The Last Word is an independent publication for tournament SCRABBLE® players. It is not affiliated with Hasbro, Mattel, the North American SCRABBLE® Players Association (NASPA), the Word Game Players Organization (WGPO), or the National SCRABBLE® Association (NSA). Our mission is to provide content of interest to all SCRABBLE® players, so please let us know if there are topics you would like us to add. We welcome contributions: stories, artwork, etc.

For the time being, we are hoping to provide this Newsletter at no charge; however, since it is a 100% volunteer effort, we would appreciate any donations. Advertisers are encouraged, too. If you would like to have The Last Word emailed to you, please send a request with your email address to CorneliaSGuest@gmail.com and we will add you to our mailing list.

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From the Editor

It’s hard to believe that it was just a year ago, on July 1, 2009, that NASPA took over tournament SCRABBLE® from the NSA. July was also the month that I prepared the first Newsletter with Aaron Daly, published as the *NASPA Tournament SCRABBLE® Newsletter*. In early August the first NASPA-run Nationals was held in Dayton, Ohio, with 495 players.

Today NASPA is still the main organization behind tournament play in North America. But it is not alone. WGPO now has almost two dozen tournaments scheduled for the coming year. “Meetup” groups are running tournaments and hosting hundreds of SCRABBLE® clubs for more casual players. The NSA website lists more than 650 North American casual clubs, plus more than 270 libraries that host SCRABBLE® events. The NSA site records 51 unrated fundraiser tournaments held thus far this year, plus 16 School SCRABBLE® tournaments. Unrecorded casual competitions abound.

The *NASPA Tournament SCRABBLE® Newsletter*, launched a year ago, was discontinued last September by the NASPA co-heads; it reemerged as *The Last Word*, the independent publication you are reading. Readership is strong, with 1000+ subscribers and 3000+ readers each month.

The second NASPA-run Nationals will be held in less than a month in Dallas, TX. Thus far just over 300 players have entered (though in all fairness, entries do not close until July 21st, and many players wait till the last minute to enter tournaments).

Players have been asking whether tournament SCRABBLE® is in decline. Are fewer tournaments being held? Are fewer players competing? Are players attending fewer tournaments each year?

Seth Lipkin has provided the following statistics from cross-tables.com. Note that figures from 2010 are through June 10 only, so are less than half of the expected number (excepting the number of players who have played in any tournament, which in all likelihood will not be doubled).

### # of tourneys by year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of tourneys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>176 (to 6/10)</td>
</tr>
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### # of player-tourneys by year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of player-tourneys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>11576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>11746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>13373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>13275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5618 (to 6/10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### # of players played in any tourney

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1967 (to 6/10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at these figures, it seems that numbers are fairly stagnant. In 2007 there was a large rise in number of player-tournaments; that number has been declining somewhat, as have the number of players who have played in any tournament. The number of tournaments held went up by 39 in 2008, then down by 6 in 2009; 2010 looks to be in the same range.

What I don’t see from these figures is growth. This surprises me, since I believe interest in SCRABBLE® has grown enormously in the past few years, with Internet SCRABBLE® drawing large numbers of players and SCRABBLE® Meetup groups proliferating across the country. Part of the recent decline might be attributed to the economy. Attending tournaments is expensive.
Occasional posts to cgp have bemoaned the many one-day tournaments that are offered, suggesting that these tournaments draw players away from the large multi-day events. I question that premise. While some players have chosen to go to back-to-back one-day tournaments rather than a single multi-day event, I think the majority of players who go to one-day events would not have attended a multi-day tournament that weekend. The larger tournaments are much more expensive to attend, plus they require players to devote more days to their hobby. As a mother of three teenagers, I find it far easier to fit a one-day event into my schedule and budget. I enjoy the large tournaments; however, for the expense of travel, hotel, meals, and entry fees, I can have a smaller excursion with my family.

Nationals—North America’s biggest event, open to NASPA players from any country. Attendance has definitely taken a slide. In the last ten years numbers have hovered around 600-700, with a peak in 2004 with 837 players playing in New Orleans. The Players Championship (2007) and first NASPA NSC (2009), both in Dayton, had the weakest recent attendance—in the 400s.

2000 (Providence): 598  
2002 (San Diego): 696  
2004 (New Orleans): 837  
2005 (Reno): 682  
2006 (Phoenix): 625  
2007 (The Players Championship, Dayton): 451  
2008 (Orlando): 662  
2009 (Dayton): 495  
2010 (Dallas): ?

The last Nationals I attended was in Orlando, which was expensive but fun—my non-playing sons were able to visit the Universal Theme Park while my daughter and I played SCRABBLE®. We all enjoyed exploring the area in the evenings. The year before I’d gone to Dayton for The Players Championship, and though I’d liked playing so many games, I had little desire to return to the area in 2009. For the expense of a Nationals, take me somewhere new.

I don’t believe tournament SCRABBLE® is in a decline; that it is holding fairly steady during a period of economic recession says a lot for the game. But I don’t think it’s a good time to be asking players for higher entry fees—or to pay extra money to join an organization before playing in a tournament. Chris Cree offered free 6-month NASPA memberships to all the 5th-8th graders participating in this year’s National School SCRABBLE® Championship. Connie Creed is letting new players pay a reduced entry fee to come to her next Philadelphia tournament. WGPO is offering free membership to players in their tournaments. These are all ways current SCRABBLE® players are encouraging new players.

As the economy improves, I believe tournament SCRABBLE® will start to grow again. In the meantime, support those tournaments you’ve enjoyed in the past, as well as new ones with new directors. And think about suggesting tournaments to your friends—it’s a daunting prospect for players to come on their own. Remember what attracted you to tournament SCRABBLE®, and think of ways others can enjoy our world.

Cornelia Guest
Emails to the Editor

Thanks to the many readers who continue to send such great feedback to The Last Word. Should you wish to comment on any of the Newsletter articles—or make suggestions or corrections—please send your emails to Cornelia Guest at CorneliaSGuest@gmail.com. Snail mail is also welcome at 6A Barry Avenue, Ridgefield, CT 06877. Emails chosen for publication may be edited at the editor’s discretion.

Hi Cornelia,

Very sad and upset to hear about Rita's passing . . . she was always a friendly face when we met up either in the UK or in the States. Some fond tributes to her as well.

Robert Richland

Greetings from Thailand!

Seems like yesterday. Rita was here, exuberantly competing in the Championships in Bangkok, and wildly cheering me on in the finals.

Rita Norr Provost recently succumbed to cancer after a long fight.

Some of you from overseas might recall her friendly smile and fierce competitiveness across the board, especially at the World Championships.

I am proud and honored to institute "Rita Norr - Lady of Steel Award" in this year’s National Scrabble Championships in Dallas. The winner of Division One will receive a SamBoard Steel in honor of Rita, a Woman of Warmth, a Lady of Steel.

Rita has been the only female winner of the US Scrabble Championships.

Some of her favorite photographs by Ann Sanfedele, our mutual friend, can be found here:

http://tinyurl.com/24tx7yl

More info on the award at the NASPA website and at http://www.SamTimer.com

--Sam Kantimathi
Meet Our Columnists
The Last Word would not be what it is without our terrific columnists. This month’s featured columnist is Joe Bihlmeyer, from Durham, Connecticut. He is the creator of “Video Joe.”

JOE BIHLMEYER
Houston Bayou Bash 2010
by Judy Newhouse

NASPA Club #359 threw a party in the beautiful ballroom of the Houston Marriott North, Greenspoint, over Memorial Day weekend. Well, it was really a SCRABBLE® tournament, but with all the food, special prizes, and Houston hospitality, it felt like a party! Sixty-four players from Canada, Louisiana, North Carolina, California, New Mexico, and Oklahoma joined us Texans for eighteen games.

Twenty great door prizes including gift cards, gift baskets, watches, games, coffee mugs, and SCRABBLE® tiles were given out before the tournament started. Five other players received cash prizes and gift baskets in the Hotel and Early Entry drawings on Sunday. Cash prizes for the tournament totaled $4500. Winners of High Play in each division won tile bags donated by “Incredible Tile Bags” plus a set of SamTiles. “Incredible Tile Bags” is the new tile-bag business of Carolyn Boyd and Debbie Scholz, members of our club.

Division A played a double round robin. Darrell Day held the lead for the first five rounds, but after Round 10, Ben Withers had the lead by one. After Round 14, the end of the second day, Darrell had recovered the lead, 11-3, to Ben’s 10-4. Ken Kasney and Orry Swift were close behind at 9-5. Darrell and Ken each won three out of four games on the final day. Final results were Darrell, 1st Place, 14-4, Ken, 2nd Place, 12-6, Ben 3rd Place, 11-7.

Division A Winners
Ben Withers 3rd, Darrell Day 1st, Ken Kasney 2nd

(photo courtesy of Carolyn Boyd)
There were 26 players in Division B. Six-foot-six Matt Dewaelsche, the tallest NASPA player in the United States (that we know of), was paired up against two of the shortest players, four-foot, eleven-inch Hope Kennedy and five-foot, one-inch Lila Crotty. Hope proved that size doesn’t count, beating Matt 397-368. Matt and Lila tied their game and delivered their tally slip together, each holding one end. Since the division was so large, we paid seven places. Prize winners were 1st Place, Carl Davis, who was Gibsonized, 14½-3½; 2nd Place, John Dalton, 13-5; 3rd Place, Becky Dyer, 12-6; 4th Place, Nancee Mancel, 12-6; 5th Place, Liz Gottlin, 11-7; 6th Place, Robin Lewis, 11-7; and 7th Place David Adams, 10-8.

6’6” Matt Dewaelsche and 4’11” Hope Kennedy at the Word Judge computer (photo courtesy of Judy Newhouse)

Division B Winners
Liz Gottlin 5th, Nancee Mancel 4th, Becky Dyer 3rd, Carl Davis 1st, John Dalton 2nd, Robin Lewis 6th, David Adams 7th (photo courtesy of Carolyn Boyd)
Division C prize winners were 1st Place, Michael Donegan, 13-5; 2nd Place, Mariah Smith, 12-6; 3rd Place, Waheed Thompson, 12-6; and 4th Place, Cynthia Hughes, 12-6. This was a hotly contested race, which came right down to the wire. Waheed and Cynthia each won three of their last four games to put them in the money. The most impressive play I saw throughout the tournament came from this division. Pat Sanchez had just played the phoney, *EYELINE, and her opponent, Gertrude Savadge, hooked all seven letters, playing the word REMOTES.

Division C Winners
Cynthia Hughes 4th, Waheed Thompson 3rd, Mariah Smith 2nd, Michael Donegan 1st (photo courtesy of Carolyn Boyd)

7-letter overlap play by Gertrude Savadge (photo courtesy of Judy Newhouse)
Carolyn Boyd, Division D, won her first 14 games! It looked like she was unstoppable, but Lindsey Dimmick beat Carolyn twice on the final day. Lindsey won three of her last four games, and Carolyn lost three of her last four. It was a close race, but Carolyn prevailed. Final results – 1st Place, Carolyn Boyd, 15-3; 2nd Place, Lindsey Dimmick, 13-5; 3rd Place, Deborah Hsi, 12-6.

Club #359 provided coffee on Sunday and Monday; finger sandwiches, chips, and pretzels for lunch on Sunday; and bagels and Danish on Monday morning. Club members also donated their time, talents, money, and goods to keep our expenses down, allowing us to give generous prizes.

As we were cleaning up after the tournament, we discovered Division A player Kevin Leeds’ board set-up, clipboard, and sweatshirt. I called his cell phone to see if he was still at the hotel. He was in his car heading back to Austin, but he quickly turned around and came back to the hotel. He swept in, grabbed his belongings and beamed, "I feel like I won something after all!"
Portland Back-to-Back Collins Tourneys

by Nick Ball

Dave Wiegand of the Portland SCRABBLE® Club organized two one-day Collins tournaments on Saturday, June 5 and Sunday, June 6, played to NASPA rules with a 5-point challenge penalty and rated under the NASPA SOWPODS rating system.

Being in Victoria but always up for a tournament where I can play properly (well, OK, better than TWL), I drove down. The tournaments on each day started at noon, which was great because it allowed some time to go sightseeing in the morning, so I now know that the Columbia River Gorge is well worth seeing, and that it's dangerous to spend too long in Powell's bookstore without a large budget!

Attendance was perhaps a bit lower than what was hoped for, but winning would be no easy task:

Name Days Rating (NASPA/NASPA SOWPODS/WESPA)

Dave Wiegand Sa Su 2032/2009/2038
Carl Johnson Sa 2021/2014/1950
Nick Ball Sa Su 1687/1795/1978
Travis Chaney Sa Su 1768/1722/1891
Jesse Wornum Sa Su 1319/-/-
Chris Mazucca Sa Su 1242/-/-
Kathy Sutrov Su Su 1206/-/-
Josh Standig Sa 1004/-/-

(A NASPA SOWPODS newbie starts with their NASPA rating.)

Chris, Kathy, Jesse, and Josh were trying a Collins tourney for the first time. I hoped the somewhat bimodal distribution of players wouldn't put them off Collins forever.

