left column shows the number of digits used. The numbers in the right column are the sums of the digits (but with 0 counted as 10), which equals the number of letters in each stanza if the long-word option is not used. To permit a four-way anagram, these four-letter counts must be equal, which they are not (yet). But note the three pairs of red digits, each consisting of the digit 1 followed by another digit *d*. Encoding one of these pairs with two separate words of length 1 and *d* uses 1 + *d* letters, but encoding the two digits together using the long-word option uses 10 + *d* letters, which is a gain of 9. So if we use a long word for the single red pair in each of the first three rows, the letter counts of these stanzas will increase to 312 + 9 = 321. Then all four stanzas will have the same number of letters, 321. The three words that correspond to the red digit pairs are *incandescence* (13), *ostentation* (11), and *treasonable* (11).

The initial digits of the numbers *e*, τ, φ, and π used here are the shortest strings of digits for which the number of letters corresponding to all four numbers can be made equal – whether the long-word option is used or not. In other words, no text with fewer than 4 x 321 = 1284 letters can simultaneously satisfy our two constraints.

In closing, here's a small puzzle. References in the last stanza to a certain pandemic affecting the world a few years ago are the result of this having been written in the year 2021. But there are numerous "Easter eggs" in the last stanza alluding to a completely different subject. What is the subject, and how many of the Easter eggs can you find? ■

TRANSPOSABLE US PLACENAMES

Darryl Francis
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Longtime readers of *Word Ways*, *Interim* and *The Journal of Wordplay* will know I like searching out transposals of the names of US states, cities, and towns. State-name transposals have featured since the early days of *Word Ways*, and over the years I have offered numerous transposals of the names of state capitals, cities and towns. Is there any further transposal activity I could tackle? How about US placenames which can be transposed to other US placenames?

At the simplest level, I found the four-letter **Ames** / **Mesa** pair. There are multiple towns in the US called **Ames**, with the most populous being in Iowa. And the city of **Mesa** is in Arizona, and the county of **Mesa** is in Colorado. Further, there are many geographic features in the US with **mesa** as part of their names. There are probably many other four-letter transposals like this—readers are encouraged to send additional examples to the editor.

At the five-letter level, there's **Salem** / **Selma**. Famous for its 17th century witch trials is **Salem**, Massachusetts; **Salem** is also the state capital of Oregon and both a city and county in New Jersey. Cities and towns named **Selma** exist in several states, although **Selma**, Alabama, is probably the best known for its civil rights marches to Montgomery in the 1960s. Again, readers are encouraged to submit other examples at the five-letter level.

A previously widely noted pair of six-letter transposals is **Palmer** / **Remlap**. There are several cities, towns and places called **Palmer—**for instance, the city of **Palmer** in Massachusetts; and **Remlap** is a place in Alabama, named after a local family called **Palmer**.

Here are some other examples at the six-letter level:

Camano (an island in Washington) / **Monaca** (a borough in Pennsylvania)

Eldora (in Hardin County, Iowa) / **Laredo** (in Webb County, Texas)

Can readers unearth other six-letter specimens?

An interesting seven-letter example notable for just switching a single letter from one end to the other is:

Adelphi (in Prince George's County, Maryland) / **Delphia** (in Perry County, Kentucky)

This eight-letter example just involves moving the letter S:

Cranston (the second largest city in Rhode Island) / **Scranton** (one of the most populous cities in Pennsylvania)

Jumping ahead to nine-letter specimens, with a switch of just two letters, is this pair:

Brunsville / **Burnsville** (cities respectively in Iowa and Minnesota).

Combining placenames with state-names allows us to generate the lengthy examples below. Some of these places are now ghost or extinct towns.

Ardell, Kansas (a ghost town) / **Dell, Arkansas** (a small town in Mississippi County);

Arrington, Kansas (a community in Atchison County) / **Rington, Arkansas** (a rural location in Mississippi County);

Hertha, Kansas (an extinct town) / **Heth, Arkansas** (a community in St Francis County);

Pitt, Minnesota (a ghost town in Lake of the Woods County) / **Pittston, Maine** (a town in Kennebec County);

Norris, South Dakota (a community in Mellette County) / **Souris, North Dakota** (a small city in Bottineau County).

Instead of spelling out state-names in full, what can be found if two-letter postal codes are also allowed as part of the placename? Here are some examples.

Olpe, Kansas (a small city in Lyon County) / **Penalosa, KS** (a small city in Kingman County);

Ivesdale, IL (a village in Champaign County) / **Sadieville** (a city in Scott County, Kentucky);

Cass County, IA / **Cassia County** (in Idaho);

Sterling, AK (a census-designated place in Kenai Peninsula Borough) / **String Lake** (a lake in Wyoming);

Manchester, WI (multiple places in Wisconsin) / **Winchester, MA** (a town in Middlesex County)

There are probably many more examples like these. How about some three-way transposals? The first one is somewhat trivial since it just interchanges two words:

Lake Norris (a lake in Lake County, Florida) / **Norris Lake** (a reservoir in Tennessee) / **Lorraine, KS** (a city in Ellsworth County);

Canyon Rim, UT (a census-designated place in Salt Lake County) / **Marin County** (in California) / **Mount Airy, NC** (a city in Surry County)

But with four valid transposals is this set of placenames:

Arnold (a city in Jefferson County, Missouri) / **Roland** (a *town* in Sequoyah County, Oklahoma) **/ Ronald** (a community in Kittitas County, Washington) / **Orland** (a *city* in Glenn County, California)

There are many communities with these names (**Arnold**, **Roland**, **Ronald** and **Orland**) in other states, usually with smaller populations. It's worth noting that **Arnold**, **Roland** and **Ronald** can all be found in Kansas, respectively in Ness, Sumner and Bourbon Counties.

Any advance on a four-way set of placename transposals? ■

LAST WORDS

T Campbell (with contributions from Eric Chaikin and Darryl Francis)

Dmitri Borgmann's "My Last Words" covered the last words in each letter heading of the dictionary. Since some decades have passed since he came up with it, I thought I'd see what the last words would be, beginning with each letter, in dictionaries today.

Compared to Borgmann's era, we're drowning in possibility: there are many resources to find words, not all of them reputable. (Defund Urban Dictionary!) I was also unkind to "variant spellings" that just looked like *bad* spellings to my eye. Plus most initialisms, simple surnames, and place names… and even character names, despite one of my favorite film characters being a candidate…

(Sorry, Yzma. But see? I sneaked you into the margin!)

Yzma from The Emperor's New Groove, *possibly indicating some displeasure.*

An **azzy** is a "wayward child," as it was in Borgmann's day. Unlike in Borgmann's day, the word now recalls the YouTuber of the same name.

The **bzzzt** sound effect means "Wrong!" or maybe "Wrong-o, buster!"

Tea lovers may call it **czystek,** though it's also called cistus or rock rose.

The letter Ѕ in Cyrillic is westernized as **dzzhe.**

The protein **ezrin** links a cell's membrane to its cytoskeleton.

The Anglo-Saxon term **fyrdung** means the whole *potential* military force of a nation. (Don't bring back the draft.)

The **Gzhelian** is a geologic age, the last such age of the Carboniferous period, which was the last period of the Paleozoic era. But you can still use it to mean "really really old."

You know how ozone is three oxygen atoms together? Well, **hyzone** is that but for hydrogen. It's not very stable.

We've gotten this far without including much slang. That isn't too unusual, **izzit?**

Jyutping is a system to Romanize Cantonese (see example at right.)

The word "jyutping" given the jyutping treatment. (Credit: By Wikifresc - Own work, CC BY 4.0.)

The mineral **kyzylkumite** has a crystal structure. So does the sugar **lyxulose.**

Some whites have embraced **mzungu**, an African term for (white) "outsider."

What does **nyxis** mean? Medical piercing with a needle.

Ozzie is a term for Australian that most Ozzies/Aussies embrace.

If I tell my wife Janice about **pyzy,** Polish potato dumplings often filled with meat or cheese, we'll probably end up eating some by the end of the week.

You won't believe what the last **q-word** in the dictionary is!

In England, you might order **Ryvita,** a kind of bread.

Szybalski's rule is something you only have to know if you're a microbiologist.

Observant Jews may wear **tzitzis,** knotted fringes or tassels on the corners of their garments.

Junji Ito's horror manga ***Uzumaki,*** adapted to anime, was inspired in part by the spiral appearance of **uzumaki** mochi, a Japanese snack.

A spiral motif as spooky...

...as it is tasty.

Vyvanse is an ADHD medication. If I'd taken it, I wouldn't be doing things like this, probably.

A **wyvern** is a mythical, two-legged, winged dragon with a pointed tail.

The word **xyzzy** is used as a placeholder like *thus-and-so* or *such-and-such.* It's "the word for when you can't think of the word"!

I excluded most initialisms because they weren't familiar to our everyday life, but most people have dealt with the **YYYY-MM-DD** format for entering dates.

Time for sleep! Borgmann found a dictionary that included *zzzz,* but these days **zzz** seems like the standard sleep signifier. It has a plural, though. You can catch **zzzs.**

The end? Not quite! When I presented this piece online, I got some amendments that I'll present here almost verbatim. First, from Eric Chaikin:

Sadly, your eminently reasonable standards prevent inclusion of some more exotic possibilities, including boxer Bobby **Czyz** (pronounced "chaz"), a Polish word for a small finch. Words derived from it include **Czyzyny** Castle, likely the "last C-word," um, so to speak.

Alas, we also miss out on the melatonin-based sleep aid **EZ-Zzz** ("Easy Z's").

Czech offers the famed vowelless verb form **vztvrkls** ("you got stubborn")

One upgrade which does meet your criteria is **tzuris**—aka Yiddish agita—with an infamous number of spellings acceptable in Scrabble, including this one.

And from Darryl Francis:

Below are a few more Last Words. But many of these can be bettered once you start to allow foreign personal names and foreign placenames.

fyve, an old spelling of **five**, appears in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). It appears in 268 quotations in the OED, the most recent being one from 1783. That's slightly more up-to-date than the Anglo-Saxon **fyrdung**.

pzazz, a variant of **pizazz**, is in the OED, and has been a valid Scrabble word in both the US and UK for years.

rywhell is an old spelling of **rule**, also in the OED - marked as 'late Middle English'.

Tzutuhiles are members of an Indian people of the south shore of Lake Atitlan, Guatemala - in the online unabridged Merriam-Webster.

uzzard is in the OED as an old name for the letter Z, the same as **izzard**.

vyzard is in the OED as a variant of **vizard**, a mask or visor.

wywere in the OED is a fishpond, a variant of **viver**.

yzyenne, in the OED, is a past tense of the archaic verb **ysee**, to see.

And, finally, **zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz** appears in an OED quote at the letter Z! The quote: "*Once you have hit on a commercial product you just go on producing more of the same, over and..zzzz..over and..zzzz..over and..zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.*"

I know that most of these are either obsolete or foreign, but I think you start to run into problems if you shut out words earlier than certain dates (when?) or personal names and placenames from certain geographical areas (which?).

Such dissents are why—when it comes to dictionary words—"The End" is never quite the end. ■

HEADBUTTS

Matthew Abate
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Introduction:

This article presents examples of words that result from removing the first letter of a word and appending it to the end. For example:

H*EART* → *EART****H***

E*MANATE* → *MANATE****E***

H*EIGHT* → *EIGHT****H***

F*LEA* → *LEA****F***

P*LEA* → *LEA****P***

E*VIL* → *VIL****E***

N*EAR* → *EAR****N***

W*HO* → *HO****W***

L*EASE* → *EASE****L***

I call these ***headbutts***, borrowing from Ralph Beaman's anatomical naming conventions for *beheadments* (words formed by removing the first letter, as in *EMOTION* → *MOTION*) [1] and *curtailments* (removing the last letter, as in *PASTE* → *PAST*) [2]. This article presents a few short studies on the headbutts transformation and concludes with some headbutts puzzles---Please enjoy.

Studies:

There seem to be many possible variations with headbutts---headbutts are a type of anagram, and this allows certain other anagram phenomena to be explored within the context of headbutts. For example, consider these ***semordnilap headbutts***:

L*EE* → *EE****L***

N*ELLE* → *ELLE****N***

A ***semordnilap*** is a word that is another word backward (as in, *SNOOPS* ↔ *SPOONS* or *LEE* ↔ *EEL*). In the examples above, the word resulting from the headbutts transformation is the original word spelled backwards (i.e., its semordnilap). The reader will have to forgive me for using names above (so early in the article). I know *Lee* as a direction from a sailing camp I attended as a middle schooler. *Nelle* might also be redeemed after recognizing **Nelle** Harper **Lee** as the famed author of "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Another variation involves attempting to repeat the procedure more than once, forming headbutts along the way. *Route*, for example, can be headbutted twice,

ROUTE → *OUTER* → *UTERO*

provided you accept Utero as valid (perhaps from the phrase "in utero"). The reader will no doubt recognize that I am using a crossword-constructor's wordlist to generate these, and that headbutts were harder to come by than initially assumed at the start of this writing. Nonetheless, there is more to do.

For example, if one were to remove the constraint that the words along the way are also headbutts, then you can do some interesting things just moving the head of a word (now an undetermined number of letters) to its tail. See the following which use a head of length 2:

ENLIST →→ LIST**EN**

DEMO →→ MO**DE**

IDK →→ K**ID**

What's surprising here is that you can generate real-world multi-word phrases just using headbutts: ***DEMO MODE*** is actually a feature flag behind the software my company produces, and ***IDK KID*** might be something you'd reasonably say to a nagging or overly inquisitive child. More examples of this kind of phrase generation with headbutts appear later in the Puzzle section:)

Dealing with short starting words and multi-letter heads, however, will lead one naturally to crises of categorization. For example, is ***IDK*** not more naturally described as the one-letter-headed headbutt of ***KID*** (*KID* → *IDK*)? Is it not the case also that ***MODE*** can be headbutted twice to form ***DEMO*** (*MODE* →→ *DEMO*)? I'll leave these thought experiments as exercises for the reader; however, my inkling is that the phrase ***HEADBUTT*** should be used when the head is longer than, or of equal length to, the tail, and the phrase ***BUTTHEAD*** should be used when the tail is longer than the head. Using this naming, you can headbutt *KID* to form *IDK*, or you can butthead *IDK* to form *KID*: in both cases, a 1-letter head (tail) is used. Of course, it would be impossible for me to leave this paragraph without mentioning the obvious:

HEADBUTT →→→→ **BUTTHEAD** →→→→ **HEADBUTT**

Oh boy, what will we do.

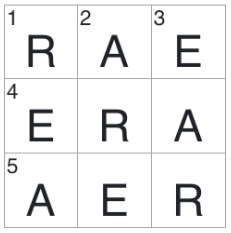
Cycling in this way (starting with a word, headbutting it to form some intermediate words, and then headbutting it again to form the original word) is perhaps of interest, for a particular application: crossword constructing. Before touching on crossword constructing and headbutts, let me share a few headbutt cycles I found:

TEA → *EAT* → *ATE* → ***TEA*** → …

ONE → *NEO* → *EON* → ***ONE*** → …

TOP → *OPT* → *PTO* → ***TOP*** → …

Below, I'm highlighting two micross puzzles, where, in both, all of answers (across and down) admit headbutt cycles. This allows for headbutting the entire crossword: moving the first column after the last, to form a new puzzle (with the same words), or moving the first row after the last.



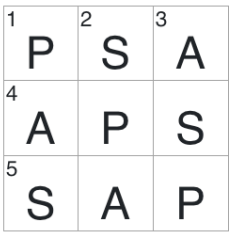
ACROSS

1 Noted potter Dunn
4 Period
5 ___ Lingus

DOWN

1 Mens ___
2 "___ you really building a grid where all the answers are anagrams of each other?"
3 Audience

T Campbell [3]



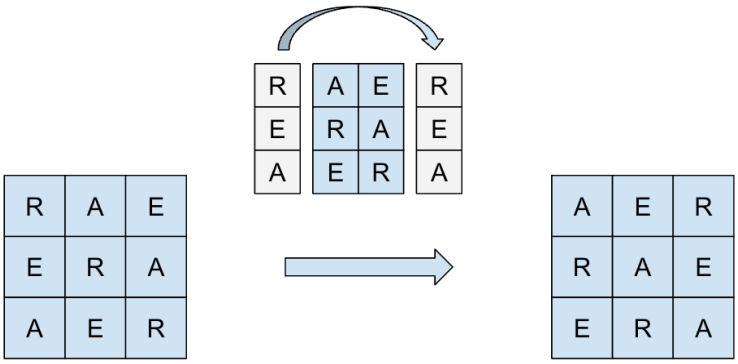
ACROSS

1 TV FYI
4 HS exams
5 Tree gunk

DOWN

1 Faux ___
2 Relaxing public place
3 Cleopatra killer

M. Abate [4]



Headbutting the puzzle

Personally, I'd be interested to learn how the headbutting of the puzzle affects the perceived difficulty or solve time. Each of the puzzles above admits 2 additional headbutted puzzles, and I wonder whether one variation (perhaps with the hardest clues as 1-across and down) would lead to slower solves amongst the populace.

Anyway, that's all for now—the puzzles begin on the next page.

References:

[1] Beaman, Ralph G. (1973) "Beheadments," Word Ways: Vol. 6: Iss. 4, Article 3. Retrieved from: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/wordways/vol6/iss4/3.

[2] Beaman, Ralph G. (1973) "Curtailed Curtailments," Word Ways: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 3. Retrieved from: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/wordways/vol9/iss1/23.

[3] Campbell, T. "Micross #42" *Substack*, 23 Oct. 2024, https://substack.com/home/post/p-150606116.