The venue on Saturday was Round Table Pizza, providing an unlimited buffet lunch of assorted toppings and soda to drink. On Sunday we were at the club’s regular meeting place of the Lucky Labrador Brewpub (photo to left), which provided a wide repertoire of interesting beers to try (except for my having to drive back to Port Angeles to be back at work Monday).
Despite starting at noon, there was plenty of time for 7 rounds on Saturday, and 8 on Sunday. The results are up at http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/tourneys/2010/csw/xt/05/. I managed to get the best of it on Saturday, then Travis beat everyone by 2 games on Sunday,

My concern that the new players would be put off forever proved unfounded, with each player agreeing that the increased choice of words made the game more enjoyable to play. The possibility was discussed of a Collins club being formed in Portland.

Carl has also posted some thoughts about the tournament on his blog, and there is a link to an annotated game which has a great setup play.

Overall, a fun weekend.

Here are some comments from some of the other players. First, the Collins newbies:

Chris Mazucca:

“Thanks, Dave, for getting the ball rolling. As best I know I’m a convert to Collins; been playing it on ISC and it’s great.”

Kathy Sutrov:

“Thanks for the opportunity to try Collins SCRABBLE®-I loved it! I was very enthused about it at last night’s club and heartily endorsed it. Anytime you direct another one, count me in!”

Josh Standig:

“Despite being severely outclassed, it was great to get a chance to play games against such excellent players. Like other folks, I really enjoyed the tournament and my first foray into the Collins world. I hope that you do get a Collins (or partially Collins) club going in Pdx.... Thanks very much to Dave for organizing this and thanks to Nick for his great and highly useful cheat sheet of key Collins-only words. I've been enjoying studying it. May the Waqf be with you!”

and the Collins “veterans”:

Dave Wiegand:

While it was slightly disappointing that we couldn’t attract more players, I think it was a good first step. It was great to see some intrepid Collins newbies giving the big wordlist a try, and enjoying the
challenge. We will definitely try some sort of tourney again before too long, and hopefully the local ranks will soon be swelling with Collins enthusiasts. There's also been some talk of starting a club in town.... From a directorial standpoint, I'd just say that putting on a Collins event is no more difficult than putting on an OWL event. For directors of existing events, it's quite easy to add a Collins division, and I heartily encourage them to do so. Once people get over their initial reluctance to try something new, most everyone enjoys the exciting new possibilities offered by Collins, and we all win."

Travis Chaney:

"... it is long overdue for North America to join the rest of the world in accepting Collins and therefore playing with the same word list. Since apparently there is not going to be another vote among the members of NASPA, the right thing to do is just to start organizing our own tournaments (NASPA Collins or WESPA) using Collins and the 5- or 10-point-per-word penalty. The WCWCWC in Ashland, Oregon and the Collins division in Phoenix are recent examples of sufficient interest to draw persons from all over the country. Players who are playing with Collins for the first time almost always express a positive experience. If tournament organizers offer decent class prizes as an incentive for first-timers, the ranks will grow quickly."

See you next time!

467-333, Nick Ball over Carl Johnson on Saturday, annotated at http://www.cross-tables.com/annotated.php?u=6309#0, see also http://chaithedog.livejournal.com/61694.html

532-499, Travis Chaney over Nick Ball on Sunday.
Third Annual Three Rivers Revival
by M. W. Schroeder

Fifty three players from thirteen states and Canada gathered in Pittsburgh, PA on June 12-13 for the Third Annual Three Rivers Revival.

Saturday morning began with the standard announcements and doggerel, (actually some of the standard announcements were made in doggerel). Everyone was invited to help themselves to the coffee and homemade cookies provided.

Clay Daniel took a commanding lead in division A on Saturday, while the lead in divisions B and C changed almost every round. At the end of seven games Clay was a game ahead of the pack in A, eleventh grader Eric Yoder in B (who was playing up a division) was 21 spread points ahead of Linda Hoggatt, and Eileen Narvin was 30 spread points ahead of Sam Weaver in C. All five players had a 6-1 record for the day.

A dozen of the regional directors held a brief meeting to sketch out their proposed tourney schedule for the next six months, and then the after hours room was open for the players. In addition to more SCRABBLE®, there were games of Texas Hold ‘Em, Quiddler, and what is reported to be the first ever game of Collins Woadwage.

All three divisions were very competitive on Sunday with the division winners decided in the last game. Clay opened up a two-game lead in division A, but Jason Keller hung on to second place during the morning games and won his last two games against Clay to win the tourney and his first division A title. The lead in division B changed almost every round with Linda Hoggatt winning the last game against Gary Perman to take the division. The lead in division C changed back and forth between Sam Weaver and Eileen Narvin several times on Sunday, but Sam won the last game against Eileen to take division C.

Congratulations to Jason, Linda, and Sam on their wins. A special mention to Rebecca Lambert who (from a last place 2-5 -545 start on Saturday), won all her games on Sunday to finish in the money in division A. And the future of SCRABBLE® is very bright if the two youngsters who played are any indication. Eleventh grader Eric Yoder (playing up a division), finished third in division B. Eighth grader Johanna Balzer, fresh from the School SCRABBLE® Championships and playing as the unrated bottom seed in her first regular tournament, finished fourth in division C.

Our annual raffle for cross-tables (and tips for the cookie
brigade) raised $115. Thanks go to Joe Larson and Martha Mills who donated prizes for the raffle, and to all the bakers who brought homemade cookies. Thanks as well to all the players who made the Third Annual Revival such a success.

A picture of Joe Larson’s SCRABBLE® tile sculpture was first prize in the c-t raffle.
Michigan Madness
by Carol Ravichandran and Dan Stock

Congrats to all, especially division winners Evan Berofsky, Frank Lee, and Sharon Simo!

The twelfth annual Michigan Madness Scrabble tournament was held at a new location somewhat north of its usual geography. The Gateway Center Holiday Inn in Flint, MI (scouted out and properly negotiated by Jason Idalski) provided us with spacious tables and gorgeous lighting to hoist the tiles. The 56 player field was the smallest ever, and the extreme difference in sizes of the divisions made for a wide range of pairing systems. Leave it to Mr. Dan Stock and his magic computer to handle all the action.

We were all saddened to hear that Paul Epstein would not be attending due to yet another death in his family. We are all thinking about him and offer our support.

Despite the large number of tournaments that I have directed over the years, I believe that each and every one possess a unique set of occurrences and special moments that are the making of sweet memories and/or urban legends; stories to be traded around the proverbial SCRABBLE® campfire during lunch breaks and SCRABBLE® barbeques, the yarns becoming increasingly more incredible as time speeds by. It was a special moment when "our star," the Divine Ms. S, walked into the tournament room to be with her SCRABBLE® family after an extended absence. It was such a nice surprise to see Stella (aka Cheryl Cadieux) again as we were overcome with emotion. Didn't take long for her to be hot on the trail for the inside scoop of the tournament.

It was also nice to see Sonia Lyda and her brother Bruce visiting from New York. We enjoyed our time with her in Michigan and wish her well in the Big Apple. Also making an appearance after many years was Andrew Allie. He is soon to be retired and promises to play more SCRABBLE®.

I would like to thank everyone who donated a door prize. We had so many wonderful items; it really ended up being a rather eclectic collection. I noticed a trend in the popularity of two of the offerings. A lot of prize slips were in the box for the designer sunglasses, but the most were in the box for the rather large bottle of Absolute Vodka. The first helps protect you from the sun and the second protects you from your inhibitions. Electric Peach (aka Pocket Pair Patty, aka Pat Hardwig) was more than happy to cart the booze away.
The competition was quite fierce and chances were taken. In a critical game late in the tournament in division B, I happened to spy our own WWTBAM contestant bounding into the air right after a trip to the word-judging computer like a kangaroo on speed. Rob Long's Hail Mary play of ROARINGS was deemed acceptable and it sealed the game victory. Regis would have been proud!

If you have ever been to Michigan Madness karaoke, you know how supercharged the atmosphere is. Creativity rules at the Love Shack! Dan Stock created another one of his karaoke puzzles which proved to be a bit out of reach of us mortals and clever as hell. His board diagram game situations coupled with witty lyrics take genius to a whole new level. He also unveiled his "Werewolves of NASPA" (see video below), replete with references to big muckymucks within the organization and lots of howling.

My offering this year was SCRABBLE® Face, performed by Lady Haha and Mister Marmalade. Jason's never-ending saga of his newspaper-published expurgated word was relived in his performance, sung to the tune of "Hey Jude." The team of Linda Hoggatt and Carolyn Easter performed a pair of witty ditties. One was a country song I don't know and the other was a tribute to Pink's "So What." FoxHound offered up their rendition of "Friends In Low Places." Hoping others will post same.

We were also entertained by classics of past years. It was so nice to enjoy the new non-smoking atmosphere. The fact that the house cab was Redwood Creek did not hurt either.

Division C was womanhandled by our resident Thespian, Sharon Simo. She lead the pack from start to finish. Avon was definitely calling.

In Division B, Frank Lee was anything but mediocre. Thoreau Maskin's Mighty M is hanging his head in shame. The old boy has still got it!
Division A of Michigan Madness or Evan Berofsky’s private ATM, as it is also known, played out in an all-too-familiar fashion. Not only did he manage to best everyone for the fourth time at this fine event, he also carted away the coveted IAMS Cat Food bag as a door prize. Fortunately, it remained within the borders of US as it was given to Four Digit Hubble’s stately cat, Cosmo. Those border guards just have too much to do without worrying about WofMD within bags of cat chow.

The apres-tourney dinner was at the palatial Logan's Roadhouse, as fine as any eatery you will find with peanuts on the floor. During a 20-minute wait for a table, several of our party partook from the large barrel of salty shelled legumes just begging to be consumed. One of us, whose initials were Stephen Knapp, outate the competition. After finally being seated in a bit of a tight booth, Mr. Knapp was having peanut withdrawals. At this point, Mr. Michael Stafford of Columbus Ohio felt compelled to begin his restaurant career by fetching a pail of Elephant Nectar and plunking it down in front of the Knappster proclaiming: "There you go, STEVE!" End of quote. The waitress split the tip with him after the meal.

Thanks again to each and everyone of you who attended the event as participants are so precious these days. It means a lot to me.

Carol Ravichandran
Tournament Director
Northville, MI
“Werewolves of NASPA”

Here's a parody I sang (complete with a long red wig, werewolf nose, muscle shirt, and a SCRABBLE® tie) at the karaoke night at Michigan Madness. Sing it yourself to the tune of "Werewolves of London" by Warren Zevon. (Those unfamiliar with the tune can check out the original at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MRu8N2K0NY.)

Parodists were in fine form this year. I hope to see a lot of other parodies posted as well.

-- Stocky

I saw a werewolf with a Texas license on his car
Cruising through the streets of Vegas in the sun
He was heading back to SCRABBLE® Superstars
Forklifting out blackjack cash he’d won
Ah-oo! Werewolves of NASPA! Ah-oo!
Ah-oo! Werewolves of NASPA! Ah-oo!
If you hear him howling around your tourney door
Better not let him in
Little ol’ lady got expurgated late last night
Werewolves of NASPA again
Ah-oo! Werewolves of NASPA! Ah-oo!
Ah-oo! Werewolves of NASPA! Ah-oo!

He’s the heavy-handed guy who stole our SCRABBLE® pie
And says he’s just a mere wholesaler
You better stay away from him
He’ll tax your prizes, Jim!
Heh! But I’d like to meet his tailor
Ah-oo! Werewolves of NASPA! Ah-oo!
Ah-oo! Werewolves of NASPA! Ah-oo!
Well, I saw John Chew down with Mary Rhoades
Doing the Werewolves of NASPA
I saw John Chew Junior down with Mary Rhoades, unh!
Doing the Werewolves of NASPA
I saw a werewolf writing a SCRABBLE® app down at Nationals
And his code was perfect … nunh!
Ah-oo-oo!
Werewolves of NASPA! Heh! Draw tiles … Ah-oo!
Werewolves of NASPA!

I've heard at least four reasons why I might have written these lyrics:

1) To poke fun directly at the NASPA leadership;
2) To poke fun at those who demonize the NASPA leadership by implying that their criticisms are about as meaningful as calling the NASPA leadership werewolves;
3) To make a witty and intellectual commentary on some of the issues facing our subculture; or
4) Just to have fun.

Two of those reasons are accurate. I hope that each of you will believe that my reasons are the two that are most in line with your particular preferences.

And yes, lest there be any doubt, there was a full moon that night.
Tournament Results 6/1-30

TORONTO ON CAN 6/2-16
1. Mark Edelson
2. Lee Fingold
3. Jackson Smylie

AKRON OH (LCT) 6/3
1. Daniel Stock

ATLANTA GA 5/29-6/1
1. John Luebkemann
2. Chad Harris
3. Russell Stewart
4. Chris Sitler

CAMPBELL CA 5/29-6/1
1. Jeff Widergren
2. Michael Baker
3. Lynda Shayne
4. Irene Averell

HOUSTON TX 5/29-6/1
1. Darrell Day
2. Carl Davis
3. Michael Donegan
4. Carolyn Boyd

CALGARY ON CAN 6/5-6
1. Evan McIntyre
2. Darlene Kendel

Tampa FL 6/5
1. Elspeth Abbate

BERKELEY CA 6/6
1. Jerry Lerman
2. Raghuram Jonnalagedda
3. Pat Diener

LAGUNA WOODS CA 6/6
1. Rachel Knapp

BAYSIDE NY 6/12
1. James Curley
2. Tim Bryant
3. Karol Degen

CHICAGO IL 6/12
1. Chad Harris
2. Bruce Shuman
3. Hannah Lieberman

FORT LAUDERDALE FL 6/12
1. George Rogers
2. Pat Feigin
3. Cheryl Levin

KANSAS CITY MO 6/12-13
1. George Asaka
2. Robert Frick

MISSISSAUGA ONT CAN 6/12
1. Tony Leah
2. Lynda Wise
3. Shauna Petrie
4. Vimalan Raviraj

PITTSBURGH PA 6/12-13
1. Jason Keller
2. Linda Hoggatt

CHARLOTTE NC 6/13
1. Winter
2. Bruce Shuman

GUELPH ON CAN 6/13
1. Yvonne Lobo
2. Jackson Smylie

WILMINGTON DE 6/13
1. Robert Linn
2. Brian Galebach
3. Daniel Milton
4. Nancy Hanley
5. Gary Skowronscki
6. Linda Oliva
7. Martin Gold

24TH BRAND’S CROSSWORD GAME KINGS CUP BANGKOK THAILAND 6/17-20
1. Pakorn Nemitrmansuk

NASHUA NH (NAST) 6/18
1. Winter

VICTORIA BC CAN 6/18
1. Jill Turney
2. Andrew Twiddy
3. Marilyn Batchelor

DALLAS TX 6/19
1. Chris Cree
2. Bryan Pepper

EDMONTON AB CAN 6/19
1. George Latis
2. Ben Settle
JUNE TOURNAMENT RESULTS

KNOXVILLE TN 6/19-20
1. David Gibson
2. Mark Schmidt
3. Trish Harrop
4. Jacob Cohen

NASHUA NH 6/19-20
1. Rod MacNeil
2. Mic Barron
3. Helena Gauthier
4. Bets Brown

VICTORIA BC CAN 6/19-20
1. Dean Saldanha
2. Ruth Hamilton
3. Jordan Campbell

NORTHERN SPAIN TOUR 6/24-7/1
1. Daniel Goodwin
2. Alice Goodwin
3. Colleen Shea

MOUNTAIN VIEW CA 6/20
1. Isaac Apinidi
2. Ian Chesser

FORT LAUDERDALE FL 6/25-27
1. Winter
2. Sandra Bloom
3. Dawn Doyle

FLINT MI 6/26-27
1. Evan Berofsky
2. Frank Lee
3. Sharon Simo

SEATTLE WA 6/26
1. Chris Grubb
2. Aditya Kini
3. Kolton Koehler

LEXINGTON KY (LCT) (WGPO & NASPA) 6/27
1. Marc Broering
2. Brad Wade

RENO NV EARLY BIRD 1 6/30
1. Jeff Widergren
New Faces

Since our last issue, 17 new faces have competed at NASPA tournaments. Four of these players finished in the top two of their divisions at their first tournaments: Ian Chesser, who won Division 2 at the Mountain View CA tournament on June 20th; Lee Fingold, who won Division 2 at the Toronto ON CAN tournament June 2-16; Anne Delor, who was second in Division 3 at the Flint MI tournament on June 26-27th; and our featured “new face,” Jenifer Champagne, who came in second in Division 3 at the Charlotte, NC Early Bird tournament on June 12th.

Jenifer Champagne

Jenifer Champagne and her husband, Marc Handler, both played at the Charlotte, NC Early Bird Tournament on June 12th, with Jenifer finishing a strong second in Division 3 in her tournament debut. The tournament was a short drive from Huntersville, where Jenifer and Marc live.

Jenifer, a registered nurse, has been playing SCRABBLE® since she was 7 or 8 with her mother’s side of the family. She’s played with SCRABBLE® groups in Fresno, CA; Portland, OR; and Charlotte, NC, though not regularly. While she doesn’t play SCRABBLE® online, she does average 10 simultaneous games of Lexulous (the replacement for the now-defunct Scrabulous).

Jenifer was intimidated and anxious about playing in the tournament. “I worried that I would commit some SCRABBLE® tournament faux pas and my opponent would call ‘DIRECTOR!!!’ Thankfully that did not happen; all my opponents were gracious and courteous. After the first game I felt at ease and began enjoying the game for the sake of the game.”

To prepare for the tournament, Jenifer and Marc reviewed 2-letter words and J and Z words on their way to the tournament. She offers the following suggestions to other new players: “Know like the back of your hand all your 2- and 3-letter words; all your J, Q, X, and Z words; all your vowel dumps. After every game run your game and words through a word finder. Notice what bingos you missed, anagrams of bingos you did get, front and back hooks for every word played.” Jenifer also suggests new players get a timer and print out tracking sheets. “Play every game at home as though you are in a tournament so time constraints and tracking become second nature.”

Jenifer and Marc don’t have specific plans for their next tournaments. They will be hosting a local SCRABBLE® get-together in a few weekends at their house. “We may travel to Ashville or Atlanta sometime in the future for a tournament, but only a short one. Even one full day of SCRABBLE® is a bit ambitious for me. I prefer 4 or 5 games at the most.”

In addition to SCRABBLE®, Jenifer likes crosswords and “hanging out with nature--fungi, mosses, and insects especially.” She is also “old-cat-lady-like obsessed” with rabbits; she has two pet Miniature Dutch house bunnies: Tiberius and Janey Bee. Jenifer likes to read science for the layperson--mainly magazines and books--and graphic novels, and she enjoys cartooning and crafting with her friends.
Welcome to Jenifer Champagne, Ian Chesser, Lee Fingold, Anne Delor, and the following other new faces:

**TORONTO ON CAN 6/2-16:** Chukwuma Nwanunobi  
**BERKELEY CA 6/6:** Chris Bassett-Bouchard  
**MISSISSAUGA ONT CAN 6/12:** Eyinsan Agbeyegbe  
**KANSAS CITY MO 6/12-13:** Brian Adams, Chris Komer  
**PITTSBURGH PA 6/12-13:** Johanna Balzer  
**WILMINGTON DE 6/13:** Calvin Wagner, Nathan Wagner  
**VICTORIA BC CAN 6/18:** Sandy Twiddy  
**KNOXVILLE TN 6/19-20:** Diana Bowen, Nancy Bowen, Philip Crosby  
**FLINT MI 6/26-27:** Margaret Revord
Club News

Larry Sherman, Editor

If you'd like your club to be considered for an article or if a newsworthy event has taken place at your club in the last month, please submit material to CorneliaSGuest@gmail.com.

SCRABBLE® in Ridgefield, CT

by Mike Ecsedy, Sharon Hawkes, and Cornelia Guest

Sharon Hawkes founded Ridgefield CT SCRABBLE® Club #603 in 2004; however, shortly thereafter she moved to Maine. The club was then directed by the late Rita Norr Provost and Mike Ecsedy. When Rita became ill, Mike took over full directing responsibilities. Because NASPA requires clubs to be headed by an official director, Cornelia Guest is the nominal director; however, Mike Ecsedy is the go-to person for all club activities.

The Eastern Regional SCRABBLE® Championships had been run in Danbury, CT, by Ron and Susi Tiekert for many years (1998-2008). This event created a cadre of SCRABBLE® players in western Connecticut with no official club. A non-official club, spearheaded by Ed Neugroschl of New Milford, met at Borders bookstore in Danbury once a month (that's as much as they would allow us), but once a month was not enough to sustain and create interest, and the club folded. Howie Greenspan started a club in the Fairfield and Stratford areas on Sunday evenings that was attended by western Connecticut SCRABBLE® devotees as often as possible, but we were looking to have a club closer to the Danbury area.

Sharon Hawkes, who was living in Ridgefield, CT at the time, writes: “After Howie Greenspan closed his club in Stratford, CT, I decided that it would save on commuting to simply start a club where I lived. So I took the club director test and scouted around for a place, learning that the Ridgefield CVS had a free meeting room at the back of the store that would work well. We started NSA Club #603 at the end of March, 2004, and started a Yahoo! group to keep everyone up to date on club happenings. Since Eric Chaikin's ‘Word Wars’ also came out that summer, it was a fun year for SCRABBLE®.”

The original regulars were Sharon, Keith Hagel, Mike Ecsedy, Steve Haraske, Kevin McCarthy, Roberta Borenstein, Thea McGivney, and our beloved late director, Rita Norr Provost. Rita provided excellent encouragement and tips on strategy to the up-and-comers, and was very patient and gracious with the newcomers. Sharon, Keith, and Kevin moved away, with Sharon handing the reins over to Rita and Mike. Soon thereafter Cornelia Guest and Alex Soule joined the troupe of regulars.

The Ridgefield club sponsored many one-day SCRABBLE® tournaments at the North Salem Lions Club, just across the border in New York State. Cornelia also became involved in School SCRABBLE®, and during the spring, many middle schoolers would attend club to play the adult members and hone their skills to prepare for the National School SCRABBLE® Championship. Among these players were 2007 National School SCRABBLE® champions Aune Mitchell and Matthew Silver.
Joe Edley agreed to come to club one Friday night in 2010 and then lead a seminar the following day as a fundraiser for the Nationals-bound Ridgefield Library School SCRABBLE® teams. This spring, School Scrabblers Amy Rowland, Jacob Litt, Stephen Winston, and Stephen Alt frequently joined our Friday evening band. We have also had occasional appearances by individuals who are club members in New Haven, New Jersey, Westchester, Albany, and California. If you are in the area some Friday evening, come join us in the back room of the CVS at 467 Main Street in Ridgefield, next to Ballard Park, beginning at 6:30 PM. Our yahoo group groups.yahoo.com/group/ridgefieldscrabble contains announcements about upcoming tournaments and any cancellations due to holidays.

The Ridgefield CT SCRABBLE® Club #603 meets on Friday nights at 6:30 p.m in the Community Room in the back of the CVS Pharmacy, 467 Main St., Ridgefield, CT (next to Ballard Bark). Contact: Mike Ecsedy, 203-775-0817, mikeecsedy@yahoo.com.

Happy 90th Birthday to Lya Korda of Club #276!

Lya Korda, a member of Lauderdale FL SCRABBLE® Club #276 since 1997, celebrated her 90th birthday on July 4th. Lya, an artist and designer, joined the NSA in 1995. In addition to SCRABBLE®, Lya also enjoys people with heart, brains, and patience. She has received awards in painting, fencing, javelin, and shotput. Says Club #276 director Sandee Bloom: “One of the most amazing things about Lya is that at 90, she can still touch the floor with both her hands from a standing position!” Happy Birthday, Lya!

The Lauderdale FL Scrabble® Club #276 meets Wednesday nights from 5:45-9:00 p.m. at Veterans Park, 7600 NW 50th Street, Lauderdale, FL 33351. Fee is $3 per week; score sheets and “cheat sheets” are supplied, but please bring sets and clocks. Contact Sandee Bloom, 954-726-6449, sandee@scrabbleclub276.com; or Larry Gradus, club335@comcast.ne.

Rachel Knapp new Club #350 Champion

Rachel Knapp won the SCRABBLE® Club #350 Championship Tournament over Maddy Kamen, the 2009-2010 Champion.

The Costa Mesa/El Toro/Aliso Viejo SCRABBLE® Club #350 meets Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays at different locations. For details visit their website at http://web.mac.com/jftsoi/Main_Page/2010_Face.html or contact Gary Moss, 949-510-1673, jftsoi@aol.com.
Philadelphia SCRABBLE® Club #516 location change

The final Wednesday night session at the Parent-Infant Center (at 42nd and Locust) was held on Wednesday, June 30. Matt Hopkins is working on another venue; check the website for details: www.phillyscrabble.com.

Is it a bird, is it a plane?

Albany NY SCRABBLE® Club #404 member John Morse was spotted by fellow hang glider pilots near Cooperstown, NY:

Lexington KY SCRABBLE® Club welcomes new co-director

Steve Bush joins John Spangler as co-director of the Lexington KY SCRABBLE® Club #637. As the final part of his apprenticeship, on June 27th Steve was the primary director at the club’s second local tournament, which was rated by both WGPO and NASPA.

*The Lexington KY SCRABBLE® Club #637 meets on Sundays from 3:00-6:00 p.m. at Perkins Family Restaurant, 2401 Richmond Rd., Lexington, KY. Contact: John Spangler, 859-533-1717, jmsinky@aol.com or Steve Bush, 859-358-4309, bush3262@yahoo.com.*
Unusual Find

Vince Castellano of Chevy Chase-DC Club #171 shares the following story:

It's not usually my style to relate cute stories from club, but this one is available technologically enhanced, so here goes. (The head title refers not to any play, but to an actual found object.

May 25, 2010, Chevy Chase Community Center, Washington, DC, Club 171. My last game of the evening I was paired against Adam Ruben. As was the case for club nights, I'm not playing that well, and Adam is taking advantage. Holding ACFIVY?, trailing by 29 and short on time as usual, I slap something down in hopes that Adam will not be able to shut down the board completely, while trying to maintain positive thoughts about what I'm going to pull: http://www.cross-tables.com/annotated.php?u=6390#22

Adam then drops a couple at 2A, admittedly a play lacking in defensive qualities (though if I were viewing from his perspective I might well have let my own guard down): http://www.cross-tables.com/annotated.php?u=6390#23

My positive thinking then paid off, as I found myself holding AHINVY?. Not normally tiles that spring to mind when you think Bingo possibilities, but the play practically flew onto the board on its own.
Just as I was about to get my pic, Dan Milton came by and announced, "Hey, I've got one of those in my car! My son found it by the side of the road and I've been carrying it around every since!" (Yes, maybe he was waiting for just such an opportunity.) Not being able to call to mind what the word meant, I struggled with the bizarre mental image of some exotic roadkill, but fortunately what Dan brought back from his car was entirely suitable for a club setting, and fits nicely on the board itself:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hryvnia</th>
<th>ˈhɪrivnɪə; -nɪə; hɛˈriv-</th>
<th>(also hryvnia)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>noun</td>
<td>the basic monetary unit of Ukraine, equal to 100 kopykas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIGIN</td>
<td>from Ukrainian gryvnya ‘3-kopek coin of pre-independent Ukraine,’ from Old Russian grivina ‘necklace, ring, coin.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tempe Club #609 celebrates sixth anniversary

Tempe AZ SCRABBLE® Club #609 celebrated its sixth anniversary on Sunday, June 13th. They have a celebration like this each year, with the session marking the beginning of the new "season." Each round features a special prize (this year we had a variety of prototypes, puzzle books, and tile bags) as well as various door prizes.