[4] Campbell, T. "Birthday Micross #43!" *Substack*, 30 Oct. 2024, https://tcampbell.substack.com/p/birthday-micross-43.

Puzzles:

All puzzles below have the same rules, and I've provided answers to the first two as examples.
Use each clue to devise a two-word phrase, where the words are related by headbutt (the second word is formed by moving the first letter of the first word to the end of the first word). The symbol (X-X) next to a clue means that the answer is two words of length X, and I've included a few helper letters in instances where tense or pluralization may be an issue. See page 78 for the solutions.

Recently acquired (3-3)	***NOW OWN***
No charge for a coral structure (4-4)	***FREE REEF***
Possible response to "Are they closed?" (4-4)	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
Paving professional's creative output (3-3)	_ _ _ _ _ _
Every pain (4-4)	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
Worked sales at a bygone car dealership? (4-4)	S _ _ _ _ _ _ S
Result of a single mother remarrying (3-3)	_ _ _ _ _ _
Displeasure at a bad drive (5-5)	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
Irritación y Malestar (5-5)	S _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ S
Hang at a slant (6-6)	D _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ D

■

C.O.S.M.O.S.: CAREFULLY OPTIMIZING SHAZAM MATRICES OF SUPERBEINGS

T Campbell

Given the evident need for as many super-powered champions as possible, use of the "SHAZAM" spell must be maximized to promote the security of our nation, planet, and multiverse. The remainder of this document is highly classified and should not be shared with anyone who lacks Justice League-level clearance or above.

William "Billy" Batson transforms into Shazam, the world's mightiest mortal, due to a "SHAZAM" spell cast on him by a 4,000-year-old wizard (see accompanying file). Similar spells have affected Batson's sister Mary Bromfield and the ancient Egyptian laborer Teth-Adam. Each recipient channels the selected abilities of gods and heroes. Crucially, this "word magic" requires the donors' names ***must align to form the acronym "SHAZAM."***[1]

In Batson's case, the spell granted him **S**olomon's wisdom, **H**ercules' strength, **A**tlas' stamina (resulting in near-invulnerability), **Z**eus's power, **A**chilles' courage, and **M**ercury's speed.

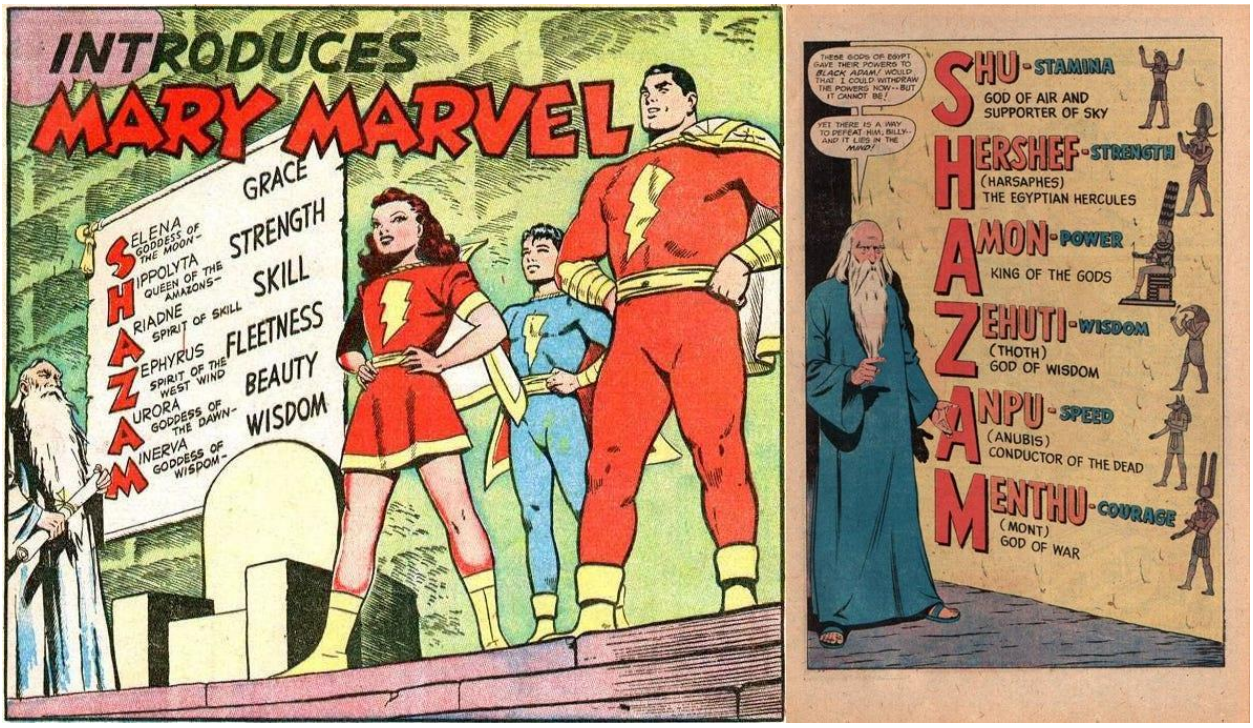
[1] Two of Batson's sparring partners, Sabbac and Ibac, have their own bespoke versions of the spell, keyed to their own names rather than SHAZAM. **Sabbac** channels the powers of demons: the invincible strength of **S**atan, indestructible body of **A**vm, evil knowledge of **B**elial, flame powers of **B**eelzebub, willpower/courage of **A**smodeus, and speed/flight of **C**rataeis.

Ibac channels the essence of human sociopaths: the terror of **I**van the Terrible, the cunning of Cesare **B**orgia, the fierceness of **A**ttila the Hun, and the cruelty of **C**aligula.

The possibilities of generating powers from a near-infinite number of name-matrices are mind-boggling. However, given that these versions of the spell have *only* generated villains and *only* tap infamous influences, there is a non-zero chance they exert a corrupting influence. If so, then their further development would cause more problems than it solved. This avenue of study should therefore not be pursued unless circumstances grow truly desperate.

Teth-Adam received abilities from the well-known gods of his day: stamina from **S**hu, strength from **H**eryshaf, power from **A**mun, wisdom from **Z**ehuti (Thoth), speed from **A**nubis, and courage from **M**ontu.

Initially, Bromfield received grace from **S**elena, strength from **H**ippolyta, skill from **A**riadne, speed from **Z**ephyrus, beauty from **A**urora, and wisdom from **M**inerva. Later, two benefactors in this list were altered: skill came instead from **A**rtemis and beauty instead from **A**phrodite.



In all cases, flight seems to be an extension of divine speed, as all three avatars display the ability to fly without its specific citation in the acronym.

Although information about Egyptian gods is too incomplete to judge Teth-Adam's example, Batson and Bromfield's powers have engineering flaws.

While children benefit greatly from infusions of wisdom, Batson's own courage makes Achilles' contribution somewhat redundant. Further, Hercules' strength and/or Atlas' stamina may overlap with the "power" of Zeus (a vague property, as all the SHAZAM-granted abilities are "powers").

Hippolyta is the mother of Wonder Woman and, as such, has Superman-class strength and toughness; this may compensate for the lack of "stamina" in Bromfield's array. Skill, speed, and wisdom are also assets. However, grace and beauty are of little use in powered conflicts. The hypnotic sensuality of Aphrodite and lethal efficiency of Artemis could be more potent in combat, but both are incompatible with Bromfield's (usual) personality, meaning some of her gifts go unused.

Bromfield's example, however, proves that not only the *donors* but the specific *gifts* the spell grants are variable.

Magic is learnable—what one spellcaster can learn, another can learn. Therefore, the primary bottleneck in creating more super-powered champions is the SHAZAM acronym itself, especially its "Z." Overcoming this is an exercise in **backronyming,** the assignation of words to predetermined initials. Backronyming is often a tongue-in-cheek exercise, as when the founders of Yahoo! declared it stood for "Yet Another Highly Officious Oracle," but in this case it is of vital importance.

As the least common letter in English, "Z" affords limited opportunities. Zagreus, a god who resurrected as Dionysus, seemed at first like a worthwhile donor. However, it was Zeus who resurrected Zagreus, not an intrinsic property of his own, leaving him with no real traits worth borrowing.

However, some untapped potential "Z" donors do exist. Given their limited supply, the most promising avenue is to start with "Z" donors and fill in more common donors for the other letters to balance them out.

We suggest exploring the following matrices, each optimized for strength, durability, intellect, and non-redundancy, but varied enough to permit specialization.

The Farsighted Shazam

Sigurd—ability to talk to birds.
Hecate—magic.
Aurora—light generation.
Zephaniah—prophecy.
Alexander the Great—strategy.
Mothra—strength.

Zephaniah is one of the Biblical prophets, granting our hero an ability most heroes can only wish for: the power to predict injustice before it happens. Combining this with Alexander's more military foresight could result in a hero who ends conflicts before they begin. Aurora's beauty was once tapped by Bromfield but now goes unused; the ability to blind and dazzle foes seems more valuable. Mothra is a figure from *modern* mythology but no less potent for that. Hecate's magic can supply the power of flight.

The Time-Master Shazam

Samson—strength.
Hiawatha—authority.
Athena—warcraft.
Zurvan—time control.
Azrael—speed (flight).
Moses—charisma.

Zurvan, the Zoroastrian god of time, could help create a hugely powerful superhero, able to freeze villains or disasters between moments and perform heroic feats in less than a second.

While Athena is often identified with Minerva, who already has a power in use, they appear to be separate entities, and the aspect of "warcraft" (tactics, fighting skills, leadership, etc.) is altogether different from Minerva's loaned virtue of "wisdom." (It has not yet been determined whether Shazams can draw on multiple gifts from a single donor.)

The Shazam-Busting Shazam

Sherlock Holmes—detective ability.
Hephaestus—engineering ability.
Atalanta—agility.
Zu—weather control.
Antaeus—invincible strength while touching the earth.
Mothman—flight.

Heroes like Thor (a god himself) have demonstrated the utility of weather control. There is also reason to suspect that magic-based lightning can transform Shazams from their powered forms to their non-powered forms.

Zu was an evil storm god, also seen as the "zubird." Remember that taking powers from gods and heroes does *not* grant the recipient their *other* personality traits, at least not in the original "SHAZAM" spell: otherwise Batson would display Zeus' lechery and Achilles' rage, Bromfield Aphrodite's vanity.

That said, the example of Teth-Adam is instructive. Despite being imbued with divine wisdom, he spent most of his 4,000-plus-year existence as a sociopath and has only somewhat reformed in the modern era. (See attached document on vetting of Shazam candidates.) This Shazam could act as a check on other corrupt Shazams, but only if they do not become corrupt themself.

Against that possibility, this Shazam is, by design, weaker than other Shazams, with no special speed abilities and two powers (strength and flight) mutually exclusive in their use.

The Monster Shazam

Selkie—shapeshifting.
Harpie—flight.
Abominable Snowman—strength.
Zombie—resilience.
Anansi—cleverness.
Medusa—petrifying face.

While it's unclear whether the SHAZAM spell can gather gifts from entire mythic *species* instead of just named individuals, it's worth a try.

Zombies are noted for their ability to persist in the face of multiple injuries, stab wounds, and lost limbs: only their heads seem vulnerable. Shazams seem to heal injuries when they shift from one form to another, so such injuries need not be permanent as they are to zombies.

This Shazam's uniform should include a helmet with retractable face-plate, compensating for the zombie's weakness and allowing selective deployment of the Medusa's power. If the face-plate is lost, the ability to shift forms into a seal will allow this Shazam to persevere without harming innocent bystanders or making themself too vulnerable.

The Revolutionary Shazam

Shiva—destructive power.
Hades—authority over the dead.
Asclepius—healing powers.
Zapata—fervor.
Aeolus—speed of the wind.
Magi—wisdom.

Considering the great political turmoil of this age, we may need a hero with a more specific kind of courage than Achilles, the courage to stand up to those in power and envision a better future for all. To many Mexicans, Emiliano Zapata embodies that trait.

The Parasite Shazam

Energy cannot be created or destroyed. The powers that a Shazam gathers are taken or tapped from their named donors while the Shazam is active. This is not a problem for long-dead heroes or idle gods, but it is an issue for more contemporary sources. We rejected one matrix **(**Stephen **S**trange's magic abilities, **H**awkman's fast flight, **A**nt-Man's size-changing, (Baron) **Z**emo's strategy, **A**quaman's animal-telepathy, **M**r. Fantastic's plasticity) when we realized that such a Shazam might drain other superheroes of their abilities at a critical moment, with potentially tragic results.

However, some individuals have gifts they should not have. The Hulk, for instance, is at least as much society's menace as its defender. Consider the development of a "parasite Shazam" whose greatest contribution to society is *removing* such gifts *permanently*—though this would require them to stay in their powered form 24-7, much as Teth-Adam does.

Satan—temptation ability.
Hulk—strength.
Anti-Monitor—disintegration ability.
Zuckerberg (Mark)—influence.
Aquillo—passivity.
Musk (Elon)—wealth.

[Note: The version of this document that is accessible to the current presidential administration substitutes **"Z**ayn Malik" for Zuckerberg and **"M**idas" for Musk. What the ultrarich don't know won't hurt the rest of us. Spoon.]

Again, the example of Teth-Adam is sobering. The person who channels these abilities should have a monk's commitment to nonviolence. Even then, they may feel some temptation to misuse them as their original owners did. The passivity of Aquillo, Greek god of peace, should act as a stabilizing influence—though Teth-Adam proves that one has to *want* to access godly wisdom in order to channel it.

The Anti-Monitor, a being who destroyed thousands of universes, may or may not still be in existence. If he is not, then the spell will work on the same basis that Batson channels the powers of the long-dead Solomon and Achilles. But if he is, then neutralizing his threat alone would be of incalculable benefit. Likewise, ending Satan's power over humanity has been the stated goal of the entire Christian faith for centuries. The scope of such abilities may be more than a Shazam can fully withdraw or contain, but the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

The substitution of **S**uperman's invulnerability is also an option, in the dark scenario that the Man of Steel ever turns against humanity. If he does, this plan could neutralize him immediately, with far less need for collateral damage than sending the original (Batson) Shazam to attack him directly.

The Artist Shazam

Humanity has needs beyond violence and rescue. A SHAZAM spell has multiple peacetime applications. Though they may seem comparatively trivial, the arts and entertainment are no small gift to humanity. Grace and beauty, misplaced virtues in the Bromfield example, are more relevant here. A Shazam designed to bring people a smile can still be of great benefit, raising our spirits long enough to allow us to tackle more serious issues. Again, borrowing gifts from current examples like Taylor **S**wift and Frances **M**cDormand appears counterproductive, so we've confined ourselves to legends and history:

Shakespeare—verbal ability.
Hestia—humility.
Apollo—singing.
Zsa Zsa (Gabor)—glamour.
Adonis—beauty.
Marx Brothers—humor.

The Scientist-Philosopher Shazam

Finally, the original Shazam sometimes displays an advanced capacity for reason; a Shazam engineered to be a thinker, not a fighter, could lead us out of difficulties that a superhero could never address.

Socrates—questioning.
Hawking—modern science.
Aristotle—mental agility.
Zoroaster—philosophy.
Al-Khwarizmi—knowledge collection.
MLK—sense of justice.

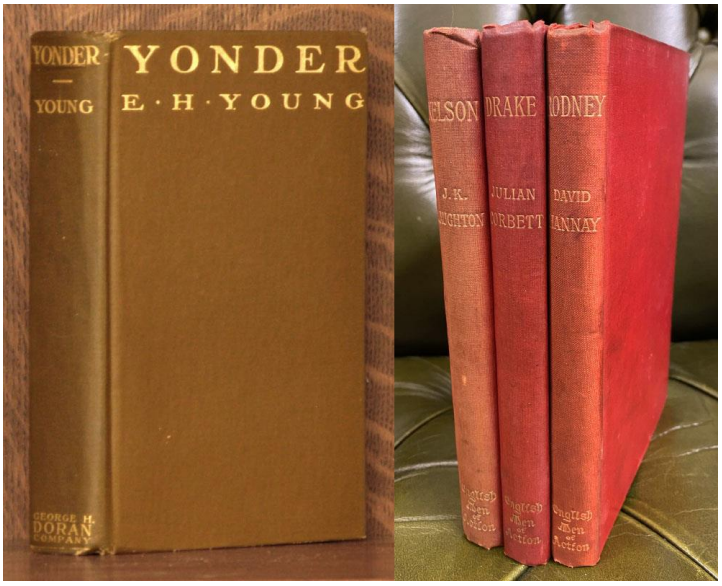
Perhaps they could even aid us in the design of further Shazams. ■

MORE BOOK TITLE ANAGRAMS

Michael Keith

T Campbell, in an article entitled *Book Title Anagrams* on Substack (tcampbell.substack.com/p/book-title-anagrams), presents eight pairs of books where the title of one book is an anagram of the other. Here are 16 additional examples, presented in order of increasing number of letters in the title—except for the last two pairs, which are extra notable and saved for last.