The Tempe AZ SCRABBLE® Club #609 meets Sunday afternoons from 1:15 to 5:00 p.m. at the Escalante Community Center, 2150 E. Orange St., Tempe AZ 85281. Contact: Laurie Cohen, 480-603-8437, tempe.scrabble@gmail.com. Website: www.tempescrabble.com.
New NASPA Club in Decatur, GA

Jeremy Jeffers recently started a new, officially sanctioned NASPA club in Decatur, GA: Club #802. Writes Jeffers: “Our first meeting was Monday, June 14. Eight players showed up, including the top four in GA, so I think it was a great start. I've also built a website for the club: http://decaturscrabble.webs.com/.”

The Decatur GA SCRABBLE® Club #171 meets on Monday nights from 5:45 to 9:45 p.m. at the Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore Street, Decatur, GA (one block from the Decatur MARTA station). Contact director Jeremy Jeffers, 646-345-2763, jeremy_jeffers@hotmail.com.

Thirty years of club SCRABBLE® in New Mexico

This summer marks the 30th year since Albuquerque NM SCRABBLE® Club #129, New Mexico’s first, opened its doors. To commemorate the anniversary, Pamina Deutch and Mike Baron opened their home for a celebration on June 26th in appreciation of “30 years of friendship, memories, and competition.”

The Albuquerque NM SCRABBLE® Club #129 meets on Tuesday nights at 6:00 p.m. at Denny’s, 2608 Central SE, Albuquerque NM. Contact: Nancee Mancel, 505-615-4737, nanceem@yahoo.com.

Like father, like son

On June 3 at the Winnipeg club, Richard Charach played SANTERA and TORSADE among his 9 bingos over 5 games. His father, Arthur Charach, had 4 bingos during the evening...including SANTERA and TORSADE.

The Winnipeg MB SCRABBLE® Club #948 meets on Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m. at the Kenaston Village Recreation Centre, 516 Kenaston Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Contacts: Julie Kading, 204-257-4742, jkading@shaw.ca; Harold Stone, 204-339-5460, h_stone@shaw.ca; Brian Williams, 204-489-0682 (evenings), thewall812@yahoo.com; Darlene McBride, 204-489-5418, darmc@shaw.ca. Website: http://members.shaw.ca/winnipeg_scrabble/
Am I justified in starting my opponent’s clock if, after winning a challenge, he writes down his score before drawing tiles?

The rules (IV.G. Completing a Turn) clearly state that one must write the score down before drawing tiles. The rules also allow a player to start his opponent's clock if there is a delay. This, however, is not a delay since it is mandated procedure.

Jan Dixon has been playing competitive SCRABBLE® for 32 years and in tournaments for 29 years. She has been a member of the Rules Committee since its inception. She divides her time between New York City with her fiancé, Aldo Cardia, and Delaware, where her children and grandchildren all reside.
When Tim Michaels first started playing SCRABBLE® at the age of seven, his dad, Tom Michaels, let him play with nine tiles. By the time Tim was thirteen, he was down to eight tiles. After beating his Dad five times in a row, they both agreed he should play with seven tiles from that point on. Neither Tim nor Tom had ever played in a tournament; they didn't even know they existed. That changed when Tom gave his son a copy of *Everything SCRABBLE®* for Christmas in December, 2004.

"I devoured that book," Tim recalls, and it opened up a whole new world. Tim and his father got on the Internet and googled clubs, having discovered their existence through the book, and learned that there was one in nearby Knoxville, an hour and a half away. They were, as so many are after their first taste of competitive SCRABBLE®, hooked. They also began attending the Asheville club, a two-hour drive away.

Tim’s first tournament experience was in June 2005 at the Knoxville tournament. He recalls being so nervous the night before that he couldn’t sleep. He lost his first game and then downed an entire pan of brownies – fueled by nerves – before starting his next game. He won the rest of his games that day. The second day of the tournament, he again lost his first game and then won his remaining games, earning him an initial rating of 1026 and a first-place finish. But that game – one of only two losses, not too shabby for his first tournament – still haunts him. He played QUASH, thinking he was safe because all of the S’s were out, but failing to realize that his opponent had a blank. She then played SQUASH to the triple word square, cementing her victory.

The entire tournament experience – both his solid overall performance and his costly mistake in his second loss – had Tim gunning for more tournaments. He began using Lexpert as a study tool, skipping the 3s and 4s and jumping right to the high-probability 7s. This omission came back to haunt him once he began playing in Division 1 shortly thereafter, because he soon realized he did not have a command of his 3s and 4s. The experts “could play whatever they wanted,” Tim recalls, “because I was too intimidated to challenge.” He went 0-10 in his first Div. 1 tournament in Athens, Georgia and came in last place in his next two Div. 1 tournaments. “I felt beat up,” Tim recalls, but he would make himself feel better by playing his father and beating him handily.

Win or lose, Tim enjoys feeling like he played well, knowing that the play he made was the right play. He also enjoys tricking his opponents into challenging a word, such as adding “LY” to “BARF” after a significant pause, so that his opponent thinks he is writing the adverb BARFLY rather than the noun, acceptable, one who frequents bars. He has also enjoyed the SCRABBLE® friendships he has developed, and the Knoxville Club has watched his progression – both in SCRABBLE® and in life – with pride and pleasure. His nickname at club is “Bubba,” stemming from a game he was playing with Rucchi Gupta when she muttered, “Oh yeah, Bubba,” after a particularly good play he made, and the entire club sported t-shirts once that proclaimed, “What would Bubba do?”
The club – and the Michaels’ ever-expanding circle of SCRABBLE® friends – was also generous in their support of Tim’s quest to play in the World Youth SCRABBLE Championship in December 2007 in Johor Bahra, Malaysia. It was Tim’s first trip outside of the United States and he describes the experience as “totally awesome.” He particularly enjoyed meeting folks from around the world and being surrounded by so many peers, rather than being one of only a handful of players under the age of eighteen. He was initially disappointed with his 25th place finish (out of 52 players), but looking back on the experience, it is the friends he made and the fact that the trip was shared with his father that made the tournament so memorable.

Tim continues to love to play SCRABBLE®, but he has several other competing interests. A former high-school gymnast, Tim formed a competitive gymnastics club at the University of Tennessee, which he now attends. He has also recently taken up the game of bridge, where he is once again the youngest player in the room. He says he appreciates the fact that with bridge, unlike with SCRABBLE®, there is minimal luck involved. Tim no longer studies SCRABBLE® words on a regular basis and is admittedly rusty, but he does not take the game – or his rating – too seriously. “Between 1500 and 2000,” Tim explains, “it’s pretty much the same thing as far as who you play.” Tim wants to maintain his high rating solely so that he can continue “to play good games against good people.”

About to start his junior year, Tim is a math major who hopes to do research or work for the NSA (not the SCRABBLE® NSA!) upon graduation. In July, he heads to New Zealand for a study-abroad program, where he looks forward to visiting some of the friends he made while at the WYSC. He plans to return home at the end of his study-abroad semester via Malaysia, where he hopes to play in the Causeway Challenge in December. Perhaps he will be able to make a play akin to his favorite ever, when he played the word SANTIZE, through an A and an I on the board, forming 6 or 7 parallel plays. “Everything had to fit perfectly,” Tim says, “and it did.” The same could be said for his life, where he manages to make time for SCRABBLE® and its related pursuits, but does not let the game consume him.

Katya Lezin lives in Charlotte, North Carolina with her husband and three children (Noah, Hannah, and Eliza). She is the author of KNIGHT SWAM, a young adult novel based on SCRABBLE®; Finding Life on Death Row, which profiles six individuals sentenced to death; and numerous articles for magazines and other publications. When she is not on the tennis court or competing in a SCRABBLE® tournament (two of her passions, which her husband would argue border on obsessions), she enjoys cooking, reading, and spending time with her family.
Diane’s DEFALTS
by Diane Firstman

Diane Firstman published her first book of DEFALTS, Generous to a DEFALT: Vol. 1-3, in 2006. Since then, she has published a second volume of her humorous alternative definitions to common (and not-so-common) words--DEFALTS Vol. 4--and selected DEFALTS have appeared in SCRABBLE® News and on the online SCRABBLE® discussion groups crossword-games-pro (cgp) and OSPD. The Last Word is pleased to offer the following selection of DEFALTS.

NONBANK: a savings and loan whose fees eat up all of your savings

NONBITING: canine characteristic wished for by anyone ever menaced by a pit bull

NONBONDED: a martini that is stirred, not shaken

NONCAKING: resisting sweets and desserts

NONCOKING: being against diarchy

NONDANCE: 1) original title of the song "I Can't Dance" by Genesis; 2) a strike by the performers of "Riverdance"

NONDEMAND: 1) a "null set" of items requested by hostage-takers and the like; 2) the absolute need for "non-" products (nonfat milk, nondairy creamer, etc.)

NONENERGY: extreme lethargy

NONFROZEN: melted

NONGREEN: the tee area, fairway and water hazards on a golf course

Diane Firstman is a lifelong New Yorker and has been playing SCRABBLE® competitively since 1994. When not thinking up DEFALTS, she attends crossword puzzle tourneys and writes on the New York Yankees for www.bronxbanterblog.com. She is adept at math, can reach items on top shelves in supermarkets, and does a dead-on impression of a sea lion. The collected “DEFALTS” are available at http://stores.lulu.com/dianagram.
The Wordsmith

To BE or not to BE?

by Chris Sinacola

At the risk of BEMUDDLING readers and BELABORING a point, I turn this month to what must be one of the most BEDEVILING questions in SCRABBLE® – when is a verb which bears the prefix BE- acceptable?

The following BEFELL me at the recent NAST early bird event in Nashua, New Hampshire. In my fourth game of the day, I had traded most of an all-consonant rack, and after my opponent then opened with FUME, with the E on the center square, I was faced with the rack ABEIPRS.

There is a very elegant play available in that spot, which I regret to say I never saw or considered. I did mull BAP or BAPS, but also saw that the E presented the tantalizing possibility of BEPRAIS(E).

I was far from certain of the word. There are so many BE- verbs, and it did seem quite plausible. In retrospect, I suppose my decision to try it was BELATED, for my opponent BEGAZED upon the board and decided, after just a moment’s thought, to challenge. Naturally, I soon BEWAILED my decision, particularly as that less-than-auspicious opening helped her BETHUMP me and BEDARKENED my hopes for the day.

Players who are highly fluent with eight-letter racks, or those who have already committed all 178 BE- verbs to memory, would surely never have attempted BEPRAISE*. The former would even know that ABEIPRS will accept just one letter, R, in order to become SPARERIB. And a few of you, I’m sure, immediately noted that the right move was PRE(F)ABS, for a nifty double-double worth 56 points, leaving I in the rack (and me in the dust). I hope to see such stuff myself, someday.

For my part, I would have supposed that the addition of a T would yield BAPTISER*. Alas, there is no such word in English. It’s BAPTIZER, while baptiser is the French verb for baptize. Oh BECLOUDED and BEDIMMED brain!

But, quite apart from whether BEPRAISE* is acceptable, this little contretemps raised for me three questions worth exploring.

First, one can fairly ask whether BEPRAISE* -- and any number of other BE- verbs -- ought to be acceptable.

Second, how and why have BE- verbs survived in modern English? Why are some -- such as BEFALL, BEFRIEND, and BECALM -- such common and “normal” parts of everyday speech, while others -- BEBLOOD, BEDUNCE, and BESHOUT, to cite a few -- are rarely if ever heard?

Third and finally, as a practical SCRABBLE® matter, is there any way to tease out a rule or guideline for what constitutes acceptability? Is there some feature or subtlety of usage or form that unites the 178 BE- verbs?
The first question is the easiest. A lexicon that admits BELAUD and BEGLAD certainly should make room for BEPRAISE*. After all, if you will open to page 808 of your compact edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, you will see it there. Bepraise: v., “to laud or praise greatly or to excess.” And you even get references to a poem by Oliver Goldsmith and a philosophical treatise by Jeremy Bentham. How very utilitarian.

To those who object that BELAUD already fills the niche reserved for a SCRABBLE® verb meaning “to praise,” I hasten to point out that our lexicon also includes BEGRIM, BEGRIME, BESMEAR, and BEDIRTY as ways of making a mess of things, not to mention that when it comes to surrounding castles, enemies, bodies of water, small children, and oil spills, we can BEGIRD, BEGIRDLE, BELEAGUER, and BESIEGE. Redundancy, thy name is English.

The reality, of course -- one that never fails to BEWEARY me -- is that our lexicon is a petulant and finicky creature, plucking what it pleases from the smorgasbord of linguistic wonders on offer: It passes over BECRAM*, BECRIPPLE*, BECROSS*, and BECROWN*, but elevates the no-less-obscure BECUDGEL to its place in the SCRABBLE® firmament.

The second question is the most fascinating. The verb BE occupies more than 22 full columns of text in the *OED*. Readers who are interested in the full tale are referred to it, for a full discussion here would BECLOG this article and cause not a few of you to BESHREW me.

For our purposes, the BE- verbs that have been BEQUEATHED to us are among those which the prefix BE- alters and intensifies, or makes transitive, nearly always with the sense of extending the action or quality of the verb around or throughout an object.

Thus, BEMINGLE, BEMIX, and BEKISS mean simply to mingle, mix, and kiss, only more so, much as what can and should happen in happy families at holidays and reunions.

All SCRABBLE® players know to mingle and mix the tiles at the start of each game, but if we have been having a bad run of luck, we might BEMINGLE and BEMIX them, just to shake things up a bit.

A few of our BE- verbs are “forming derivative verbs with privative meaning” – in other words, verbs that express the loss of something – such as BEREAVE, with which we are all sadly familiar, and BEDEAL*, which means the same thing as BEREAVE, but appears to have died out along with Old English approximately 800 years ago. (Relax, even a BECRUSTED linguistic conservative such as myself won’t argue for its revival.)

The *OED*, as I mentioned above, goes into tremendous detail on these points, carefully segregating the BE- verbs into categories with very subtle differences. There are those usages of BE- that extend the action of their verbs “to surround, cover or bedaub…” (BECLOUD and BEDAUB), and those that form “transitive verbs on adjectives and substantives,” as, for example, BEFOUL, BEFOOL, BEDIM, and BESOT, making something or someone foul, a fool, dim (or dimmer), or stupefied.

My favorite group arrives on page 722, where BE- functions to form “participial adjectives,” “in the notion of ‘covered or furnished with,’ usually in a conspicuous, ostentatious, unnecessary, or overdone way.”
Thus, English has such words as BEBOOTED* and BEGARTERED*. Yikes! The *OED* goes on to assert that “the formations of this kind are endless,” and offers BEBELTED*, BEMUSLINED*, BETURBANED* and many, many more.

Needless to say, only a very small fraction of these are admissible in SCRABBLE®. Should we allow more in? Opinions vary. In SCRABBLE®, they always do! But consider this from author Ammon Shea, who read the entire *OED* so that you and I wouldn’t have to. In his delightful if somewhat terrifying book, *Reading the OED*, he plucks BEDINNER* (to treat to dinner) and BEMISSIONARY* (to annoy with missionaries) from what I think of as the great sea of nonBEing.

BEDINNER* leaves me cold. If I’m going to treat someone to dinner, I’ll just tell them I’ve got the check. But allowing BEMISSIONARY* at SCRABBLE®? I’d sign that petition, along with the one for including UNBEPISSED*, another word that Mr. Shea has most happily included in his volume. While not, strictly speaking, a BE- word, it gives you a deeper appreciation for the utility of the English language, does it not? I cannot resist quoting Mr. Shea, who muses: “Who ever thought there was an actual need for such a word? Is it possible that at some time there was such a profusion of things that had been urinated on that there was a pressing need to distinguish those that had not?”

The final question – whether one can tease from all this some rule for the acceptability of would-be BE- words at SCRABBLE® – is quickly answered. Of course not!

You may try to devise such a rule if you like. But I would suggest that it’s far easier to simply memorize the 178 BE- verbs – along with the handful of BE- adjectives and adverbs and a smattering of BE- interjections. The entire list will be something short of 200 words, which is no more difficult, really, than tackling the threes, which number 1,015.

If you take the time to cross out the BE- verbs that are in common parlance, you will come up with a list of perhaps 130 to 135 to learn. Those with strong vocabularies (or a penchant for reading Chaucer, Shakespeare, and the like) might pare that list to some 100 truly unusual, rare, or unfamiliar words.

Whatever you do, remember that unless your opponent is being very savvy, you might get your BE-word past him or her, regardless of its validity. SCRABBLE® is, after all, a game.

In short, don’t BEWORRY, BEHAPPY*!

*Chris Sinacola is director of the Worcester MA SCRABBLE® Club #600. BEEMAIL * him at sinacola@msn.com.*
Word Trivia Quiz
by Siri Tillekeratne

Given below are unusual and unique meanings of 10 words in OSPD 4. What are the corresponding words?

1. a tiny bit of candy for decorating ice cream
2. a Muslim who knows the Koran by heart
3. a small hollow rubber ball
4. a pasty mixture applied to an irritated part of the body
5. a sharp bamboo stake placed and concealed so as to impale the enemy
6. a transparent sheet of chlorinated rubber used in packaging
7. withdrawal of blood from a donor, removing some contents, and returning the remaining blood to the donor
8. a field that is cleared from a jungle for farming purposes
9. an European woman living in colonial India
10. a Jew in Spain who professed Christianity to avoid persecution

ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE

Siri Tillekeratne is a director of the Calgary SCRABBLE® Club #374 and a former Director of the Year.
ANSWERS

1. a tiny bit of candy for decorating ice cream: JIMMIE
2. a Muslim who knows the Koran by heart: HAFIZ
3. a small hollow rubber ball: SPALDEEN
4. a pasty mixture applied to an irritated part of the body: SINAPISM
5. a sharp bamboo stake placed and concealed so as to impale the enemy: PUNJI
6. a transparent sheet of chlorinated rubber used in packaging: PLIOFILM
7. withdrawal of blood from a donor, removing some contents, and returning the remaining blood to the donor: PHERESIS
8. a field that is cleared from a jungle for farming purposes: MILPA
9. an European woman living in colonial India: MEMSAHIB
10. a Jew in Spain who professed Christianity to avoid persecution: MARRANO

Siri Tillekeratne is a director of the Calgary SCRABBLE® Club #374 and a former Director of the Year.
Non-fiction:

Conundrum
by Jan Morris

This is an intriguing memoir, beautifully written by an author who has written numerous other non-fiction books. Jan Morris, formerly known as James Morris, was the correspondent for The Times of London assigned to cover England’s historic summit of Everest. The author actually accompanied the expedition to the Himalayas and did on-site dispatches of the historic event. It would be as James Morris that she would write the wonderful book Coronation Everest, which chronicles the events leading to the historic summit of Everest by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on the eve of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The author would eventually become a celebrated writer of many travel books, journeying the world over.

This very personal book is an autobiographical narrative of the author’s own gender dysphoria, as she, a biological male at birth, had always felt that she had been born into the wrong body. Elegantly written, it is not a book for those who are seeking tabloid sensationalism. Rather, it is, at times, somewhat anachronistic in feel, as it was written by someone who lived through a time when actual gender changes were still in the nascent stages. Passing historical references are made to those transsexuals who paved the way for others.

The author’s account of her early life is fascinating, as much of it was spent in traditional male pursuits of the time. A stint in the army as a member of the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, years as a well-known foreign correspondent, as well as husband and father, were all roles in which the author found some satisfaction but never total fulfillment, as her gender dysphoria continually intruded upon her happiness, a dark cloud hovering over all that she did and all that she was.

The author's recollection of her lifelong, personal conundrum over gender is graced with self-deprecating wit and humor. It is a first-rate autobiographical account of the author's journey across the shivering sands of gender dysphoria. Born in 1927, the author, with the support of Elizabeth, her wife and best friend, crossed the gender frontier at the age of forty-five, after having spent thirty-five years as a male and ten additional years in androgynous transition as a hormonal chimera.
It was with her surgery in a clinic in Casablanca in 1972 that the author felt that she finally was able to live her life as she was meant to live it. Her account of her surgery, however, is enough to make one take pause at the sheer desperation to reconcile one's inner self with one's outer self. Still, notwithstanding the seemingly primitive approach of the clinic to such a complex surgery, James Morris crossed the gender frontier and surgically metamorphosed into the woman that she had always felt herself to be, surmounting the last hurdle to self-realization. Thus, Jan Morris was born.

Conundrum is available at Amazon.com.

Fiction:

The Weight of Water

by Anita Shreve

This is an exceptionally well written tour de force about complex emotions. Written in clean, spare prose, it is two stories in one, each with its own voice, demanding to be heard. It is, without a doubt, a book to remember.

The Weight of Water tells the story of Jean, a news photographer who sets out on a sailboat to a remote island off the coast of New Hampshire, accompanied by her husband, her five-year-old daughter, her brother-in-law, and his girlfriend of several months. The purpose of Jean's visit is to photograph the scene of a nineteenth-century double murder that saw two Norwegian immigrant women hacked to death, which murders were much ballyhooed at the time as the crime of the century.

While there, Jean discovers an uncatalogued translation of the personal journal of the ostensible eyewitness, Maren Hontvedt, who seemed to have survived the carnage. Written in a sombre and ruminative tone, the journal of Maren's life and of the events that led up to the carnage forms the core of the story. Maren's journal provides a framework for looking at the angst of Jean's present, which is haunted by passion, jealousy, and betrayal. It is through Maren's story that Jean herself comes to terms with her own personal tragedy.

Alternating between Jean's unravelling present and the secrets of the past, the book provides a compelling, absorbing, and suspenseful narrative, keeping the reader in its thrall. The two juxtaposed dramas come together in a primal and tragic climax. Those who read this book will find themselves haunted by it.

The Weight of Water is available at Amazon.com.

Linda Wancel loves reading, writing, watching films, traveling, and Scrabbling. She is the mother of 27-year-old twins and has been a criminal prosecutor for the last 23 years.
Historic Moments: SCRABBLE® Throughout the Years

Memories of Four Great Ladies

by Stu Goldman

Having had such a long career in our game, it is inevitable that I would know many fine players. I would like to tell you about four wonderful women whose careers are over because they are no longer with us. All were tournament winners, and all delightful to know.

The first of these to leave us was Carol Clarke Halper. A no-nonsense yet friendly person, she ran a million-dollar computer company from her home while tending her infant, then toddler, son Simon. When we experts talked about who would be capable of running the SCRABBLE® organization, her name was mentioned frequently, always favorably.

Carol only won two tournaments according to cross-tables, both big ones. Yet she had the highest peak rating of any of the players I'm writing about. The first tournament in which I played her, I knew my goose was cooked at one point because I was already behind, there was a blank outstanding, and Carol's eyes lit up like a Christmas tree. That was an early habit that she soon learned to suppress, possibly because of her husband, expert Ed Halper.

Cross-tables says her record against me was 3-1, but it's at least 4-1 because the above tournament is not included. My outstanding memory of a game with Carol was a club game in which I drew a blank with all the tiles picked and a closed board. I spotted the word VEX on column O and realized I could front-extend it with my blank to CONVEX and cover a red TWS square. When I did, Carol said good-naturedly, "Well, that just won you a game."

Next comes Dee Jackson. While not quite as skilled as the others in this piece, she was a solid 16-1700 player with a peak rating over 1900. Toward the end of her life, her rating suffered a bit, as it has with many of us. Yet Dee remained cheerful, and let none of us know of her terminal illness. So we were all shocked by her passing.

For some unknown reason I do not remember any of my seven (according to cross-tables) tournament games with Dee. I remember many club games from the days when we both lived on Long Island, and the delightful SCRABBLE® parties she would host. In one club game I had made a foolish opening for an X-play without the X. She said, "I know what you're doing, but there's no way I can stop it." I proceeded to play the X that I had just drawn, without letting on that it was a new addition to my rack.

A little over a year ago Rose Kreiswirth passed on after a long bout with cancer. We all know about the Rose award to be given at the Nationals, in her honor, to the most congenial female player. Her consideration for others and dedication to the game could not be better exhibited than the time she entered a tournament room just before games were to start and announced, "I'm sorry to be so late, but I just came from my daughter's sweet sixteen party."
An inveterate and skilled performer, Rose won a dozen or more tournaments. I do not remember any of my games with her in detail; cross-tables says I won about 40% of them. I do remember the 1998 Waltham, MA, event, which cross-tables says she won. Actually, the two of us and Jack Eichenbaum were tied, using a point system, and one prize was entry into the next year's premier division. I was disappointed that she did not play in the premier along with me. Jack also elected not to play.

Finally, Rita Norr Provost, the great queen of SCRABBLE® and the only female national champion to date. Her great qualities as a player and human being have been described by others since her recent passing much more adequately than I could. Not as widely known is that when she won the 1987 National Championship it was the first tournament she won. What a way to start!

The first time Rita played tournament SCRABBLE® she played me. It was the original New York City championship, held in the '70s at the Brooklyn War Memorial. She won, and kept me out of the quarter-finals. We subsequently became good friends, and the following incident is the item I put on the "bulletin board" at her wake.

After a tournament session on Long Island, Rita invited me to her home for dinner and SCRABBLE®. I offered to make my spaghetti sauce, and began asking for spices. When I requested rosemary, Rita began flitting around her kitchen, clipping rosemary needles from the living plants. She also praised her 3-year-old daughter, showing me the game the tot had invented. It was remarkable, having pieces, a way to move them, rules, and a goal to be the winner. I felt that the child was showing the mother's love of competition, and the mother showing--well--love.

Stu Goldman

Stu Goldman lives in California and has been playing tournament SCRABBLE® for 36 years.
Word Star
by Jeff Kastner

Play **Word Star**, a word game with similarities to Boggle, created and presented each month by Phoenix, AZ expert **Jeff Kastner**.