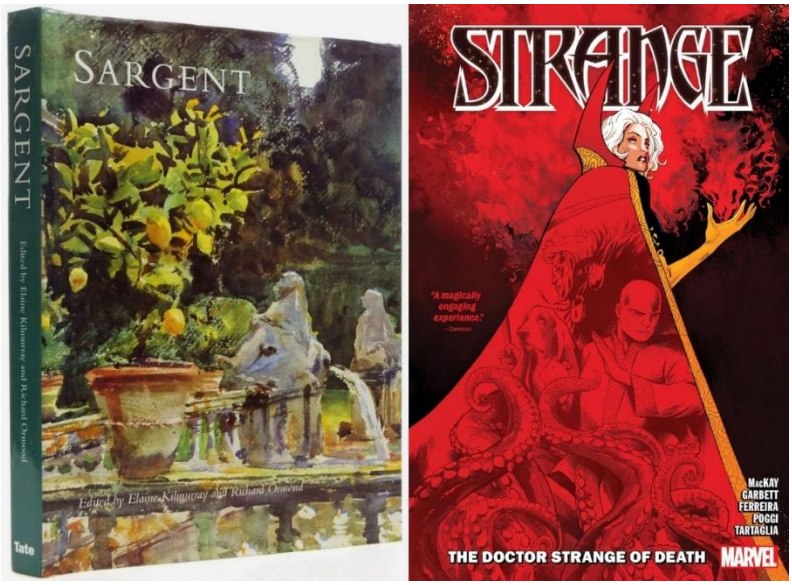
Yonder by Emily Hilda Daniell (née Young), who wrote under the name E.H. Young, was published in 1912 and is her second novel. *Rodney* (third book of the set of three at right) is an 1891 biography of English admiral George Brydges Rodney by historian David Hannay. The three books in the right photo are volumes from a (larger) set called *Men of Action.*



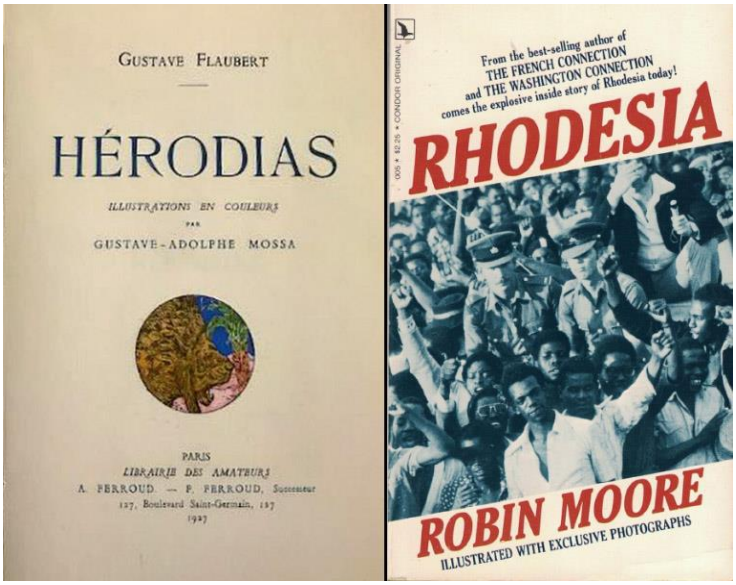
One of the anagram pairs in T's list is *Hamnet* and *The Man*. This can be extended to a three-way anagram with Ayn Rand's 1938 dystopian novel *Anthem*:

And *Hamlet* itself also has an anagram mate! Marie Corelli's romance novel *Thelma* was first published in 1887—the 1922 edition shown here is an early example of a movie tie-in book, with a cover photo showing American actress Jane Novak playing the part of Thelma in the silent film released that same year.

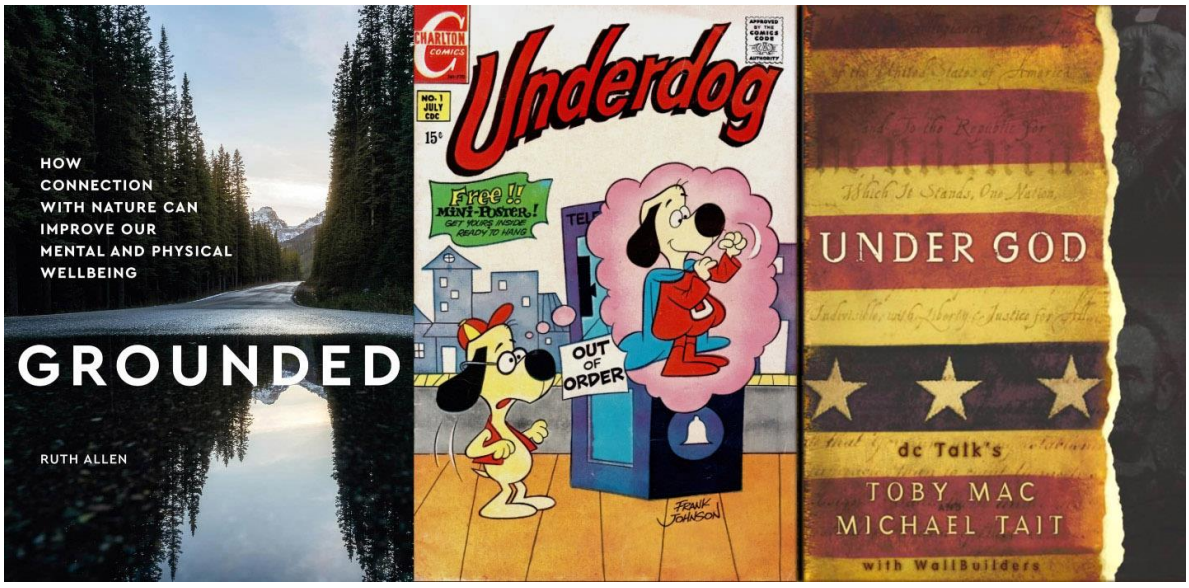
On the left below is a 1995 book from the Tate Gallery, a survey of the life and works of the artist John Singer Sargent. On the right is the second volume of *Strange*, a two-volume series of comics set in the Marvel universe after the death of Doctor Strange. Each volume is a 100+ page paperback book.



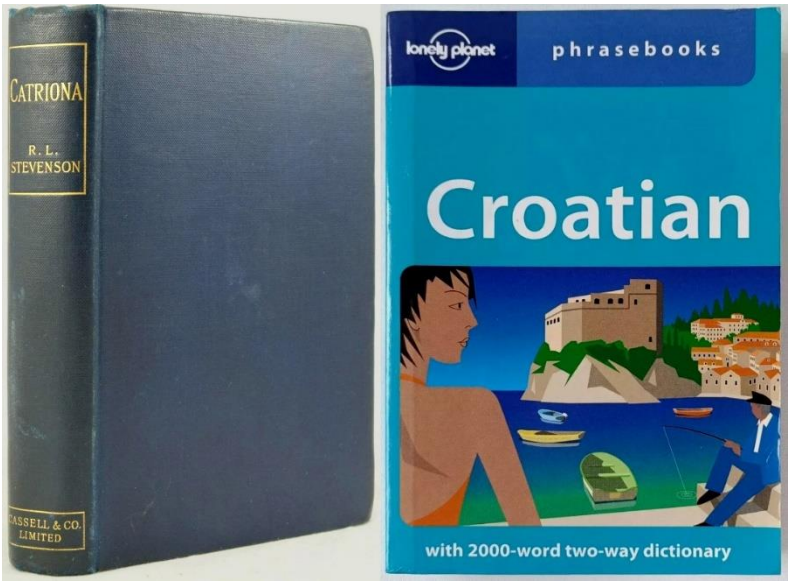
Another famous author, Flaubert, makes an appearance in this pair with *Herodias*, his version of the story of John the Baptist's beheading, published both on its own and as *Trois contes* in 1877 with two other stories. At right is *Rhodesia*, a 1977 book about the country by the author of *The Green Berets* and *The French Connection*.



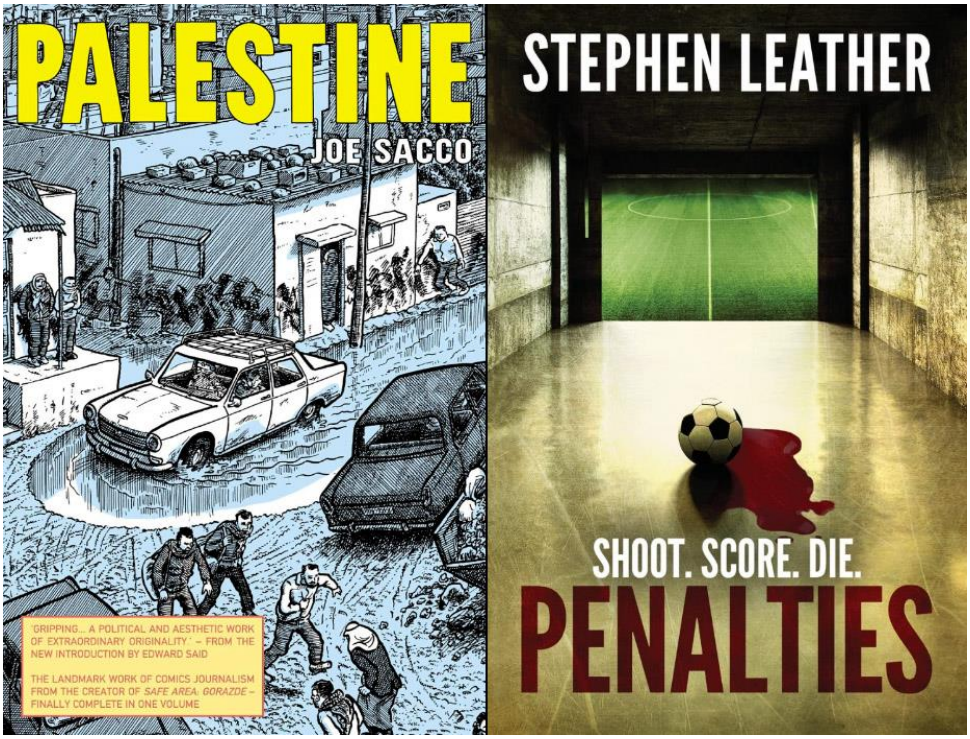
Here's another anagram triplet. On the left is *Grounded*, a 2021 book from British therapist and writer Ruth Allen, followed by the well-known comic hero from 1964 to now, *Underdog*, whose adventures have appeared in dozens of single-issue comics as well as omnibus paperbacks. On the right is a 2004 book from Toby Mac and Michael Tait, one of several published books with this same title. The anagram from *Underdog* to *Under God* is rather...<u>under</u>whelming, but seems acceptable in order to capture another elusive triplet.



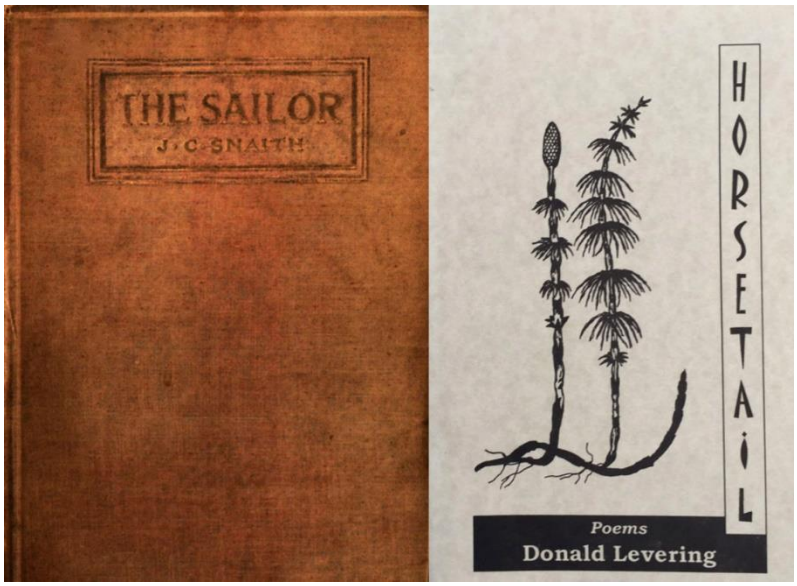
Yet another famous writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, contributes his 1893 novel *Catriona*, a direct sequel to the 1886 novel *Kidnapped* based on real-life Scottish events in the 1700s, starring teenager David Balfour. At right is a modern book on the Croatian language.



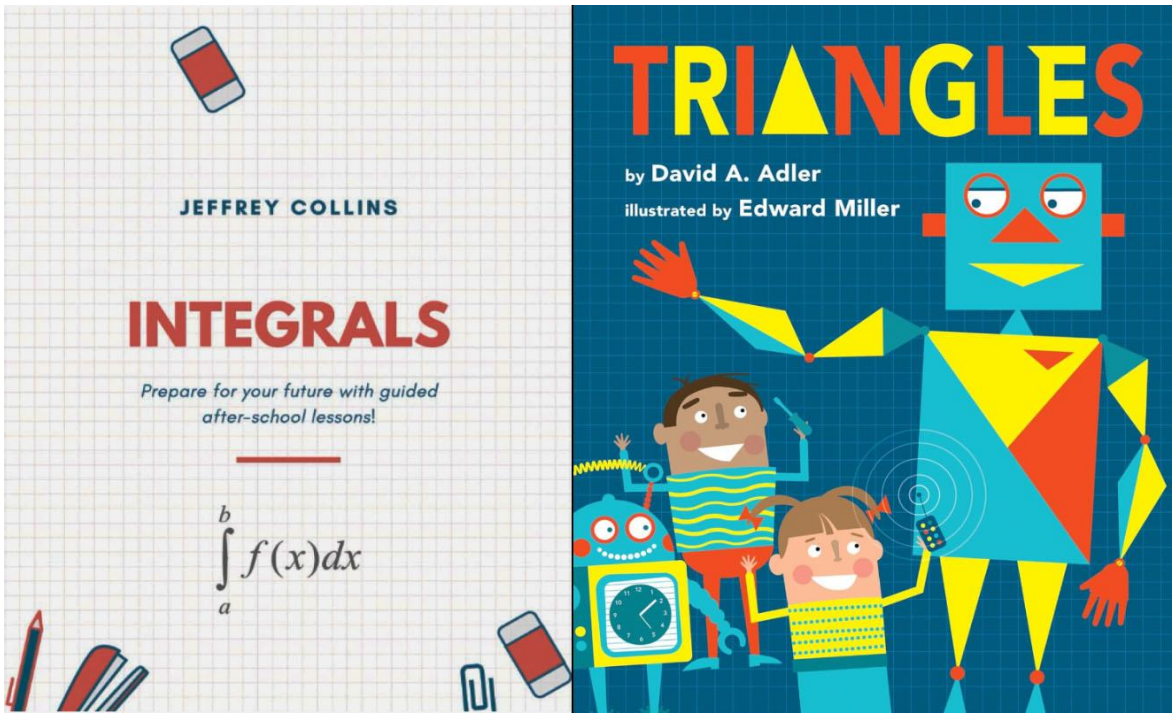
At left is *Palestine*, an interesting graphic novel from 2009 by Joe Sacco, considered to be possibly the first example of "comics journalism," about events he experienced first-hand in Palestine in the early 1990s. It was followed by a sequel, *War on Gaza*. A 2016 thriller about a Premier League football player, *Penalties*, rounds out this intriguing juxtaposition.



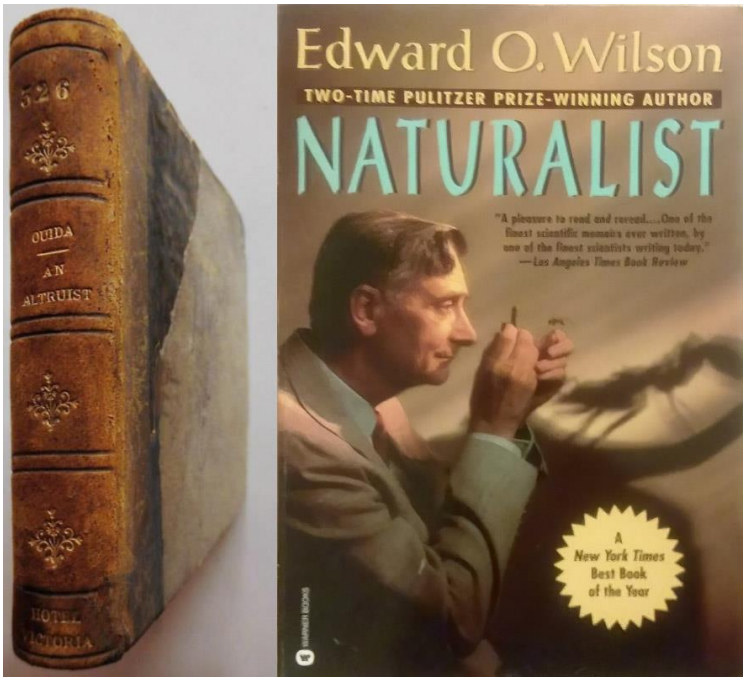
John Collis Snaith (1876-1936) was remarkable for having been a top-class Nottinghamshire cricketer who also published 50 books. Near the midpoint of his oeuvre is 1916's *The Sailor*, in which young protagonist Henry Harper experiences various adventures on land and sea. *Horsetail* is a book of poetry by Donald Levering, described as "a collection of poems culled from [his] experiences working in a grain elevator in Kansas and as a groundskeeper in Oregon."