**Your object** is to find and list as many words as possible, using only the 6 letters contained in the Word Star puzzle. All words must be OWL2 or Long List acceptable.

There are **3 basic rules to finding words** within a Word Star puzzle:

1. **Words must be at least 3 or more letters long** (with no limit on how long the word can be).

2. **Words are formed by using letters that adjoin each other**. For example, the words **BED** and **WELD** are acceptable, but not **LEWD**, because the “W” and the “D” are not neighboring letters.

3. **Letters within a word may repeat as many times as possible**, as long as such letters are repeated twice (or thrice) in a row, or as long as Rule 2 is followed. So, for example, **EWE** and **BELL** are acceptable. But, **BLEED** would not be acceptable because the “B” and the “L” are not adjoining.

* Note that the **Center Star**, located in the white middle portion of the puzzle, is the most important letter. It is the only letter that adjoins each of the 5 others in the puzzle. In addition, there are bonus points awarded for using the Center Star as often as possible. The Center Star in this month’s puzzle is the letter “E.”

**Multiple forms of the same word are acceptable** (for example, **RATE, RATED, RATER, RATERS, and RATES** would all be fine, if they were in the puzzle). No points are awarded (and no penalty points are assessed) for any entries on your word list that are not in OWL2 or the Long List, or that do not adhere to the above rules.
Points are scored as follows:

- 2 Points for each WORD found.
- 5 Bonus Points for each BINGO (7 or more letters) found.
- 1 Point for each LETTER of every word found.
- 1 Bonus Point for each CENTER STAR of every word found.

Example of Points Scored:

Let’s say a Word Star puzzle has an “S” as the Center Star letter, and your list consists of the following words:

ATTIRE
ATTIRES
SAT
SATE
SATIRE
SATIRES
TIRE
TIRES

Your score would be:

- 16 Points for the 8 WORDS found.
- 10 Bonus Points for the 2 BINGOS (ATTIRES and SATIRES) found.
- 42 Points for each of the 42 LETTERS used in the 8 words.
- 7 Bonus Points for each CENTER STAR used (the letter “S” is used 7 times).

TOTAL SCORE in this imaginary example = 75 Points.

Par Scores for this month’s Word Star:

225 points (Novice); 340 points (Intermediate); 435 points (Advanced)

Once you’ve compiled your list, check out my Solution on page 48.

See you next month with another Word Star puzzle! …Jeff Kastner

Jeff Kastner, originally from New York City, has been living in Phoenix, AZ since 1985. Jeff is one of a handful of players who has ever been ranked in the USA-top-50 in both SCRABBLE® and chess. He is the 2007-2008 Phoenix SCRABBLE® Club champion as well as the 2008-2009 Scottsdale SCRABBLE® Club champ. His chess, Sudoku, and word puzzles appear weekly in The Jewish Press newspaper and website. He hosts the Internet program Who’s on the Show?, where one of his first interviews was with directors Larry Rand and Barbara Van Alen: http://whosontheshow.com/shows.html
Word Star Solution for: The Last Word July 2010

BED  DEE  JEBEL  WEDDED
BEDDED DEED JEE WEDEL
BEDEL DEEDED JEED WEDELED
BEDELL DEL JELL WEE
BEDEW DELE JELLED WEEED
BEDEWED DELED JEW WEEDED
BEE DELL JEWED WEEL
BEEBEE DEW JEWEL WEEWEE
BEJEWEL DEWED JEWELED WEEWEED
BEJEWELLED DJEBEL JEWELLED WELD
BEL EBB EBBED LED WELL
BELL EEL EEE WELLD
BELLE ELD EEE WELLD
BELLED ELL WEBWEBED
DEB EWE WED

PAR SCORES:
225 points (Novice)
340 points (Intermediate)
435 points (Advanced)

BEST SCORE:

2 Points for each WORD found:
   61 Words = 122 points.

5 Bonus Points for each BINGO found:
   9 Bingos = 45 points.

1 Point for each LETTER of every word found:
   296 Letters = 296 points.

1 Bonus Point for each CENTER STAR of every word found:
   124 E’s = 124 points.

TOTAL = 587 Points
The Tile Bag

James Leong, Editor

Well dear readers, I apologize yet again. I have to be the most delinquent columnist on this newsletter period! But, barring any disasters, I will also be a delinquent columnist and a lawyer come this September (yes, I passed the bar exams). That must really give lots of you reassurance!

Anyway, I hope everyone had a great spring and that you’re all having a great summer. That being said, I think this column might have something that could just possibly resonate with everyone at one point or another. And, here is that question:

_______________________________________________________________________________

Dear Tile Bag,

I used to really love the game. Nowadays, it feels like a chore to go to a tournament, or even club. I don’t get it. I work hard to improve. I study my words and I even use Quackle, but I just don’t win as much as I think I should. I don’t even know if it’s worth playing the game anymore. Is there something wrong with me?

Thanks,

Tired

Everyone’s had it--fatigue, exhaustion, apathy: a weariness that sets in, even for the most ardent of players. For some, it arises fresh from a tournament with bad performance, or even from self-perceived mediocrity. Whatever it is, it seems to rise from a variety of causes: from one person’s protest against consistently displeasing (to him or her) results, to another person’s lack of passion in playing a competitive game, to even refusing to play the game altogether because of a weariness that is innately rooted in the drive to even play competitively.

In competitive SCRABBLE®, it seems that almost all of us play, at some level, to improve, whether we do it for ourselves or to show others. The fire that spurs one to push forward is a double-edged sword: it encourages one to work hard, to strive, and feeds one with inspiration when there may be no tangible reason to be incited to pour in the effort. But, in the same vein, if it’s not properly nourished, or properly contained, it can threaten to become all-consuming, sucking the pleasure out of a recreational pastime as surely as a mosquito draws blood from its target, or Twilight extracts money from preteen girls. Competitive drive is fickle, because it spurs one to try to succeed, and if one can’t live up to one’s standard of success, it will inevitably result in a creeping of self-doubt, of frustration with this 15x15 endeavor, to the point that one might one day look at the game and decide that it’s just not worth it--that there is no inspiration, no thrill in playing any more. That the game is worthless because it is devoid of life, of fun. These people stop being players and become more like unwitting workers.

So there is more than one question inherent in figuring out what to do, if anything. Is there a way to rekindle the flame once it goes out? Should we even try to force it, or let it come back on its own?
Or should we try to redefine how we look at SCRABBLE® in order to figure out if we really want to go through a cycle which is bound to repeat itself at some point?

Well, let’s look at what the system I describe seems to entail. If one includes a burnout and eventual retirement from competitive play, in a nutshell the steps seem to be in an order close to the following:

- Be introduced the game;
- Enjoy playing the game;
- Discover competitive play and competitors;
- Enjoy that initial thrill of competitive play and of becoming part of a group;
- Aim to improve performance, whether it be by more consistent play or developing strategies or learning words;
- Continue to compete, but find results do not reflect the aim of improved performance;
- Become disillusioned with competitive SCRABBLE® and the never-ending mini-cycle of working to improve yet never achieving that target one sets for oneself;
- Burning out after enough turns of the aforementioned mini-cycle; and
- Retirement from competitive play due to stress.

In this way, it seems like a linear path with an apex of activity (find a hobby and get engrossed in it) followed by a nadir (get frustrated with it, and put it away). However, since we perceive SCRABBLE® to be a competitive endeavor, we sometimes feel obligated to improve and get better, because a potential for prestige exists. But that obligation does not, and should not, equate with inspiration for the standard person. To some, it seems that a fear of stagnation compels them to feel obliged to continue to work to improve. They sense that either their competition or the friends they have found are growing and continue to do so, and thus they need to as well.

It’s interesting, though – I haven’t played for very long, nor very much as can be evidenced by my competitive record. What I do notice is that even though this sense of obligation to maintain a certain level of play should be greatest at the highest echelons of the game (where the most money can be made), most players at the very top rarely seem to feel this discontentment from bad results. I might be highly wrong in my perception, but it seems they are rarely about to kick themselves repeatedly over a mistake they made, nor do they continually look at the game and wonder why their constant work doesn’t always result in them placing in the top ten of a tournament.

I am not a top player, so please do not take my next statements as a boast. However, I have a small anecdote about what was arguably the biggest game of my career to this point – the final round against Jerry Lerman at the Players Championship in 2007. At the very end I played what was very much the wrong play, tracked, and saw that I left Jerry a bingo to play and would lose the game if he found it. He didn’t, and we played out the rest of the game, taking home from that game the first and second place checks for the tournament. His mistake could really undo a lot of players in its magnitude – simply, it was a mistake, something everyone makes. However, the circumstances in which it happened could make a lot of people already in a disgruntled state of mind question whether they should be playing this game. Similarly, the lack of care that I showed in playing what I did could have been reflected on by some players as to show that for all their work, they can’t make the right decisions, so why should they continue to play?
However, neither Jerry nor I had those kinds of reactions. Jerry took the loss with consummate grace, although I am sure he was disappointed with himself. However, he just continued on from there and still plays at the highest levels of the game, where he belongs. In his attitude, I think something is demonstrated, and that is the acceptance that he made a mistake, but life goes on. Roll your eyes at the statement I just made because yes, it is obvious. However, when you’re in that kind of situation it is not the easiest thing to remember. People who continually get stuck in the past, reflecting on what they could have done or should have done, may never recover enough to actually look forward rather than back. Be disappointed, yes, but take that and push past it, rather than examine it to the point that you will drive yourself insane.

My attitude for the one minute when I realized that I may have just handed over the championship, where Jerry was thinking over his move, wasn’t really one where I was kicking myself. Basically, I mentally shrugged and couldn’t really be disappointed in myself. I never expected to be anywhere near that position to start, so finishing second or third (the two possible positions) was more than enough of a thrill for me. Heck, I didn’t even have an expectation to place – personally, I went to that tournament because I promised a good friend of mine that I would. The memories I have of the event are of people I talked to, of spending time with friends, of meeting new ones, of getting to show a first-time tournament player some of the ins and outs of an event and touching base with her as the days went on – that was what I remembered. The award ceremony is a blur. The cash is all but spent. However, sitting back and thinking on it, I realize that even if I’d finished last, I probably wouldn’t be all that much different than I am now in my outlook.

I see competitive SCRABBLE® not really as competition, but more as SCRABBLE® that happens to be competitive. SCRABBLE® nowadays constitutes people, places, crazy stories, great food, bad food, and things that I’ll have been honored to have been a party to, to take part in. I’ve never really felt that feeling of classic burnout as I describe for others – I like to play as much as I did when I first thought my father was cheating for playing “id” when I was five years old, or when I rediscovered the game about ten years later on the Internet. SCRABBLE® has not really lost any value to me, because those core values have never changed.

It seems then, that there are at least a few ways to combat the apathy that tends to creep into SCRABBLE® competitors’ passion towards the game. If they take Jerry’s road, they hone their disappointment by not overly dwelling on mistakes – rather, they take the positive from the experience, and use it to make themselves stronger. Or, they can try to look at it the way I do, which is that SCRABBLE®’s a game and should be viewed as such. In a way, playing games at a tournament is the part of SCRABBLE® that has the least meaning to me, because I don’t look back on those games and think about what I did and did not do. Rather, I look at the experiences I had along the way and the people I got to spend time with – that’s what constructs the event for me. And as such, competitive results don’t become my primary focus. Don’t get me wrong – money is always great and it does feel good to play at one’s best, but because winning is not what brings me to tournaments, it’s not going to be what ultimately would dictate whether I would continue playing in events or not.

Honing disappointment. Taking a different perspective towards the game. Maybe stepping away from the game for a period of time and then coming back re-inspired. All of these approaches can help ignite the flame inside you, or merge it into a greater fire. There are many other ways to get
around a miasma of self-doubt and pessimism, but the two philosophies I’ve recalled have been crystallized as experience that I feel able to share.

It takes all kinds to make our game the great experience that it is. Try to make sure that you never lose sight of the fact that SCRABBLE® is always supposed to be fun. An inspiration, and not an obligation. If you remember that, I think you’ll never find yourself disillusioned, retired, or disgusted to the point that plucking a tile from a bag is an unwelcome act.

Thanks for reading!

Got a question? Don’t hesitate to write, no matter how strange or silly it may sound! Just fire away to tilebag@gmail.com.

James Leong is a top player from Vancouver, BC, Canada. He was the winner of the 2007 Players’ Championship in Dayton, OH.
Scrabblers for a Cause

Kevin McCarthy, Sr.: Camp Cheerful

Folks-- I wanted to tell you about the 5k I ran this morning: hot, sticky, and I was tired ~ I finished in 30:30 ~ not spectacular, but I finished. What *was* spectacular was the participation of Jude Alexander Carver! Jude is the young autistic child that we formed team "Hey, Jude!" for; he uses the services of Camp Cheerful (today's beneficiary of our charity efforts). Jude is quite a handful, but he did manage to walk the 5k with his mom and several of my co-workers. He had a good-sized cheering section when he finished the walk in just over an hour, and as you can see from the photo, I am now a fan as well.

I met Jude for the first time this morning ~ and we had a blast. He must have told me 100 times that he wants a crystal ball, apparently something he has been asking about for three months. His mother (also a co-worker) says that even if he gets what he is obsessing over, the relief will be short-lived, he'll be fixated on something else in a matter of minutes. He wore his number proudly, even though he mentioned repeatedly that he looked "REEEdiculous" wearing it.