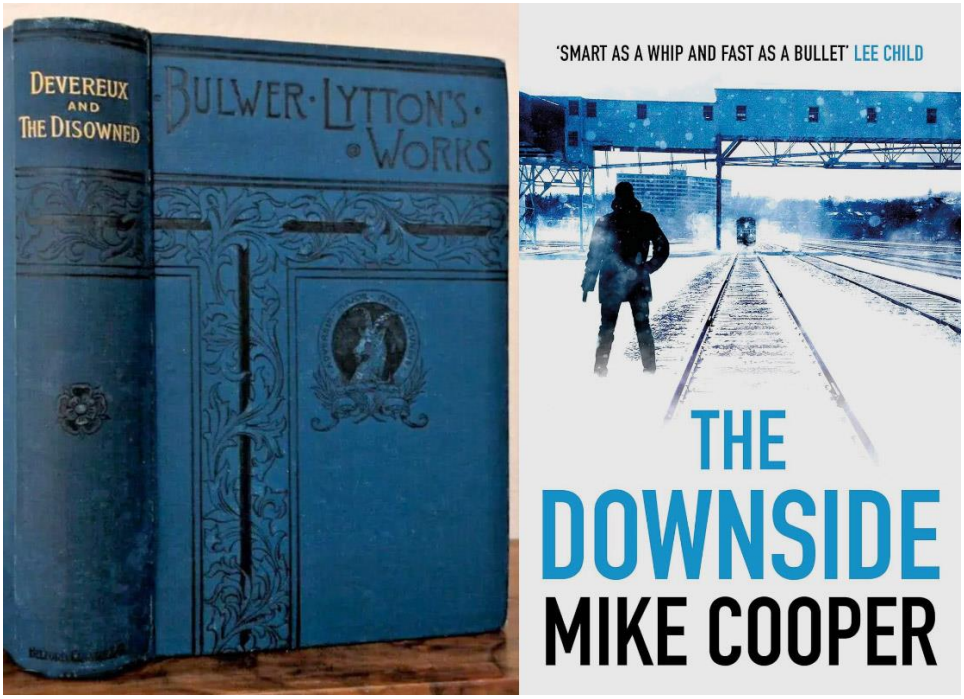
The next pair is interesting because both books (*Integrals* from 2021 and *Triangles* from 2015) are in the same general subject area (mathematics). Also, this anagram is very well mixed—more on this later.



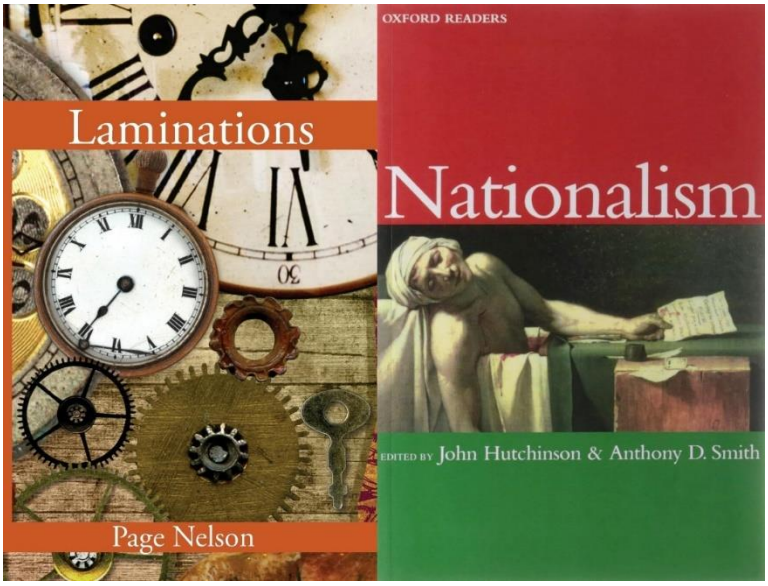
An Altruist is a later novel (from 1897) from Ouida, pen name of English writer Maria Louise Ramé, whose *A Dog of Flanders* has been made into a film no less than five times. *Naturalist* is the 1994 autobiography by famed entomologist and naturalist Edward O. Wilson.



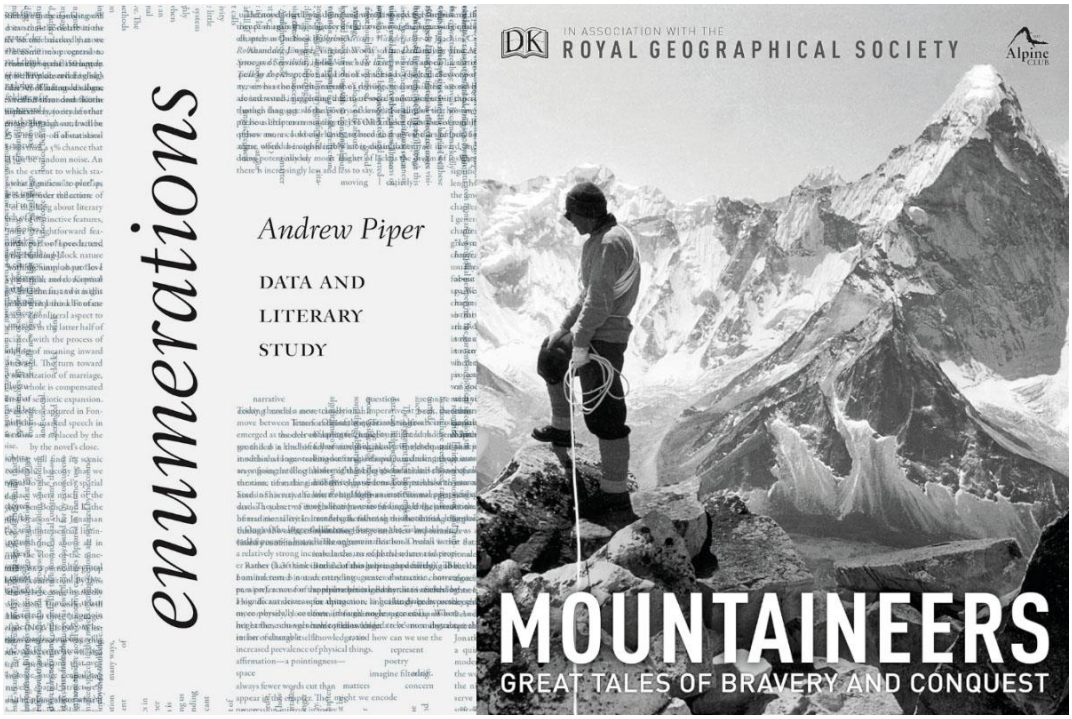
The Disowned is an 1829 "three-decker" by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (of "It was a dark and stormy night" fame). *The Downside* is a recent novel about a large-scale heist.



Laminations bills itself as "a genre-bending book consisting of a diary, aphorisms, poetry, and variously inserted commentaries." *Nationalism* is a 1995 collection from Oxford University Press of articles on the titular topic.



enumerations is a treatise on some of the mathematical aspects of the study of literature, published in 2018 by the U. of Chicago Press. *Mountaineering* is a 2019 historical survey from the Royal Geographical Society of mountain climbing and famous climbers.

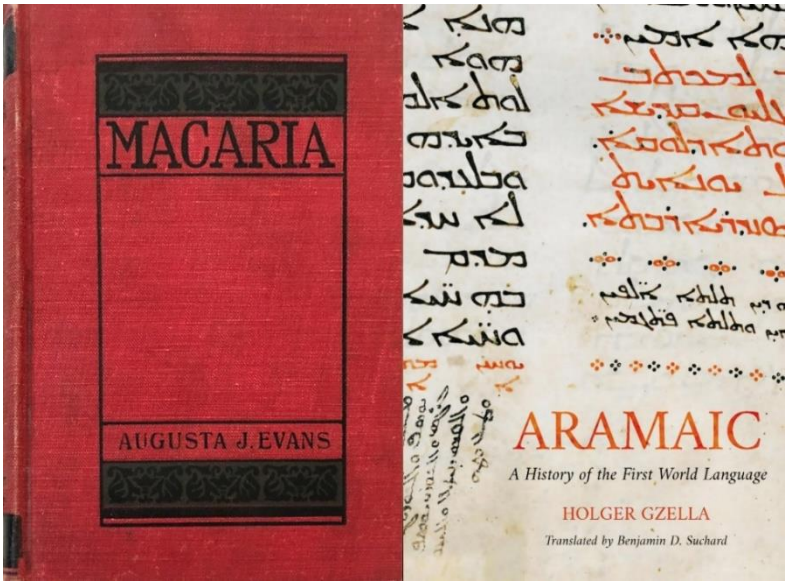


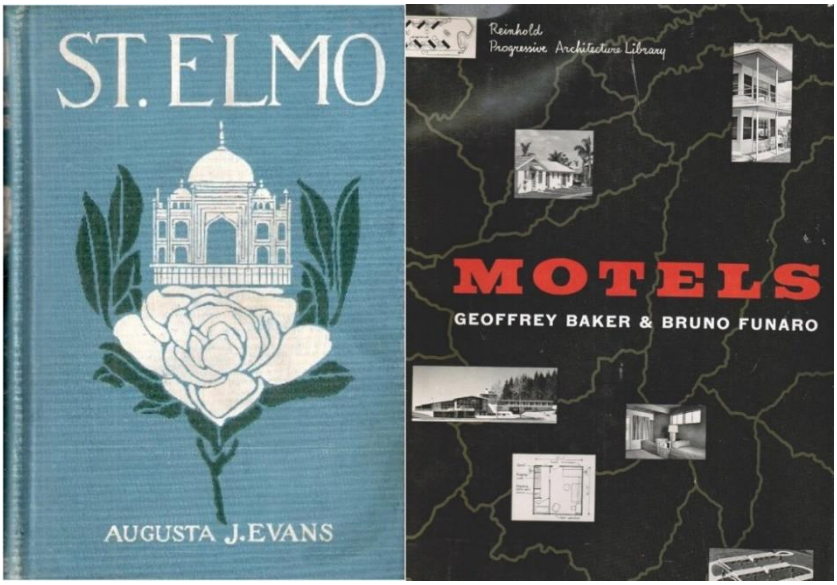
We close with a remarkable pair of pairs: two books by the same author that each have an anagram book mate. The author is Augusta Jane Evans Wilson (1835-1909), described in the opening sentences of Brenda Ayers' biography as follows:

> *Augusta Jane Evans Wilson was one of the best-known novelists in America during the nineteenth century. In fact, she holds the historical distinction of being the first woman to make $100,000 from her writing.*

In 1866 her fourth novel, *St. Elmo*, became the best-selling novel of the 19th century. It was preceded in 1864 by *Macaria*, written during, and about, the Civil War.

Below, *Macaria* is paired with Holger Gzella's treatise on the Aramaic language (shades of *Croatia* from a few pages back?) while *St. Elmo*'s mate is a vintage book from 1955 celebrating the architecture of *Motels*.





Listed below are the eight examples found by T Campbell combined with our 16, in a table of pairs followed by two separate tables for the triplets. Scores and letter-counts are given, with scores explained below.

Book Title Pairs

Sc	#Let	Title	Author	Year	Title	Author	Year
3	5	*Thaïs*	Anatole France	1890	*Tisha*	Anne Hobbs, R. Specht	1976
3	6	*St. Elmo*	Augusta J. Evans	1866	*Motels*	G. Baker, B. Funaro	1955
4	12	*The Statement*	Brian Moore	1995	*The Testament*	John Grisham	1999
5	6	*Gaston*	André Franquin	1960	*Sontag*	Benjamin Moser	2019
5	7	*Macaria*	Augusta J. Evans	1864	*Aramaic*	Holger Gzella	2021
5	7	*Transit*	Anna Seghers	1944	*Tristan*	Gottfried von Strassburg	~1200
6	11	*The Disowned*	Edward Bulwer-Lytton	1829	*The Downside*	Mike Cooper	2017
6	6	*Hamlet*	Shakespeare	1603	*Thelma*	Marie Corelli	1887
6	6	*Yonder*	E.H. Young	1912	*Rodney*	David Hannay	1891
6	7	*Sargent*	E. Kilmurray, R. Ormond	1998	*Strange*	Jed McKay, et al.	2023
6	8	*Herodias*	Gustave Flaubert	1877	*Rhodesia*	Robin Moore	1977
6	9	*Palestine*	Joe Sacco	1993	*Penalties*	Stephen Leather	2016
6	9	*The Sailor*	John Collis Snaith	1916	*Horsetail*	Donald Levering	2000
6	11	*Laminations*	Page Nelson	2016	*Nationalism*	J. Hutchinson, A. Smith	1994
6	12	*Commonwealth*	Ann Patchett	2016	*The Common Law*	Oliver W. Holmes, Jr.	1881
7	8	*Catriona*	Robert L. Stevenson	1893	*Croatian*	Gordana & Ivan Ivetac	2010
7	10	*An Altruist*	Ouida	1897	*Naturalist*	Edward O. Wilson	1994
7	12	*The Americans*	Daniel J. Boorstin	1973	*The Rains Came*	Louis Bromfield	1937
9	9	*Integrals*	Jeffrey Collins	2021	*Triangles*	David A. Adler	2015
11	12	*Enumerations*	Andres Piper	2018	*Mountaineers*	Royal Geo. Society	2019

Triplet 1 (6 letters, Scores = 6,2,6)

Title	Author	Year
Hamnet	Maggie O'Farrell	1890
The Man	Irving Wallace	1866
Anthem	Ayn Rand	1938

Triplet 2 (8 letters, Scores = 5,4,5)

Title	Author	Year
Grounded	Ruth Allen	2021
Underdog	various	~1960
Under God	Toby Mac, M. Tait	1995

A Few Notes on Anagram Quality

There are enough anagrams here to make it worthwhile to consider which ones might be "best." This is quite subjective, of course, since we might prefer those involving well-known books or authors, or we might like those for which the pairing of the two books is interesting or amusing.

It is, however, possible to objectively rank how well-mixed an anagram is using several methods, one of the simplest and best being the "minimum number of blocks" metric, defined as the smallest number of contiguous blocks one letter string can be split into so that the anagram string can be produced by rearranging the blocks. Consider, for example, THE SAILOR and HORSETAIL, a 9-letter pair. Without spaces we have THESAILOR and HORSETAIL, which can be split into as few as six blocks that can be shuffled around to turn one string into the other:

T H E S AIL OR ↔ H OR S E T AIL

thus giving a score of 6. For an anagram between two *n*-letter strings, the possible score ranges from 2 (the entire string can be split in two and then those two parts swapped) to *n* (every one of the *n* blocks has a single letter), with higher scores denoting better (more well-mixed) anagrams.

The minimum-block metric, known as the "minimum common string partition" in computer science, is a generalization of a scoring method proposed back in 1976 by Ross Eckler in *Long Well-Mixed Transposals* (*Word Ways*: Vol. 9, Issue 1), though he only gave "demerits" for blocks of size 2 and 3 and completely disallowed blocks of larger sizes.

One must be careful when calculating this score by hand, especially if several letters of the alphabet appear multiple times in the pool of letters, since one must find a breakdown into blocks *with the smallest possible number of blocks*. For example, consider this anagram of two non-words: ONATONATOEAT = ATOEATONATON. We might notice the common substring of length 7, ATONATO, and split into blocks as

O N ATONATO E AT ↔ AT O E ATONATO N

for a score of 5. But this is not the correct answer because it's possible to split into fewer blocks. In fact, this anagram has the worst possible score of 2:

ONATON ATOEAT ↔ ATOEAT ONATON

To help avoid mistakes, we wrote a computer program to calculate the scores.

In the "Pairs" table above, the score for each pair is listed in the first column ("Sc"), followed by the total number of letters in the next column. The rows are sorted by increasing score and then by number of letters. For the triplets there are three scores (given in the table heading), one score for each pair of books. If the titles in the first, second, and third rows are A, B, and C, the three scores separated by commas are for the pairs AB, BC, and AC.

In all these anagrams, there are only five "perfect" ones having a score equal to the number of letters in each title—four with six letters and one with nine: *Hamnet = The Man; Hamnet = Anthem; Yonder = Rodney; Hamlet = Thelma; Integrals = Triangles*

There's only one with the smallest possible score of 2: *The Man = Anthem*, which splits into blocks as THEM AN ↔ AN THEM.

Based on score, the two most notable examples are *Integrals = Triangles*, the longest one with a perfect score (9), and *Enumerations = Mountaineers*, with the current record high score of 11.