Yesterday morning, I ran in a charity 5k raising money for palliative care for kids, inspired by the hospice care received by a local baby girl. To hear Carina's story, or to spend time with Jude, reminds me how fortunate I have been. I wonder how Wanda and I got so lucky to raise our two without even minor difficulties, nothing more than bumps scrapes and bruises, no stitches and only a single broken bone. Children, if you have 'em, hug 'em ~ it is amazing to see with all that can go awry with kids ~ that it goes so well, so often.

So now that I have two grown-ups and a wonderful daughter-in-law, more free time, and some spare cash, I try to get involved ... if you have a moment, check out the website below to learn more about what Camp Cheerful does for kids like Jude.

**Diane Firstman: Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation**

On Sunday, August 15th, I will follow in the footsteps of the 27-time World Champion New York Yankees as part of the second annual Damon Runyon 5K Run/Walk for Cancer Research. This unique event will take place inside Yankee Stadium. I'll get to explore the Stadium and take my very own victory laps around the warning track that circles the field.

100% of the money I raise will be used by the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation to fund innovative research by today's most brilliant young scientists, who are racing to find the causes and cures for all types of cancer.

The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation identifies the most brilliant and promising scientists and provides them with funding to pursue innovative cancer research. The focus is on emerging leaders who have great potential to achieve breakthroughs in how we diagnose, treat and prevent cancer.

The Foundation was created in 1946 in memory of Damon Runyon, a New York writer who began his career as a baseball journalist and revolutionized how the game was covered. Of the more than 3,200 scientists funded since, 11 are Nobel Laureates and many lead cancer centers nationwide.

Today more than 260 scientists funded by Damon Runyon – including 15 current awardees – are working at labs and major research centers throughout New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Please click on the link below to make a donation that supports my run/walk.  

You can choose the amount you want to give - all donations are gratefully received!

Thank you for your support.

http://www.damonrunyon.org/yankeestadium

**Jeffrey Scranton: American Lung Association**

The weekend of June 17-19th I made a 180-mile, 3-day trek across Maine in support of the American Lung Association. Albeit grueling, the scenery and company were both outstanding. To read more about the event and the cause, go to the following link:

Sponsor Jeffrey on his TREK across MAINE!
Stell’s Racks of Mirth

by Stellacious (AKA Cheryl L. Cadieux)

Some sayings and quotes by Tampa Bay Area Scrabblers and a few strangers...)

"I'll be all right but I don't know when."

"THAT was pure skill."

"*I* was looking at that spot!!"

"I'm a man; we can do anything!"

Ken Knight to Stell: "We're just listening to you playing Scarlett O'Hara over there"

"I was doing well until I ran into Buzzsaw Sally." -- Ken Knight

"OOOHHH How much do I hate myself??" (Ken Knight holding his head and contemplating a challenge)

Stell to Ken: "You're trying to win this game, aren't you?" Ken: "Yes I am..men are EVIL!"

"Myron doesn't know his A hooks." (Stell sang this out to the whole room after Myron played GENE and she put an A in front of it and came down with ZAGS on the triple for five million points and then he challenged it.)

Stellaisms for Your Day

Yesterday is a cancelled check; tomorrow is a promissory note; today is the only cash you have--so spend it wisely.

I sometimes wonder if the manufacturers of foolproof items kept a fool or two on their payroll to test things.

To join OSPD, Stella's SCRABBLE® mail group, please send a blank message to the following URL: ospd-scrabble-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

We are so delicious, that we are DIGESTable, with the digest form of only one e-mail a day.

At the bottom of each and every e-mail that you receive from OSPD, you will see the address to change your daily subscription from receiving the e-mails as they come in to only once a day in the digest form.

OSPD is a way for Scrabblers to communicate. We also have a Daily Word List: For example, one recent word list was “N” back hooks.

Paul Epstein occasionally does Mystery Racks and we have a quiz from time to time.

Please join us!

Stellacious
AKA Cheryl L. Cadieux
If you don’t run your own life, Someone else will. --John Atkinson

Forget about all the reasons why something may not work. You only need to find one good reason why it will. --Dr. Robert Anthony

Cheryl L. Cadieux, a congenial tournament player better known to her OSPD group members as “Stella,” lives in Au Gres, MI and New Port Richey, FL.
Equipment Roundup
This month’s equipment roundup looks at board carriers and totes. *The Last Word* makes no representation as to any of the equipment listed, and we will not accept calls related to order fulfillment or quality. We do not list prices as they are subject to change; follow the links for these.

Readers are encouraged to write in to add equipment to our list ([CorneliaSGuest@gmail.com](mailto:CorneliaSGuest@gmail.com)).

Next month we will shift from equipment to SCRABBLE® apparel.

**BOARD CARRIERS**

**SAM KANTIMATHI** ([www.samtimer.com](http://www.samtimer.com))

**Wheeler Bag**

Rolling padded bag with retractable handle that locks in place in three height settings. Room for three round SCRABBLE® boards plus equipment such as clocks, racks, etc. Retractable pedestal to keep back upright. Belt loop to wrap around other bags. One-year warrantee.

**Lightweight Shoulder Bag**

Soft-sided padded shoulder bag with two-compartment side pocket for equipment. Room for one or two round SCRABBLE® boards. Reinforced handles and removable padded shoulder strap.
Semicircular Shoulder Bag

Shaped to hold folding boards. Pockets for equipment on both sides.

![Semicircular Shoulder Bag Image]

SamTote

An less expensive option for carrying round boards and/or square boards, dictionaries, etc. Vinyl; 20” x 20” (50 cm x 50 cm). Available in 5 colors.

![SamTote Image]

REUNION BLUES CYMBAL BAGS


![REUNION BLUES CYMBAL BAGS Image]
ZILDJIAN CYMBAL BAGS

Steve Gadd Cymbal Bag

Padded shoulder strap. 23.6 x 23.6 x 3.2 inches; 6.6 lbs. Fits boards 22” in diameter.

Session Cymbal Bag

Synthetic leather-like material. Padded shoulder strap. Fits boards 22” in diameter.

Padded Cymbal Bag

Fits boards 22” in diameter. Adjustable shoulder straps.

Deluxe Cymbal Bag

Black padded Cordura shell with leather handles and nylon shoulder straps. Fits boards 22” in diameter.
CUSTOM CARRYALL  (Cheryl@customcarryall.com)

The Custom Game bag is a carryall for all of your game equipment. The main compartment holds a full-size round board. Interior pockets are sized for dictionary, clock, racks, pens, tile bags, glasses, and identification. Exterior pocket is handy for quick access to portfolio or any loose papers. Bag is fully lined, padded with fleece and secured with zippers, velcro and magnetic closures. Padded strap is adjustable for single shoulder or cross shoulder. Customize by selecting colors, fabric, trim, theme.

KACES CYMBAL BAGS

Not Leather Cymbal Bag

Heavy-duty convertible backpack. Fits 22” boards.
Grafix Xpress Series Cymbal Bags

Features original, artist-commissioned designs printed in brilliant, high definition colors on high-quality bags. Holds boards up to 22". Made of tough water- and tear-resistant luggage-grade padded nylon with reinforced double stitching, luggage-grade zippers, a large zippered outer pocket, dual carry handles, a shoulder strap, and a reinforced bottom section.
ROAD RUNNER CYMBAL BAG WITH WHEELS

Nylon rolling bag with telescoping handle and front pocket. Fits boards 22” in diameter.
“Scrab-doku”

By: Jeff Kastner
(For July 2010 issue of “The Last Word”)

In a standard Sudoku, your object is to fill in every square of the grid so that all nine rows across, all nine columns down, and all nine 3-by-3 boxes contain the numbers 1 through 9, with no repeats.

Same rules apply to this Scrob-doku, but I’ve added a few twists to help you solve it. First of all, I use letters to replace the numbers. These letters are part of a “Keyword” which I’ve scrambled below. I’ve also provided a clue to help you find the correct anagram. Once you’ve unscrambled the Keyword, one of the rows or columns will contain all of its 9 letters in the proper order.

This week’s “Scrambled” Keyword: SHOTGIVER

Clue: This word can mean: “an error due to carelessness.” Conversely, it can also mean: “watchful care or careful management.”

SOLUTION on page 65
Word-Finder Challenge:

Here’s an additional test of your anagramming ability. Your object is to find all the words you can that have at least 6 or more letters in them, using only the 9 letters of this month’s (Scrambled) Keyword: SHOTGIVER.

In addition to being at least 6 letters long, all words must be OWL2 or Long List acceptable. Each letter of the Keyword may be used only once within any word you find. Multiple forms of the same word are acceptable. For instance, if OUTLINE, OUTLINES, OUTLINED, and OUTLINER were contained in the Keyword, they could all be used.

Par Scores for this month’s Word-Finder Challenge:

30 words (Novice); 45 (Intermediate); 55 (Advanced)

Once you’ve compiled your list, check out my SOLUTION on page 65. See you next month with another Scrab-doku puzzle and Word-Finder Challenge! …Jeff Kastner

Jeff Kastner, originally from New York City, has been living in Phoenix, AZ since 1985. Jeff is one of a handful of players who has ever been ranked in the USA-top-50 in both SCRABBLE® and chess. He is the 2007-2008 Phoenix SCRABBLE® Club champion as well as the 2008-2009 Scottsdale SCRABBLE® Club champ. His chess, Sudoku, and word puzzles appear weekly in The Jewish Press newspaper and website. He hosts the Internet program Who’s on the Show?, where one of his first interviews was with directors Larry Rand and Barbara Van Alen: http://whosontheshow.com/shows.html
Unscrambled Keyword: OVERSIGHT (67 words)

EGOIST      GROVES      RIGHTO      THEIRS
EIGHTS      HERIOT      RIGHTS      THRIVE
EIGHTVO     HERIOTS     RIVETS      THRIVES
EIGHTVOS    HOGTIE      SHIVER      THROES
ERGOTS      HOGTIES     SHORTIE     ThROVE
GHOSTIER    HOISTER     SHOVER      TIGERS
GIRTHS      HORSTE      SHRIVE      TORIES
GIVERS      HOSIER      SHROVE      TRIGOS
GOITER      HOVERS      SIGHTER     TRIOSE
GOITERS     OGIVES      SIGHER      TROVES
GOITRE      OGREISH     SOVIET      VERTIST
GOITRES     OGRISH      SOVET      VERTIGOS
GORIEST     ORGIES      STIVER      VIGORS
GRIOTS      OTHERS      STOGIE      VIREOS
GRITHS      OVERSIGHT   STOVER      VOTERS
GRIVET      RESHOT      STRIVE
GRIVETS     RESIGHT     STROVE
Joe Bihlmeyer, a top Connecticut SCRABBLE® player, presents a video response to Annette Tedesco’s query as to why drawing tiles with two hands makes opponents suspect foul play.
Chris Cree wins D Magazine Words With Friends Tournament

SCRABBLE® champion and NASPA founder Chris Cree was the winner of D Magazine’s Words with Friends Tournament on June 9th.


Albert Hahn wins $38,391 at World Series of Poker

Albert Hahn finished seventh at the World Series of Poker (WSOP) to win $38,391. Hahn made it to the final table of nine famous players. From the event updates (Event #37, H.O.R.S.E.): “If you think this line-up isn't tough, you probably haven't been around poker very long. There are five bracelet winners at this final table: Phil Ivey (7), Bill Chen (2), Ken Aldridge (1), John Juanda (3, and one WSOP-E bracelet) and Jeff Lisandro (4). The player who bubbled the final table, Ryan Hughes, has 2 bracelets.

“Then there’s Chad Brown, who has five Top 4 WSOP finishes, including three runner-up finishes, and Dave Baker, who has been having a spectacular 2010 WSOP and is gunning for his first bracelet after four previous cashes and one final table appearance.

“The odd man out is Albert Hahn, who seems to have no previous tournament results.”

Ming Reslock also played at the WSOP and was eliminated in 15th place in Event #31 H.O.R.S.E., winning $8,349.

Hasbro takeover target in leveraged buyout?


SCRABBLE® champion Nigel Richards profiled in NZ article


New WGPO website up and running

Rick Wong and Henry Yeung have prepared a website for the Word Game Players’ Organization: [http://wordgameplayers.org](http://wordgameplayers.org).

Katya Lezin in contest to have talk show on Oprah network


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**JUNE MILESTONES**

**DEAN SALDANHA** reached 1900 for the first time at the Victoria BC CAN Tournament.

**JASON KELLER** reached 1800 for the first time at the Nashua NH Tournament.

**JURAJ PIVOVAROV** reached 1700 for the first time at the Calgary AB CAN Tournament.

**JAMIE RYAN** reached 1700 for the first time at the Nashua NH Tournament.

**LEE FINGOLD** reached 1600 for the first time at the Toronto ON CAN Tournament.

**JASON J. SMITH** reached 1600 for the first time at the Flint MI tournament.

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Protestors at Scripps Spelling Bee want spelling simplified


Andrea Carla Michaels co-authors WSJ puzzle


Interview with American Crossword Puzzle Champion Dan Fayer

Australian SCRABBLE® player Derek McKenzie posted this link to an interview with Dan Fayer, the winner of this year’s American Crossword Puzzle Tournament over five-time winner Tyler Hinman. (Fayer also shares with McKenzie great links to crossword-puzzle sites.) [http://www.word-buff.com/crossword-solving.html](http://www.word-buff.com/crossword-solving.html)

NYPD officer awarded $80,000 after SCRABBLE® Feud

Forced to see a psychiatrist after a SCRABBLE® feud, NYPD officer Sonya Glover was awarded $80,000 in a settlement. [http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2010/06/27/2010-06-27_nypd_officer_sonya_glover_who_was_forced_to_see_shrink_over_scrabble_feud_gets_8.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2010/06/27/2010-06-27_nypd_officer_sonya_glover_who_was_forced_to_see_shrink_over_scrabble_feud_gets_8.html)

Kenyan takes 2010 East African Championship

Willy Mwangi, who came into the Championships as the top seeded Kenyan player, won the recent 2010 East African Championship over countryman Nicholas Mbugua. Kenya won the Best Team trophy, sweeping the top seven positions.