Some challenges for further investigation include:

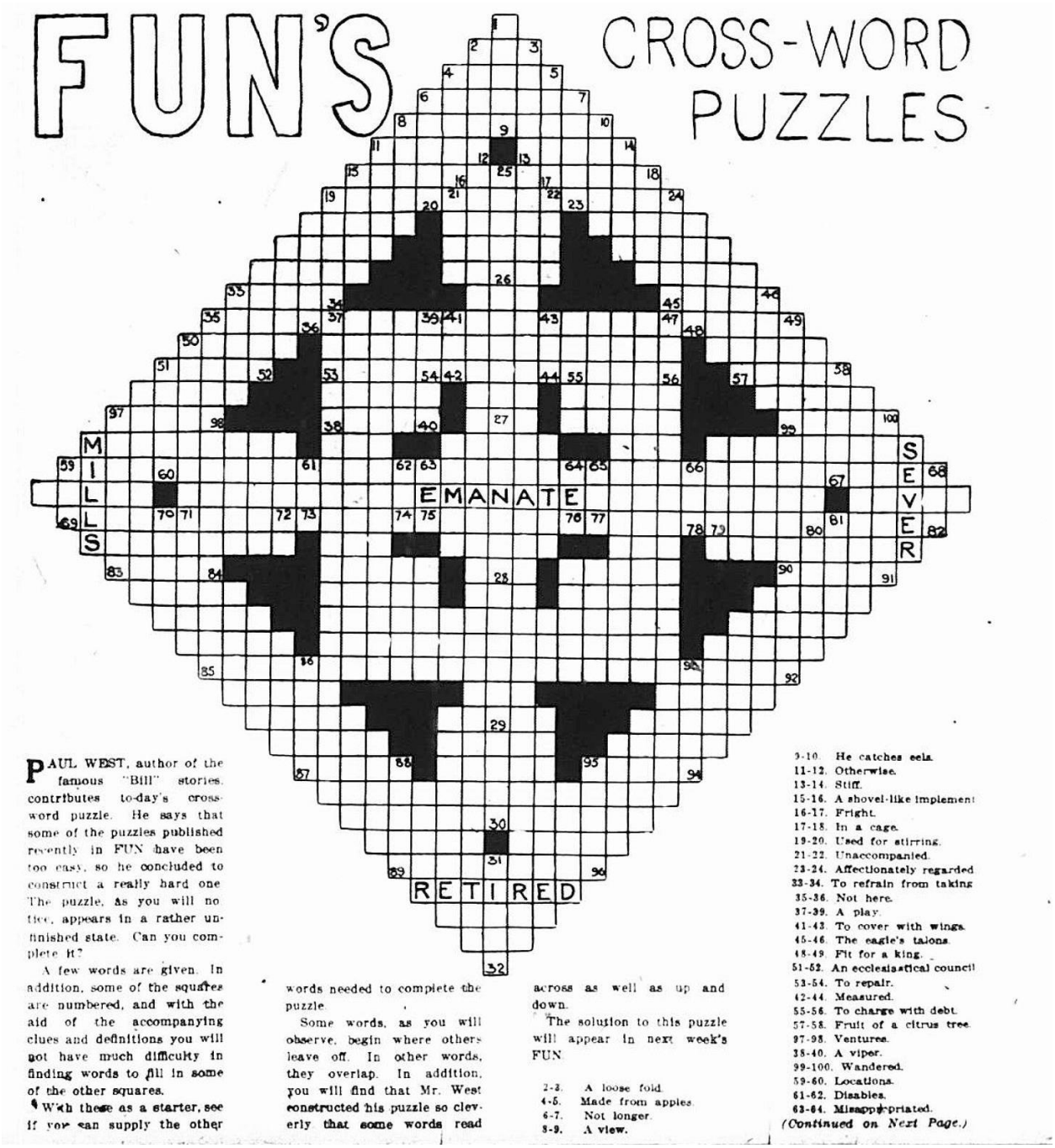
(1) Find a book title anagram with more than 12 letters.
(2) Find one with a score greater than 11.
(3) Find a perfect one (score = number of letters) with more than 9 letters.
(4) How about a 4-way book title anagram? ■

CROSSWORDS, 1915-1919

T Campbell

This continues an ongoing year-by-year exploration of the history of the crossword puzzle. For an account of its creator and first full year, see the previous issue of *The Journal of Wordplay.*

1915 was a year of continued innovation in grid design. Consider this not-so-little gem:



FUN'S CROSS-WORD PUZZLES

EMANATE

MILLS

SEVER

RETIRED

PAUL WEST, author of the famous "Bill" stories, contributes to-day's cross-word puzzle. He says that some of the puzzles published recently in FUN have been too easy, so he concluded to construct a really hard one. The puzzle, as you will notice, appears in a rather unfinished state. Can you complete it?

A few words are given. In addition, some of the squares are numbered, and with the aid of the accompanying clues and definitions you will not have much difficulty in finding words to fill in some of the other squares.

With these as a starter, see if you can supply the other words needed to complete the puzzle.

Some words, as you will observe, begin where others leave off. In other words, they overlap. In addition, you will find that Mr. West constructed his puzzle so cleverly that some words read across as well as up and down.

The solution to this puzzle will appear in next week's FUN

2-3. A loose fold.
4-5. Made from apples.
6-7. Not longer.
8-9. A view.
9-10. He catches eels.
11-12. Otherwise.
13-14. Stiff.
15-16. A shovel-like implement.
16-17. Fright.
17-18. In a cage.
19-20. Used for stirring.
21-22. Unaccompanied.
23-24. Affectionately regarded.
33-34. To refrain from taking.
35-36. Not here.
37-39. A play.
41-43. To cover with wings.
45-46. The eagle's talons.
48-49. Fit for a king.
51-52. An ecclesiastical council.
53-54. To repair.
42-44. Measured.
55-56. To charge with debt.
57-58. Fruit of a citrus tree.
97-98. Ventures.
38-40. A viper.
99-100. Wandered.
59-60. Locations.
61-62. Disables.
63-64. Misappropriated.

(Continued on Next Page.)

A 1915 puzzle with more "wide-open space" than modern puzzles allow.

This grid did not behave like modern grids. Some areas contained multiple answers next to each other, and large sections of the puzzle only had squares that were only part of answers in one direction. The modern equivalent would be the *barred* crossword, which separates its white squares with heavy lines but may not include any fully black squares.

In January, *Fun* ran a series of three crosswords with diagonal, letter-shaped designs, the first an F, the next a U, the last an N. "That spells FUN for every one of FUN's puzzle solvers," as Arthur Wynne wrote.

Three 1915 FUN puzzles in week-to-week sequence.

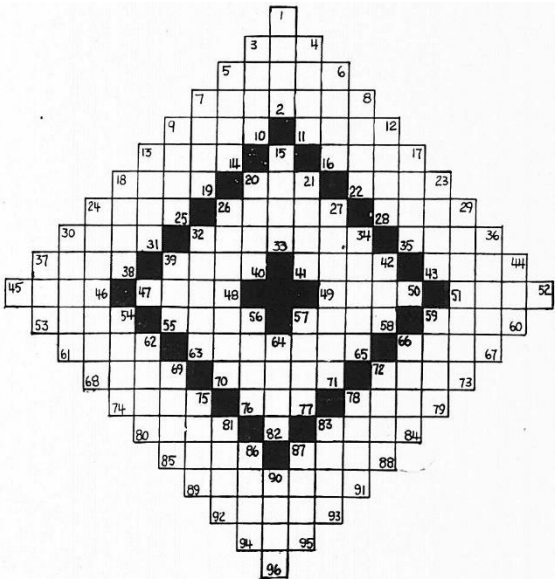
On March 7, 1915, Wynne painted a picture for his readers of the FUN flood of submissions:

> *The editor of FUN receives an average of twenty-five cross-words every day from readers. Considering that only one cross-word is published per week, you can possibly imagine what the office of FUN is beginning to look like. Everywhere your eyes rest on*

boxes, barrels, and crates, each one filled with cross-word puzzles patiently awaiting publication.

However, the editor of FUN hopes to use them all in time. The puzzle editor has kindly figured out that the present supply will last until the second week in December, 2100.

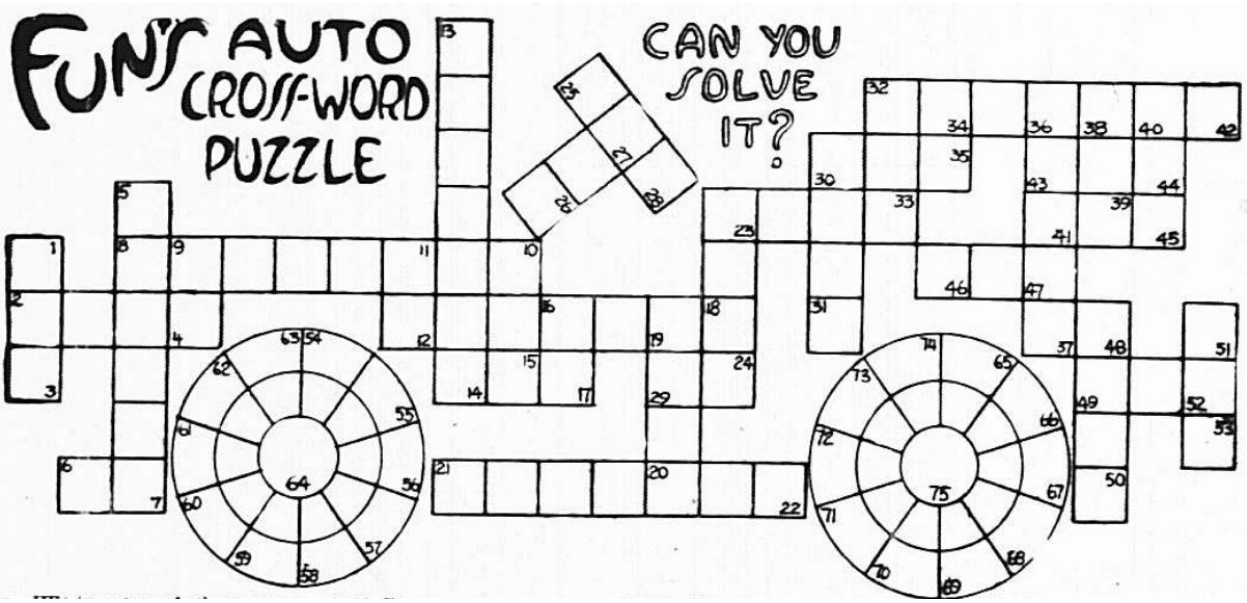
FUN published plenty of grids in Wynne's original hollow-diamond design, some anonymous (and likely by Wynne), some by others. Another common theme at this point was *nested* hollow-diamond designs, which were no harder to construct, word-by-word, than the single hollow diamond (see right).



The "nested hollow diamond" structure.

Still, more innovative designs were plentiful. The automobile still qualified as a craze in the 1910s, so the grid below may have felt inevitable. *Fun* printed it with the following note:

> *The inventor of the cross-word puzzle printed this week calls it a Guessmobile runabout. Incidentally, he requested that his name be not used, as once before when he contributed a cross-word puzzle many of* Fun*'s readers sent their solutions to him.*

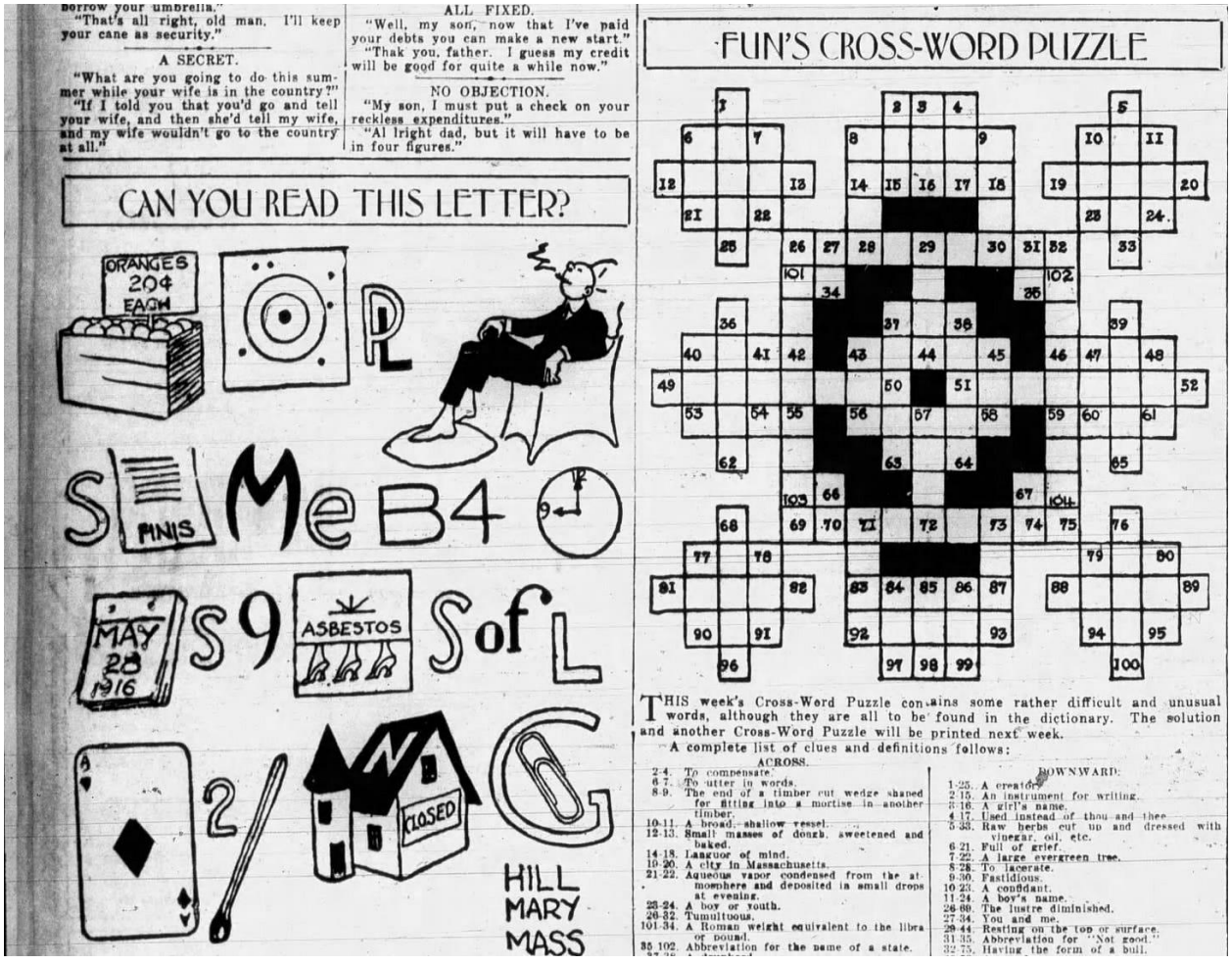


This automobile-shaped puzzle appeared in 1915, when many papers had a whole section devoted to "auto news."

One puzzle took the form of a swastika sign—in 1915, the swastika was still five years away from its adoption by the then-nascent Nazi party. And it was at least two decades away from coming to signify Nazism more or less *exclusively.* After that, the swastika (outside very limited contexts) got a lot more offensive—just as the implications of the term *cross-word* got less so.

When researching early references to the *crossword,* one comes across a lot of false positives. The earliest "cross-words" in print had nothing to do with puzzles: *cross-word,* and occasionally *crossword,* used to be a condensed term for *cross words,* which is to say, words spoken in anger. Which, in turn, was sometimes a euphemism for *"curse* words." Also, a few so-called "cross-words" continued to appear that were actually acrostic challenges or word squares to be drawn out by the reader. The New York *World*'s FUN section continued to be the only source for crosswords anything like what we know today—although that section was reprinted in other papers like *The Minneapolis Journal,* which added to its reach.

In **1916,** FUN expanded further, appearing in new papers like the *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* and the *Tacoma Daily Ledger. The Pittsburg Press* began publishing it on June 11. But within FUN, the crossword had competition from another visually arresting kind of puzzle—the rebus.


borrow your umbrella."
"That's all right, old man. I'll keep your cane as security."

A SECRET.

"What are you going to do this summer while your wife is in the country?"
"If I told you that you'd go and tell your wife, and then she'd tell my wife, and my wife wouldn't go to the country at all."

ALL FIXED.

"Well, my son, now that I've paid your debts you can make a new start."
"Thak you, father. I guess my credit will be good for quite a while now."

NO OBJECTION.

"My son, I must put a check on your reckless expenditures."
"Al lright dad, but it will have to be in four figures."

CAN YOU READ THIS LETTER?

ORANGES 204 EACH

PL

S MeB4

PINIS

MAY 28 1916

S9

ASBESTOS

SofL

CLOSED

HILL MARY MASS

FUN'S CROSS-WORD PUZZLE

THIS week's Cross-Word Puzzle contains some rather difficult and unusual words, although they are all to be found in the dictionary. The solution and another Cross-Word Puzzle will be printed next week.

A complete list of clues and definitions follows:

ACROSS.

2-4. To compensate.
6-7. To utter in words.
8-9. The end of a timber cut wedge shaped for fitting into a mortise in another timber.
10-11. A broad, shallow vessel.
12-13. Small masses of dough, sweetened and baked.
14-18. Languor of mind.
19-20. A city in Massachusetts.
21-22. Aqueous vapor condensed from the atmosphere and deposited in small drops at evening.
23-24. A boy or youth.
26-32. Tumultuous.
101-34. A Roman weight equivalent to the libra or pound.
35-102. Abbreviation for the name of a state.

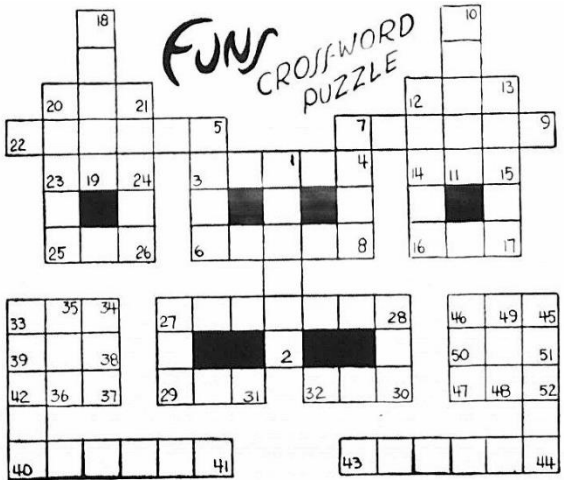
DOWNWARD:

1-25. A creation.
2-15. An instrument for writing.
3-16. A girl's name.
4-17. Used instead of thou and thee.
5-38. Raw herbs cut up and dressed with vinegar, oil, etc.
6-21. Full of grief.
7-22. A large evergreen tree.
8-26. To lacerate.
9-30. Fastidious.
10-23. A confidant.
11-24. A boy's name.
28-60. The lustre diminished.
27-34. You and me.
29-44. Resting on the top or surface.
31-35. Abbreviation for "Not good."
32-75. Having the form of a bull.

The "new kid in town" (the rebus) sharing space with last year's "new kid" (the crossword).

Although “picture-writing” has been with us since ancient Sumer, the concept of a rebus, in which pictures stand in not only for words but also for their soundalikes, is more an invention of the Middle Ages. They began as clever signatures—one might have signed “T Campbell” as ☕🏔🔔—before maturing into puzzles sometimes around the Renaissance. By the 1800s, it was well established in American life, and it would have been an altogether familiar entertainment to the audience of 1916.

It seems Arthur Wynne was hedging his bets at this point. The crossword puzzle was still popular, but there was no guarantee it would last another few years. And if it did, it might congeal into a form he didn’t recognize—literally.

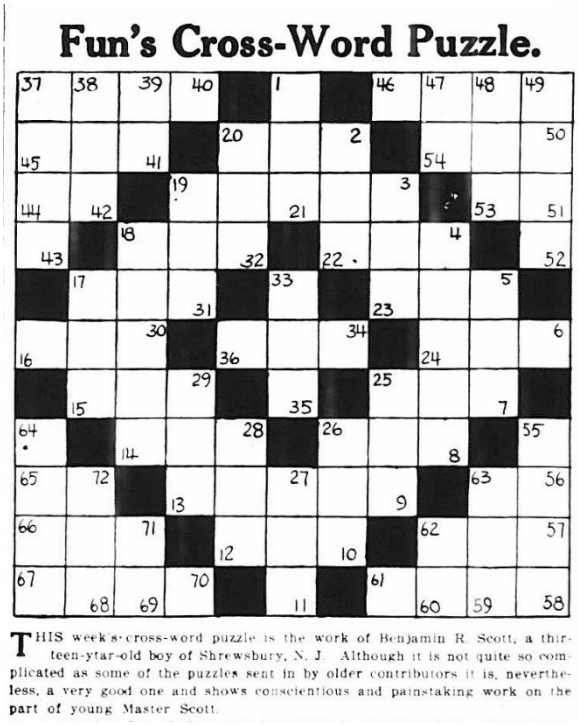


More of a Rorschach test than a recognizable shape; such oddities were not uncommon in 1916.

The first crossword puzzles Wynne designed were diamond-shaped, and so were many reader submissions. By 1916, though, the diamond shape was losing ground. The shape of crossword puzzles was still far from standardized, but the most likely shape for crosswords to assume was a square—which was more convenient for layout artists and provided more entertainment value per square inch.

Of the forty puzzles I surveyed published during that period, eight of them were diamond-shaped, twenty-one were square shaped, and eleven were some third type like the one above and to the right.

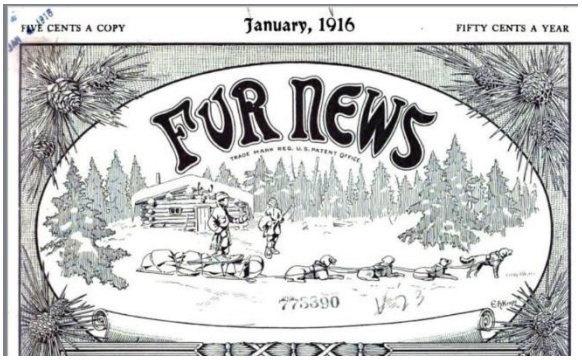
A few, like the sample seen at center right, combined the diamond and square format. This puzzle is listed as “the work of Benjamin R. Scott, a thirteen-year-old boy of Shrewsbury, New Jersey.” That makes him about as young as the youngest crossword creator in *New York Times* puzzle history, Daniel Larsen.



Benjamin R. Scott's precocious creation.

Despite this evolution, crosswords in 1916 remained just about unknown in many parts of the United States, never mind the rest of the world. If a “crossword/cross-word” reference showed up in a newspaper and it wasn’t in a syndicated *FUN* section, it was still using the old “angry speech/swear word” definition, like the Sep 26 issue of the *Decatur Herald* (“The Never-Said-A-

Cross-Word People") and the June 7 *Decorah Public Opinion* (She—"Just think, Henry, we've never had a cross-word." He—"No, Mame. Ain't I a patient cuss?")



This cover illustration graced the furrier's publication Fur News *2.*

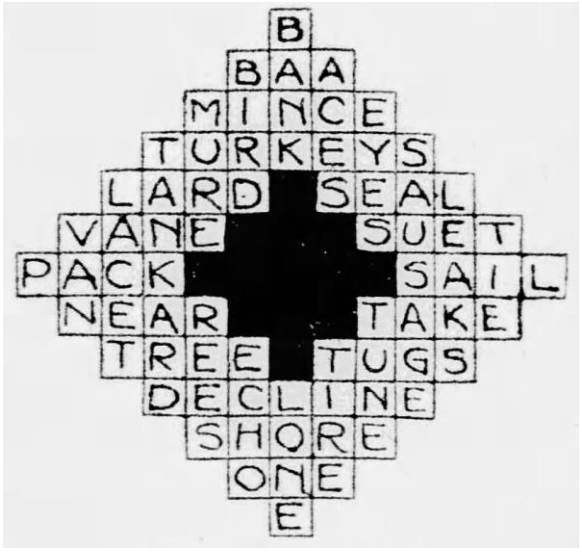
However, there was one exception to this in a specialized periodical, itself an artifact of a now-uncommon lifestyle. In "Thrills of the Trail," in *Fur News* 2, February 1916, George Zebrowski described a "very exciting encounter" with an "ordinary husky house tabby," possibly injured by a trap.

The cat attacked the author, who reported he'd had ailurophobia ever since:

> *He clawed my face until it resembled the original design for a crossword puzzle, and how my eyes managed to escape in the general melee is to me, as yet, an unexplained mystery.*

Zebrowski and the angry housecat were the first "pop-culture" appearance of crosswords: they'd be far from the last.

In **1917,** Arthur Wynne's weekly *FUN* crossword chugged along but inspired no imitators, only syndicators. Despite later misleading claims, *The Boston Globe* did not publish its own crosswords in 1917. However, it did join the *Salt Lake Telegram* and the aforementioned *Tacoma Daily Ledger, Pittsburgh Press,* and others in syndicating *FUN.* Then as now, syndicated papers published puzzles after their original release—with the delay varying from paper to paper.

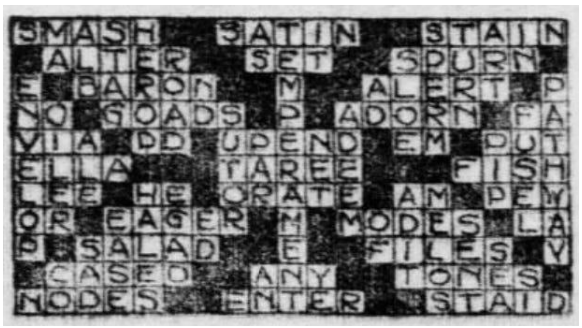


Solution to the 1916-1917 "Santa Claus puzzle."

So it wasn't until January 7 that Tacoma readers experienced a puzzle "sent in by a very distinguished contributor—none other than old Santa Claus himself. As might be expected, most of the words and definitions have a decided flavor of Christmas." The last clue was "What no one should be at Christmastime" (LONE). Some answers—MINCE, TURKEYS, LARD, SUET, TANKARD, SAUSAGE—remind us that Christmas used to be more of an *eating* holiday.

The puzzle was a throwback in more ways than one. Perhaps because of the complications of syndication, 1917 featured no other holiday-themed compositions, and non-square crossword designs were growing rare. Of the 52 syndicated

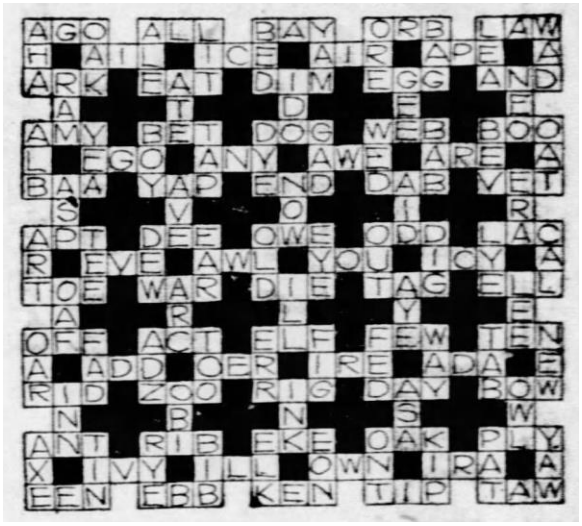
puzzles I surveyed for the year, 45 were squares or near-squares. (About a third of those featured diamonds inside the larger square design.) Four of the exceptions, like the rectangle at right, came out near the beginning of the year.



A rectangle measuring 19 x 11 squares.

With words like TAREE, SUTOR, and ADEEM as load-bearing central entries, this grid is nowhere near what modern editors would find kosher. Even the experimental designs from this period often didn't show great technical skill.

The Edwin A. Lyon creation at right is interesting, though, as it may be the only puzzle published in major venues to use nothing but three-letter answers. Almost all its choices are common vocabulary today.



This "chainmail" design is nothing but three-letter words.

Of surveyed puzzles, exactly half (26 of 52) were anonymous—assuming Santa Claus didn't really write that one puzzle. Seems like he'd be a little busy around Christmastime. Of the remainder, 7 had women's names, 11 had men's, and 8 used initials, e.g., "R.P. Harvey." (Three also listed themselves as "Mrs." or "Miss.")

A strong uptick in male names toward year's end might reflect the United States joining the war. Some of those constructors may have been bored and anxious soldiers seeking distraction before deployments—or after them. One author was listed as "Private Arthur R. Gormley, Post Hospital."

Mentions of "cross-words" outside *FUN* were still more likely to mean "words spoken in anger" than "puzzles solved for fun." There was, however, this curious citation in the *Sidney Herald,* February 7. Part of a series of "School Notes" provided by Mae Pearce, it's a window into an older and sometimes delightful world:

> *The pupils of seventh grade had a party at the school house Thursday evening, from 5:30 to 8:00, all the members with the exception of Carolina Cuttenea and Vera Pettit attended. Refreshments consisting of lemonade, sandwitches [sic], pickles, cake, oranges, and apples were served at 6:15. For amusement, they played winkum, cross-words and silly answers, animal and flinch. About eight o'clock the party broke up, everyone declaring they had a good time, even if the indoors party had been substituted for a sleigh ride. Quite a number stayed to put the room in order for the next day's school.*

"Winkum, cross-words and silly answers, animal, and flinch." A little research clarifies *some* of these. Flinch is *not* the schoolyard game, sometimes verging on bullying, in which one makes threatening moves and punishes anyone who flinches—it's a card game created in 1905. Winkum is a variant on musical chairs.

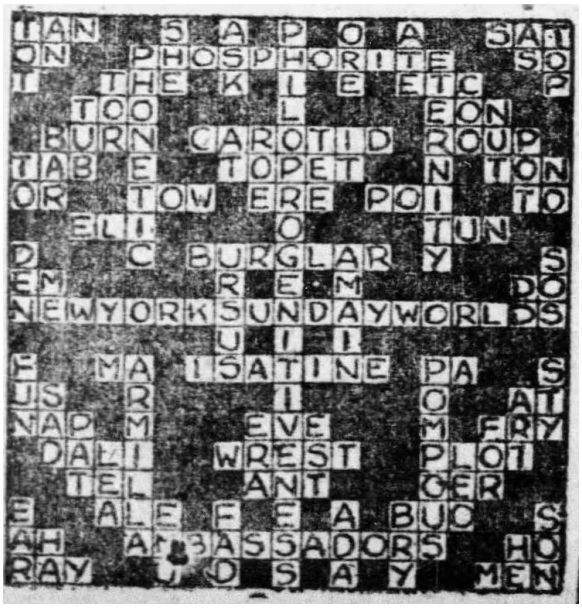
But "animal"? Is that a version of Twenty Questions where the "animal, vegetable or mineral?" question comes pre-answered? A version of Werewolf? More-specific charades?

And "cross-words and silly answers"? A lot of modern crosswords have silly answers. Did this game anticipate that practice? Hard to say, but it probably had little to do with any puzzles published in *FUN*. Unless TAREE, SUTOR, and ADEEM were popular slang terms among schoolchildren of the 1910s.

In **1918,** there was still only one regular crossword feature—syndicated from the *New York World*—but it continued a slow bloom, showing up in more and more papers. While it offered an escape from the war, the war left a noticeable fingerprint on it.

The theory that the war led to more male crossword designers has some supporting evidence in 1918 bylines, which included 6 female names, 15 male ones, and 7 listed with an initial in place of a first name. The remaining puzzles were anonymous. Some papers reproduced these bylines like *The Pittsburg Press*, whereas *The Boston Globe* did not.

The puzzle was now reaching a wider audience in syndication than in its original venue. So it was ironic that this March grid included NEW YORK SUNDAY *WORLD*S as an answer, clued with "They bring you *FUN."* Note the demanding nature of the other long answers: PHOSPHORITE, AMBASSADORS, PHILOPROGENITIVENESS ("The love of offspring").



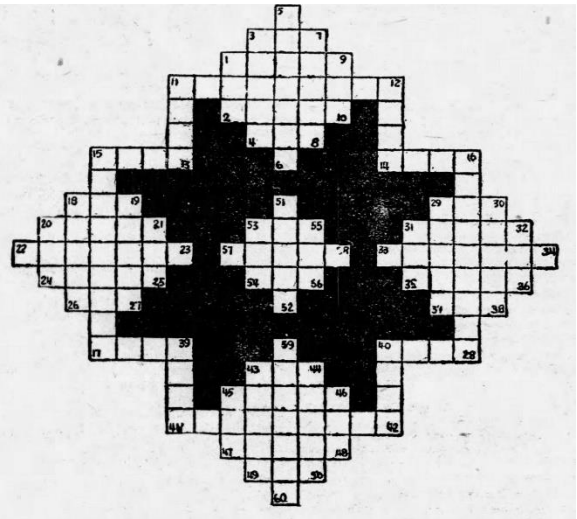
This grid celebrated The New York World, *though some syndicated papers' readers had never even heard of it.*

The Los Angeles Evening Express included this note before becoming the latest outlet to syndicate *FUN*'s crossword:

> *A Feature June 9: The Cross-Word Puzzle will afford lots of fun for nimble-witted youngsters and grownups. Work out a set of answers and see how they correspond with the correct definitions published a week later in the Magazine Section.*

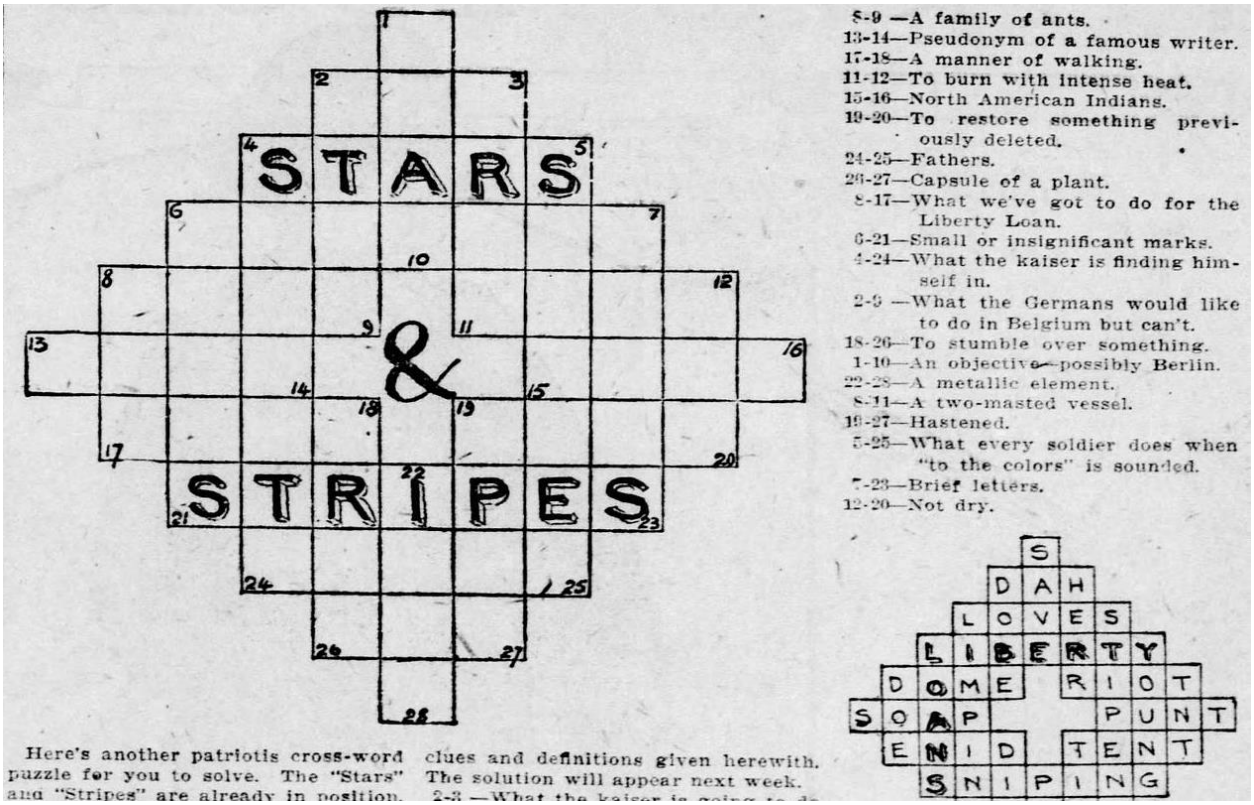
This may be the first instance of the puzzle being advertised as “fun for the whole family.” On the one hand, *FUN* featured cartoons, simpler puzzles, and jokes likely to delight “nimble-witted youngsters.” On the other, it’s hard to imagine even the nimblest-witted 1918 schoolchildren rattling off PHILOPROGENITIVENESS in everyday speech. “Mother won’t let me try on her lipstick! What a beastly lack of philoprogenitiveness!” (Or perhaps not so hard as all that.)

The crossword wasn’t just expanding its audience; it was expanding its format. After seeming to settle down into staid squares and diamonds-in-squares, it got more creative again as 1918 wore on. More circular designs came into fashion—both within squares and on the exterior—and late in the year, exterior diamonds made a reappearance.



Creative designs like this one made a comeback in 1918.

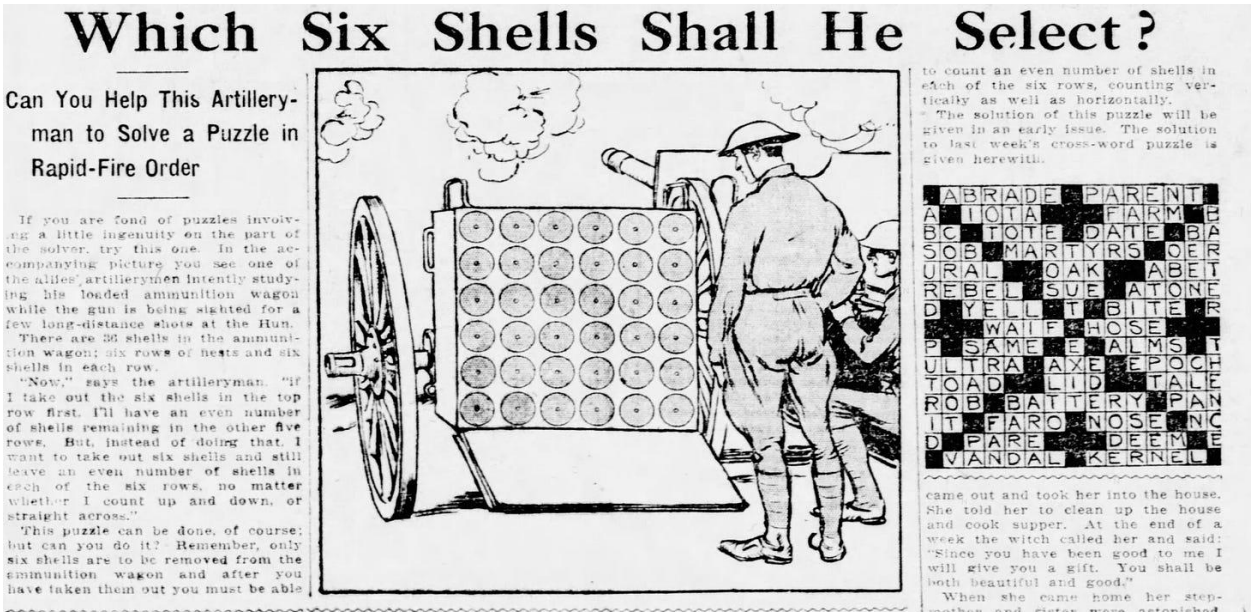
Two diamonds, probably authored by Arthur Wynne, were connected with wartime propaganda. The words auto-filled into the grids were STARS and STRIPES in one, LIBERTY/LOANS in the other. Liberty loans were what later generations would call “war bonds.”



In wartime, the puzzle banged its patriotic drum as loudly as anyone.

Another grid, published in the September 1 *Globe,* had the 1-Across clue, "Denoting adherence to the greatest country in the world." Answer: AMERICANISM. The prior 1-Across had been BATTLE. (A later grid included the word ARMISTICE.)

Despite the crossword's popularity, *FUN* replaced it with other puzzles on at least two occasions in 1918. One was a maze that superficially resembled a crossword. One was a geometry puzzle with an obvious wartime influence—and more than one right answer. (Remove six artillery shells so that an even number remains in each row and column.)



Which Six Shells Shall He Select?

Can You Help This Artillery-man to Solve a Puzzle in Rapid-Fire Order

If you are fond of puzzles involving a little ingenuity on the part of the solver, try this one. In the accompanying picture you see one of the allies' artillerymen intently studying his loaded ammunition wagon while the gun is being sighted for a few long-distance shots at the Hun.

There are 36 shells in the ammunition wagon; six rows of nests and six shells in each row.

"Now," says the artilleryman, "if I take out the six shells in the top row first, I'll have an even number of shells remaining in the other five rows. But, instead of doing that, I want to take out six shells and still leave an even number of shells in each of the six rows, no matter whether I count up and down, or straight across."

This puzzle can be done, of course; but can you do it? Remember, only six shells are to be removed from the ammunition wagon and after you have taken them out you must be able to count an even number of shells in each of the six rows, counting vertically as well as horizontally.

The solution of this puzzle will be given in an early issue. The solution to last week's cross-word puzzle is given herewith.

came out and took her into the house. She told her to clean up the house and cook supper. At the end of a week the witch called her and said: "Since you have been good to me I will give you a gift. You shall be both beautiful and good."

When she came home her step-

It wasn't clear quite how this geometry problem would help win the war, but it was the thought that counted.

Other notable experiments of the year included two separate puzzles that offered *additional* clues and answers within the areas normally marked as negative space. One did this with designated thickly bordered white squares. The other, at right, may be the only mainstream crossword that ever required a white pencil to solve it.

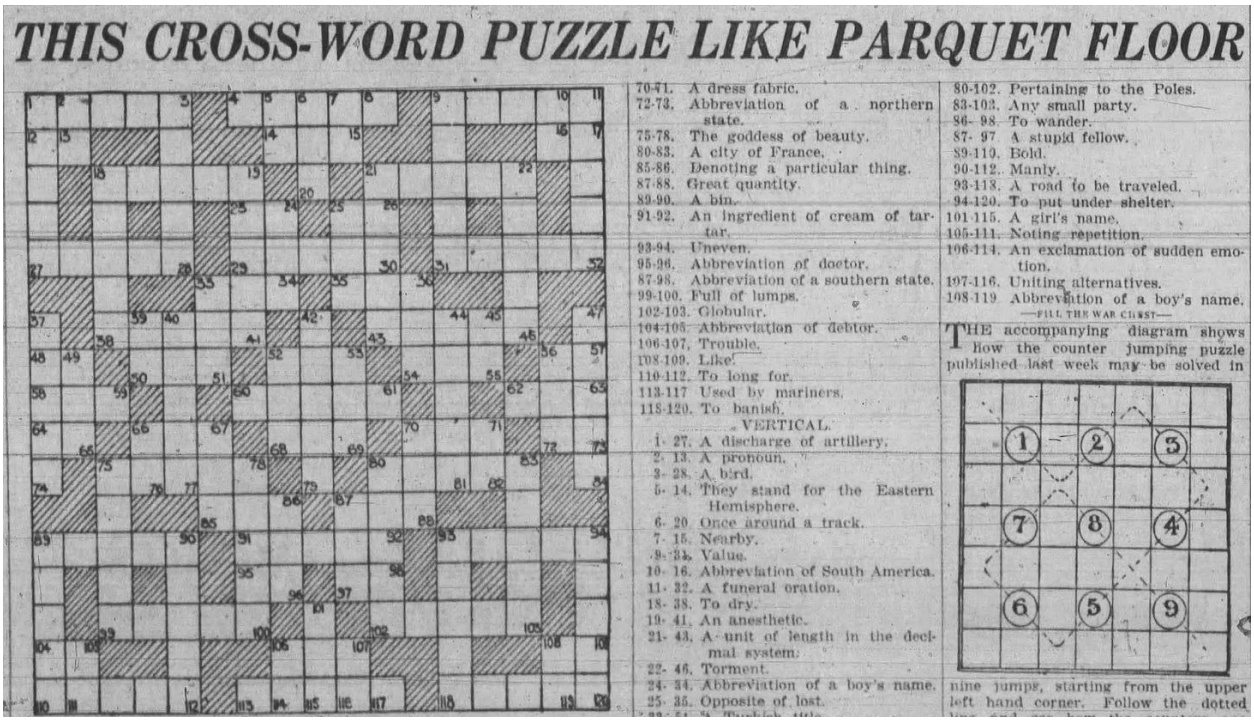
This puzzle required solvers to write on the black squares, an experiment that was apparently never repeated.

The cultural impact of crosswords remained small. Outside of *FUN,* citations for "crosswords" around this period often continued to mean "angry words" or "acrostics." One exception is a school report from *The Jefferson County News,* Jun 27, 1918:

> *During this second year of our high school work each member of our class has delved*

into the depths of Algebra and have learned the Binomial Theorem and are now completing the "crossword puzzles" officially called Logarithms.

This citation shows crosswords entering the consciousness of younger people, as well as that they weren't considered "easy" puzzles. Even well-educated teens who knew their way around the binomial theorem used them as a metaphor for tough challenges.



THIS CROSS-WORD PUZZLE LIKE PARQUET FLOOR

70-71. A dress fabric.
72-73. Abbreviation of a northern state.
75-78. The goddess of beauty.
80-83. A city of France.
85-86. Denoting a particular thing.
87-88. Great quantity.
89-90. A bin.
91-92. An ingredient of cream of tartar.
93-94. Uneven.
95-96. Abbreviation of doctor.
97-98. Abbreviation of a southern state.
99-100. Full of lumps.
102-103. Globular.
104-105. Abbreviation of debtor.
106-107. Trouble.
108-109. Like.
110-112. To long for.
113-117 Used by mariners.
118-120. To banish.

VERTICAL.

1- 27. A discharge of artillery.
2- 13. A pronoun.
3- 28. A bird.
5- 14. They stand for the Eastern Hemisphere.
6- 20 Once around a track.
7- 15. Nearby.
9- 31. Value.
10- 16. Abbreviation of South America.
11- 32. A funeral oration.
18- 38. To dry.
19- 41. An anesthetic.
21- 43. A unit of length in the decimal system.
22- 46. Torment.
24- 34. Abbreviation of a boy's name.
25- 35. Opposite of lost.
80-102. Pertaining to the Poles.
83-103. Any small party.
86- 98. To wander.
87- 97. A stupid fellow.
89-110. Bold.
90-112. Manly.
93-113. A road to be traveled.
94-120. To put under shelter.
101-115. A girl's name.
105-111. Noting repetition.
106-114. An exclamation of sudden emotion.
107-116. Uniting alternatives.
108-119 Abbreviation of a boy's name.

—FILL THE WAR CHEST—

THE accompanying diagram shows how the counter jumping puzzle published last week may be solved in nine jumps, starting from the upper left hand corner. Follow the dotted

Early puzzles' abstract designs inspired many comparisons to other aspects of modern life.

At the end of the year, a syndicated puzzle ran with a long intro in some papers:

One of the teachers in a Brooklyn public school announced the other day that she was encouraging her pupils to solve this Magazine's puzzles because of their educational value. She said that by solving them herself she had become acquainted with a great many dictionary words of the existence of which she had not been aware. All of which is very flattering to the puzzle editor and his growing army of contributors who keep on sending in cross-word puzzles faster than he can find space to publish them.

However, these puzzles are not to be considered from the standpoint of educational value alone. They are to amuse as well as to elevate, and to take our minds off war prices, income taxes, the high cost of living, and other disagreeable subjects for a few moments, or maybe hours, each week.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

The fighting may have ended by early **1919,** but puzzles weren't yet done with wartime fervor. This maze appeared in the crossword's place in syndicated outlets starting on January 12, inviting solvers to "drive" the ex-kaiser and his son out of Holland:

Can You Drive the Hohenzollerns Out of Holland?

Now, everybody give a hand. Do you see the black square with the identification letter "A" alongside, asouth of theZuider Zee? That is where we are to suppose the Hohenzollerns, father and son, ex-kaiser and former crown prince, took refuge after the former German emperor had declined to leave Holland when invited to do so.

You have got to drive him from "A" along the roads all the way into Belgium. It is no use driving him into Germany, because if you did that they would only drive him back into Holland. So we've got to get him into Belgium, where the allies will take care of him.

Starting from "A," follow one of the roads as indicated by the double lines. The round marks are towns. You mustn't jump from one road to another. Stick to one road all the way until you get him into Belgium. If you lose the way or find yourself going around and around in circles you had best go back and start all over again.

ZUIDER ZEE

NORTH SEA

BELGIUM

GERMANY

TRY THIS ONE.

There are several ways in which strange juggling may be done with figures and numbers. Ask some one, whose age you do not know, to write down secretly the date and month of his birth in figures, to multiply this by 2, to add 5, to multiply by 50, to add his age last birthday and 365. He then hands you this total only, and from this you subtract 615. This reveals to you at a glance his age and birthday.

For example, suppose he was born April 7 and is 23. He sets down 74 (the day and the month), and multiplies them by 2, total 148; 148 plus 5 makes 153; 153 multiplied by 50 makes 7,650; 7,650 plus 23 (his age) makes 7,673, and 7,673 plus 365 makes 8,038. If from this you subtract 615 you have 7,423, which represents to you the seventh day of the fourth month—23 years of age. This rule works out correctly in all cases.

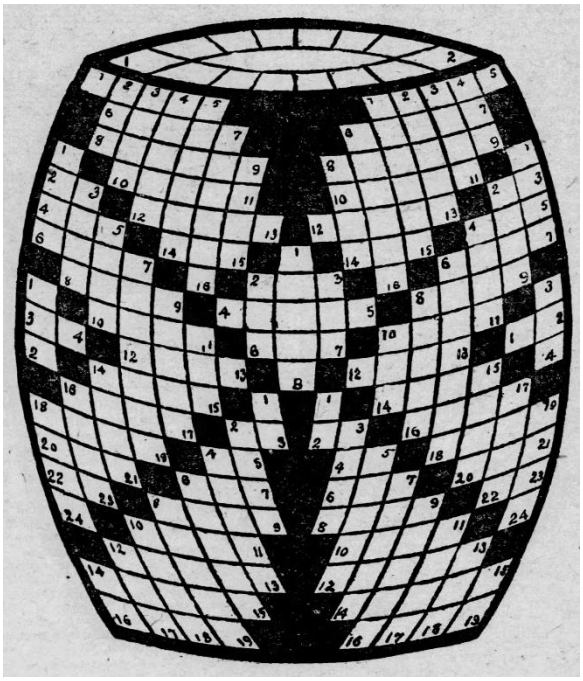
SOLUTION TO CHRISTMAS DINNER PUZZLE.

The $100 spent by the philanthropic society in providing 100 turkeys, chickens and squabs for the Christmas dinners of 100 families and lonely bachelors, as explained in last

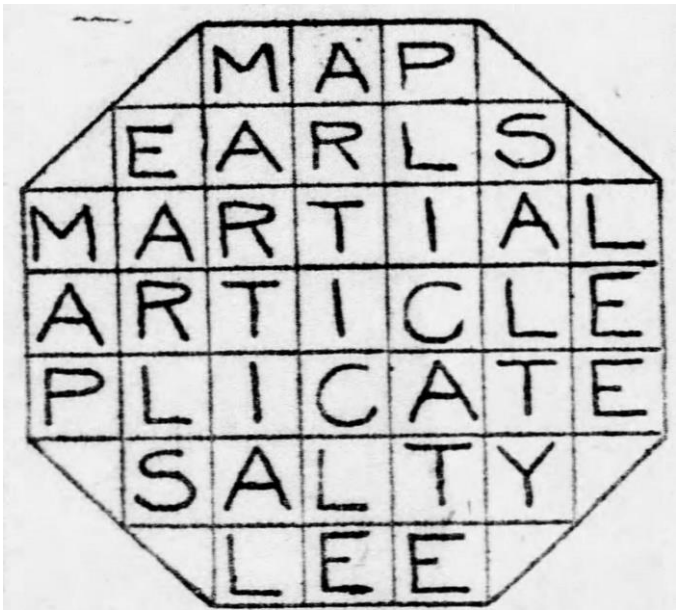
Like the "shell" puzzle above, this maze ran in the crossword's place.

It's hard to imagine a modern puzzle being so whimsical about hated foreign enemies. ("OSAMA is hidden in this word find, kids! *Can you spot him?")*

The Boston Globe declined to play this game. After starting the year a couple of weeks behind *The Pittsburg Press* and other syndicated outlets, it fell further and further out of sync with them until *FUN* designs like the next page's "barrel" appeared in the *Globe* months apart from its showing up elsewhere. (Prohibition was ratified that year, wasn't it? Hmmm.)



A barrel shape (really a set of mini-puzzles)...

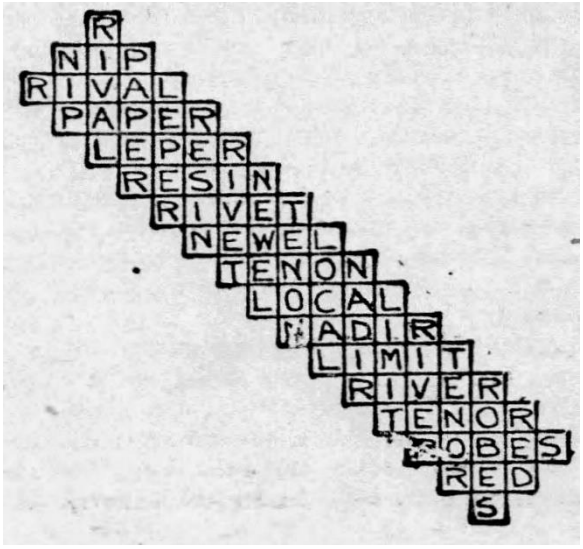


...and a word octagon, an older puzzle form with a new coat of paint.

FUN's most notable innovations were on a smaller scale. On January 26, it produced the "Combination Cross-Word/Word Square" at top right.

Hard to believe its word-loving readers didn't know what an *octagon* was, but then, stop signs of the era were triangular, so they weren't yet making that shape part of everyday life.

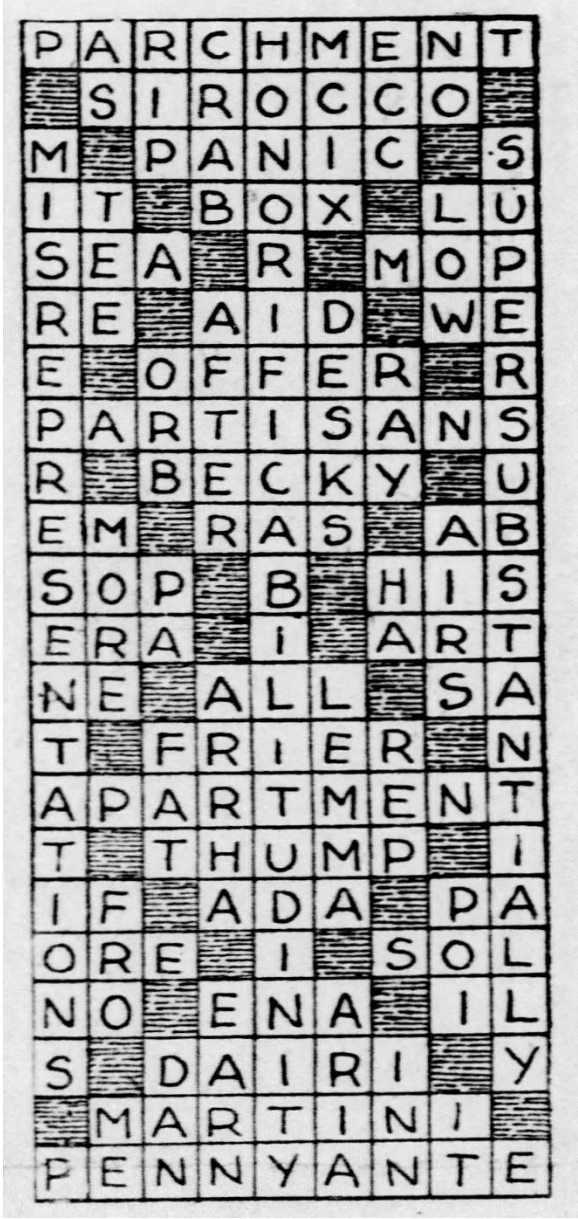
A few weeks later, a "continuous diagonal diamond" emerged. Like the word octagon, it was "single," reading the same across and down. Readers submitted their own "continuous diamonds" in response, like the one at right.



An example of the "continuous diamond" format.

Another grid was part normal crossword, part continuous diamonds, and with some answers reading *up* instead of down.

The feature found other ways to excel. The October 12 grid on the next page introduced itself like so: "Today's cross-word puzzle contains what is believed to be the largest in the English language, besides several other words which are quite long enough for all practical purposes." The so-called largest word was HONORIFICABILITUDINITY (22), clued as "Honorableness." The "several others" were two, MISREPRESENTATIONS and SUPERSUBSTANTIALLY (both 18).



A puzzle with some impressively (but not unsurpassably) long answers.

Since most people use "several" to mean more than two and *antidisestablishmentarianism* (28) was already in dictionaries in 1901, are these claims SUPERSUBSTANTIALLY MISREPRESENTATIONS of HONORIFICABILITUDINITY? Discuss. However, there seems little room for doubt that these were the longest words yet featured in a *crossword.*

Bylines appeared less often. Six constructors appeared female, due to female-seeming names or indicators like "Mrs.," "Miss," or "her" in the descriptions. Six seemed male for similar reasons. Others were indeterminate or anonymous. Some papers (now including *The Pittsburg Press)* dropped bylines even when they appeared elsewhere. *The Boston Globe* kept all its puzzles anonymous, though at least many of them were coming from the syndicated *World,* same as everyone else's.

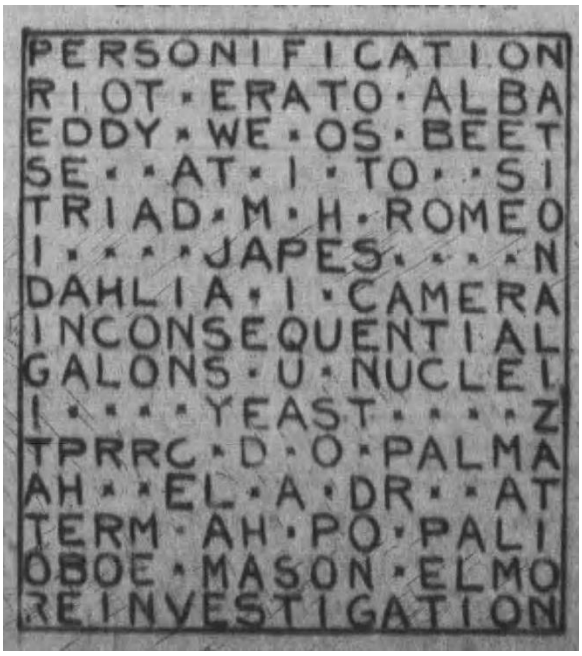
Introductions were sometimes perfunctory: "Here is another interesting crossword puzzle, as you will doubtless learn when you begin to experience it" (June 6, *Pittsburg Press).* "Today's crossword puzzle...possibly may acquaint you with one or two unfamiliar words" (August 3, *Minneapolis Journal).*

Possibly may acquaint you? *One or two?* Whoa, don't overpraise it, it's a crossword, not a cancer cure! Occasionally, some editorial charm seeped in (July 13, *Buffalo Courier Express):*

> *Miss Gertrude Franke of Okanchee, Wis., contributes this week's cross-word puzzle. Some of us may have been cultivating an idea that all the good puzzle makers reside in the East, on account of the preponderance of puzzle contributions received from that section of the country. But after you get through with to-day's problem you will always remember Okanchee as the home town of one of the most intricate cross-word puzzles you ever tackled.*

As if that wasn't enough of a blow to the East Coast elite, this followed a month later:

The one big distinguishing feature of this week's crossword puzzle is that it contains five 15-letter words. Once you get them the remainder of the puzzle may be easy to solve—perhaps. Captain F.W. Steffen of the United States Army sent in this puzzle. Maybe he started work on it somewhere in France. He completed it in the demobilization camp at Columbus, Ohio, where he probably got hold of a most powerful dictionary. Anyhow, here's the puzzle.



An early 15x15 design composed (and promoted) as a product of a military captain's idle hours.

No, no, keep speculating, August 17 *Minneapolis Journal!* We have to know whether Captain Steffen will ever find true love! *We're invested now!* (Steffen's design—possibly the first 15x15 crossword—is at right.)

The Los Angeles Evening Express promoted the crossword with "Unsolicited Testimonials" which put more focus on the solvers, starting February 23:

I have derived much pleasure from solving the many cross-word puzzles appearing in your Sunday editions. -- H.J.R.

To be without one of your crossword puzzles on a Sunday is just as bad as being marooned on a deserted island. -- M.J.F.

A 1919 puzzle solution—or is it seven different solutions?

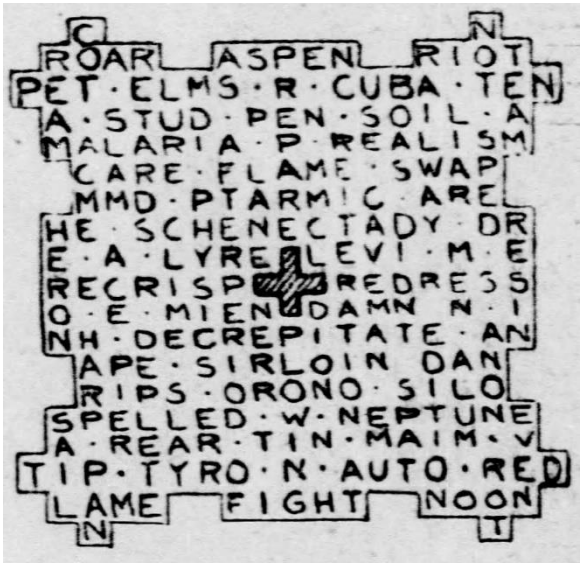
As you can see, 1919 crosswords didn't prioritize "all-over interlock": grids like the one at right were divided into sections, with no relation to each other beyond their squares looking pretty together. This was more like solving seven little puzzles than one big one, but most solvers at the time accepted this as just how things worked.

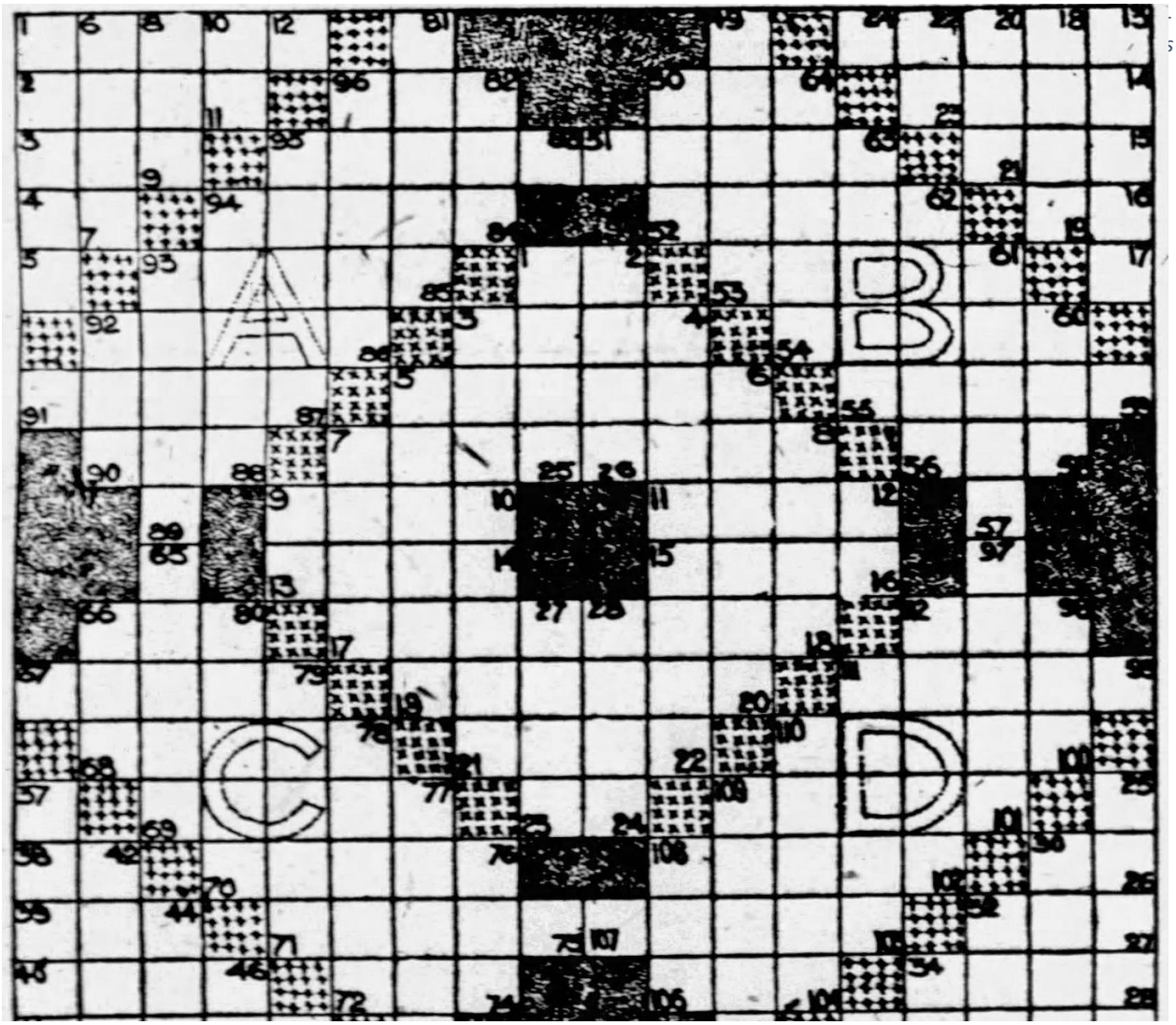
So the November 9 composition on the next page promoted its interlock as an unusual feature: "…every word in this 96-word puzzle connects with some other word at one or more points, there being no isolated corners, centers, or other portions." While not the equal of modern themelesses, the middle is more "wide open" than most grids of the period.

As these answers' chaotic, handwritten format might indicate, it was still a disordered time for the crossword. Some syndicators misprinted grids or clues, sideways or upside down, or skipped weeks altogether.

These little flubs resulted in angry letters, but they didn't cost the crossword too much popularity. Still, at the end of this year and into the next, *FUN* would commit a more serious lapse.

And for that, it *would* pay a price. More on that in the next issue. ■





This 1919 grid combined normal crosswords, "continuous diamonds," and "vertical" answers that went up instead of down. All part of the 1910s' experimental vibe!

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.

Julia Hintlian and Giovanni DiRusso's "'Its Own Nature, Knowledge, and Form': Paronomasia in the Syriac Translation of Evagrius of Pontus's Great Letter" in *Vigiliae Christianae* discusses the use of wordplay in the translation of the religiously significant text. https://brill.com/view/journals/vc/aop/article-10.1163-15700720-bja10103/article-10.1163-15700720-bja10103.xml

Y.N.T. Khashan and W.Y. Salman's "Vocal Rhythm" from *Journal of Ecohumanism*, *4*(1), 2377 – discusses how we read aloud and the role that features like alliteration and internal rhythm play in its presentation. https://ecohumanism.co.uk/joe/ecohumanism/article/view/6060/6155

Josaiah D. Peeler's "Graphematically Constructing Siege Works: The Function of the Phrases הָרָעָב בָּעִיר and בָּעִיר רָעָב in the Hebrew Bible," is another Biblical study from the *Scandinavian Journal of the New Testament.* https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/09018328.2025.2457972

James Beavis, BSN, BA, and Timothy Goncer, BSN's "Aspirin and Aspiration: Improving swallow screen compliance with alliteration as a cognitive cue" in *Stroke* 56(Sup. 1) is about the use of one weird alliteration trick to get stroke patients taking their medicine. https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/abs/10.1161/str.56.suppl_1.TP147

Bianca-Georgiana Munteanu's "Structures, Techniques, and Strategies of Advertising Discourse" in *LiBRI. Linguistic and Literary Broad Research and Innovation* 12(1) concerns the ways the language of advertising works, which requires some deciphering participation on the part of the audience. https://www.edusoft.ro/brain/index.php/libri/article/view/1703/2050

Tom Roberts' "Voice, Rhyme, and Aesthetic Injustice" from *The British Journal of Aesthetics* deals with the fact that rhymes are regional—and pushing people to read work in a "voice" that's not their own is one way for one region to assert power over another. https://academic.oup.com/bjaesthetics/advance-article/doi/10.1093/aesthj/ayae051/7972661

Oyturayeva Mavluda Bahodir qizi explored "The Role of Song and Rhyme in Teaching English Phonetics at the Initial Stage" for *International Conference on Multidisciplinary Science* 3(1).

Says Who?: A Kinder, Funner Usage Guide for Everyone Who Cares About Words by Anne Curzan is a lively, humorous guide to the language as it's spoken today.

Pronoun Trouble: The Story of Us in Seven Little Words by John McWhorter won't be available until April, but it seems sure to be a lively tour through a changing (and now controversial) division of language. ■

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.

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. In his spare time, Matt records solution videos to Puzzmo puzzles through their Insider program: check out his videos here https://www.youtube.com/@PuzzleswithMatt-lx8cu. Matt is the author of "Autograms" (Issue #4 of TJoW), "Puzzle Poetry" (Issue #5 of TJoW), and "Goof-Offs" (Issue #7 of TJoW), as well as "Headbutts" which appears in this issue. 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.

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.

Jeff Grant: Contributed to *Word Ways,* 1977-2020, published *The Palindromicon* (1991 + 2002) and *Dictionary of 2-Letter Words,* NZ Scrabble champion 16x, 3rd in World Champs 1995, *Guinness Book of Records* for longest palindrome and shortest pangram, manual 10-squares.

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

President's Name, Nicknames:

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. Andrew Jackson
3. George Washington
4. Thomas Jefferson
5. Dwight D. Eisenhower
6. John Fitzgerald Kennedy
7. Richard Nixon
8. Calvin Coolidge
9. William Henry Harrison
10. Zachary Taylor
11. Ronald Reagan
12. Franklin D. Roosevelt
13. Theodore Roosevelt
14. William Howard Taft
15. James Buchanan

President's Name, Middle Names:

1. James Abram Garfield
2. Lyndon Baines Johnson
3. Rutherford Birchard Hayes
4. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
5. John Fitzgerald Kennedy
6. Warren Gamaliel Harding
7. Barack Hussein Obama
8. James Knox Polk
9. Richard Milhous Nixon (whence the character Milhouse. Bart's best friend on *The Simpsons)*
10. Joe Robinette Biden

Certified Proof:

The last four lines of the final stanza include allusions to the Yes songs "Going for the One," "Roundabout," "Close to the Edge," "Owner of a Lonely Heart," "Awaken," "The Revealing Science of God," "Starship Trooper," "Wonderous Stories," "Perpetual Change," and the album title *Tales from Topographic Oceans.*

Headbutts:

Recently acquired (3-3)	***NOW OWN***
No charge for a coral structure (4-4)	***FREE REEF***
Possible response to "Are they closed?" (4-4)	***NOPE, OPEN***
Paving professional's creative output (3-3)	***TAR ART***
Every pain (4-4)	***EACH ACHE***
Worked sales at a bygone car dealership? (4-4)	***SOLD OLDS***
Result of a single mother remarrying (3-3)	***DAD ADD***
Displeasure at a bad drive (5-5)	***RANGE ANGER***
Irritación y Malestar (5-5)	***SPAIN PAINS***
Hang at a slant (6-6)	***DANGLE ANGLED*** ■