U.S. qualifying system for 2010 Causeway Challenge announced

Brian Bowman of the NASPA-WESPA Liaison Committee has announced the qualifying system for U.S. teams for the 2010 Causeway Challenge Premier division: [http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/2010_Causeway_Challenge_US_Qualification_System](http://www.scrabbleplayers.org/w/2010_Causeway_Challenge_US_Qualification_System)

Palo Alto SCRABBLE® Club in the news

A nice article about Palo Alto SCRABBLE® Club #512 appeared in the June 8th *Paly Voice*. [http://voice.paly.net/node/23174](http://voice.paly.net/node/23174)
Trivial Pursuit creator Chris Haney dies
Chris Haney, one of the creators of the game Trivial Pursuit, died on May 31st. Read how he credits SCRABBLE® for his inspiration. http://scrabble.wonderhowto.com/blog/scrabble-2-men-created-trivial-pursuit-rip-chris-haney-0116642/

Ogilvy Paris SCRABBLE® ad campaign stripped of award
SCRABBLE®’s “the Beautiful Word” campaign has been an enormous success, involving artists from around the world. http://www.jawbone.tv/featured/2-featured/26-scrabbles-the-beautiful-word-campaign-true-collaborative-undertaking-.html. Hours before the campaign was about to win the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival grand prix award, the SCRABBLE® campaign was disqualified because it had previously been entered--in 2008. http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/jun/24/cannes-lions-grand-prix-winner-disqualified (Click below to see one of the ads.)

Long Island fifth and sixth graders compete in tournament
Close to 50 students competed at a tournament at the Merrick Library in Long Island, NY. http://www.liherald.com/detail/25477.html?content_source=&category_id=5&search_filter=&event_mode=&event_ts_from=&list_type=&order_by=&order_sort=&content_class=&sub_type=&town_id=
Nashua NH tournament in the news
http://www.unionleader.com/article.aspx?headline=Only+in+Print%3A+Scrabble+tourney+draws+top+players&articleId=26817d65-95de-4c75-af1b-e7ed0afcc455

PR firm’s new office features floor-sized SCRABBLE® board

Economic adviser Larry Summers has SCRABBLE® iPad app
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/07/AR2010060701140.html?hpid=moreheadlines

NJ fifth graders in SCRABBLE® tournament
Roosevelt School in Rahway recently held their eleventh annual Scrabble Tournament for fifth graders.  http://njtoday.net/2010/06/14/scrabble-scholars/

Hasbro will be offering additional digital games
EVELYN HOWARD
by Harold Rennett

Evelyn Howard, the founding director of the Chevy Chase-DC SCRABBLE® Club #171, passed away on January 15 of this year, in Port St. Lucie, FL, at the age of 86 years young.

She and her husband, Bill Holland, who survives her, hosted the Chevy Chase club in the early 80s, and they are among the finest people I have ever known. For a short time in the early 80s, Evelyn and Dan Pratt hosted Sunday meetings of Dan's Club 50 in Evelyn and Bill's home, and during that same period, I accompanied Bill and Evelyn to Jan Beck's club in Columbia many times on Monday nights. Despite the fact that Evelyn and Bill -- but especially Evelyn -- could beat a person up pretty badly in a game of SCRABBLE®, Bill and Evelyn were adored by everyone, everywhere. They were consistently rays of sunshine who were genuinely as thrilled by the SCRABBLE® (and non-SCRABBLE®) successes of their friends and acquaintances as they were by their own. For Evelyn and Bill, SCRABBLE® was more than just a game that provided them literally tens of thousands of hours of mental stimulation and competition over the years. SCRABBLE® was also a means to the end of establishing new friendships and deepening existing ones.

Evelyn and Bill were greatly missed when they moved out of the DC area to be closer to members of their large, close-knit, loving families, most of whom I had the pleasure of meeting when Bill and Evelyn finally "tied the knot" in the mid-90s after years of "sinful" cohabitation. Just as those families no doubt celebrated Evelyn's gifts to their lives when Evelyn departed in January, we should all celebrate the contributions that Evelyn made to our lives, including the lasting contribution she has made to many people whom she never knew -- the creation of Club 171. [This club is still going strong 30 years later, with a weekly attendance of about 20.]

In Evelyn's honor I have funded a prize for highest losing score in each of the divisions of the upcoming National SCRABBLE® Championship.

Harold Rennett is a former director of the Chevy Chase-DC SCRABBLE® Club #171.
ABRAHAM NATHANSON

Abe Nathanson, the inventor of Bananagrams (featured in the March issue of The Last Word), died of cancer on Sunday, June 6, at the age of 80.

Nathanson invented BANANAGRAMS® in 2006, when he was playing SCRABBLE® with his grandson, Aaron, and they felt the game was too slow. Nathanson said, “What we need is a game so fast it will drive you bananas,” and from those words the wildly successful game was born. With his family, Nathanson developed a fast-moving, age-neutral game that requires no math skills. His daughter Rena came up with the idea of packaging the tiles in a banana-shaped cloth pouch, which his ex-wife Sandra designed.

BANANAGRAMS® was an instant sensation from the moment the Nathansons presented it at the 2006 London Toy Fair. It sold half a million copies the first year, and it was this past holiday season’s top-selling game, selling approximately two million copies. The game was the 2009 Toy of the Year.

The Nathansons teamed with Joe Edley, the three-time National SCRABBLE® Champion, to produce two books of BANANAGRAMS® puzzles: BANANAGRAMS®!: The Official Book (reviewed in the March issue of The Last Word) and More BANANAGRAMS! There is also a puzzle book for children, BANANAGRAMS® for Kids (by C.C. Puzzability), and BANANAGRAMS® apps are available on Facebook and for the iPhone, the iPad, and the iPod Touch.

Nathanson was born in 1929 in Pawtucket, RI, the son of a fruit seller. He studied graphic design at Pratt Institute before forming a commercial design studio in Pawtucket with his brother Morris. Later he founded George Nathan Design, a company that designed graphics for bars, gift items, and executive toys. Other games Nathanson designed include PAIRS in PEARS®, APPLETTERS®, ZIP-IT®, OH-SPELL®, AND FRUITOMINOS®.

Nathanson is survived by his daughters Rena Nathanson, Brenda Moore, and Dana Nathanson; two brothers, Morris and Nathan; a sister, Rachel Shuchman; and four grandchildren.
SCRABBLE® Resources

There are many study tools to help tournament SCRABBLE® players hone their skills, including a number of programs that can be downloaded for free. This section will offer suggestions and links, plus feature each month a different SCRABBLE® resource. This month Marc Levesque discusses the development of his new Director! tournament management program.

DIRECTOR!
by Marc Levesque

At Cornelia’s request, I have put together this small overview of the origins of the new Director! tournament management program. Cornelia also asked for an overview of the program’s functionality, but you can already find that at http://www3.telus.net/director. So I’ll just do the origins part....

I took over as director of the Victoria, BC club in 2008 after our previous director resigned the role. This was followed shortly after by the persistent question from many of our club members: “So when are we going to have a tourney?” After about a year or so’s worth of insistent pleas, their perseverance paid off: I foolishly committed to holding my first tourney.

Being brand new at this director thing, and never having organized an event of any significance, I was a bit intimidated by the prospect. So I began researching how one might go about running a tourney (and the cart was now solidly in front of the horse).

John Chew’s excellent document on the subject, as well as the new NASPA Director’s Manual, had a wealth of information on what had to be done, but it looked daunting to a rookie like me. The biggest issue seemed to be what software to use to actually do all that registration, pairing, scorekeeping, prize determination, reporting, and results submission work. I tried all three of the existing programs for managing tournaments, but found them to either be lacking in some of what I saw as key features, or very difficult (for me, anyway) to learn and actually use. I really didn’t think I needed ALL the bells and whistles. So I scoured the web to see what else I could find.

I found many programs available for managing team sporting events (baseball, golf, etc.) and quite a few for managing chess tournaments. So, I downloaded a whack of them and tried them out, but none was even close to being suitable for SCRABBLE® tournaments. In addition, I wasn’t crazy about their interface designs either.

What I also found, though – and I can’t remember where I stumbled across it - was a very good document describing the requirements for the “ideal” SCRABBLE® tournament management program. The document is entitled “Tournament Software Design Goals: version 0.1.2 - 8/19/2007”. Someone by the name of Scott Smith (who I was unsuccessful in trying to locate) is cited as the author, but this document appears to have had input from quite a few people with a lot of knowledge concerning the requirements for running SCRABBLE® tournaments. This became my basis for determining what the program should be capable of doing.
So I thought, well that doesn’t look so hard to do – and started mocking up some interface design options, and banging out some code. It didn’t take all that long to come to the conclusion that this was going to be a lot harder to do than I initially thought. The nuts and bolts code stuff was relatively easy, but the biggest problem was how to design the interface in such a way that it would be relatively easy to use. And my tourney was coming up really soon now!

It eventually took quite a few iterations of various designs – and enduring some less-than-rosy feedback from a few initial beta testers – to come up with something that appeared workable. I have to admit, some of those iterations were… well… I think I still hear the echo of the term “ugly.”

I finished release 0 in the nick of time for my first tourney in November of last year, along with a whole backup approach to managing the tourney, done with excel spreadsheets, in my back pocket – just in case it all blew up in the middle of my first live tourney.

It worked fine, but I realized from that experience that it needed considerably more spit and polish. So I pored over the growing mountain of code for a little while longer.

In January 2010, Dan Horowitz, who manages the technical aspect of tournaments for Connie Creed in the Philly area, decided to give it a whirl for the Atlantic City tournament (111 players / 19 rounds). On that same weekend Art Moore in Florida (49 players / 14 rounds), and Tom Tremont in Illinois (32 players / 7 rounds) also decided to give it a go. The big debut weekend for Director! was a go.

I tested everything pretty thoroughly, but if there is one law of software development that you can’t possibly break, it is: “You will never find the last bug.” And with that many players and games involved in the first real test of this thing, something was bound to happen.

So I turned to that great Beta Tester in the sky and said: “If you have an ounce of mercy in any of those three souls, Lord, you will not let this become a disaster!” I guess He heard most of what I said, because most things worked, but of course, a few small things did go a tad awry. But hey, we were trailblazing here.

Since that time, I have received a number of great ideas from the original trailblazers and from additional directors, including some gems from Shan Abasi, Stefan Huber, Judy Cole, Linda Werner, Peggy Grant, Sue Hoehn, Stephanie Steele, Vicky Blizzard (sorry if I missed anyone), and I have been incorporating them into new releases as time permits. The bugs are being eradicated as they are discovered – but they aren’t breeding quite so prolifically any more.

I used the latest release this past weekend for my first multi-day tournament here in Victoria, and things worked out very well. The tourney ran very, very smoothly. So hopefully things will remain stable.

The program certainly does not do it all, but it does enough to get through most types of tournaments relatively easily. Over time, with all that “hands on” director advice, it can only improve.

Marc Levesque is the director of Victoria BC SCRABBLE® Club #402.
OTHER SCRABBLE® RESOURCE LINKS

PLAY SCRABBLE® ON LINE
POGO SCRABBLE®
The official SCRABBLE® online game. Created under agreement with Hasbro in 2008.

SCRABBLE® ON FACEBOOK
Select the SCRABBLE® application on the Facebook home page to play the official SCRABBLE® game. Various groups hold tournaments at this site, including a group called "Mad Scrabblers".

INTERNET SCRABBLE® CLUB
A Romanian-based site and application for interactive games. A favorite site for many of the top players.

PLAY LIVE SCRABBLE® CROSS-TABLES
Lists all upcoming tournaments, as well as results of past tournaments. Has SCRABBLE® tournament aides.

NASPA CLUB LISTINGS
Lists clubs throughout North America with their meeting times and locations.

NSA CLUB LISTINGS
Lists casual clubs throughout North America with their meeting times and locations.

Anagramming/Practice Tools
JUMBLETIME
A free web site for practicing anagramming skills.
MAC USERS: After you do a Jumbletime quiz on a Mac, the scroll bar to view the results is missing. To make it appear, go to the lower right corner and grab the striped triangle and shrink the window all the way to the top left corner. When you pull it back, the scroll bar to the right of the answers to the quiz (magically) appears. (Make sure you do this before you check your score against other players.) Also, before running a quiz, you might want to first press Control and scroll with the mouse to enlarge the screen so that you can more easily view the jumbles. Once you finish playing, scroll the screen back to its original size. (Thanks to Larry Rand and Monique Kornell.)

AEROLITH
A free application for practicing anagramming skills and learning words.

QUACKLE
A free application for playing, simulating, and analyzing games.

ZYZZYVA
A free application for practicing anagramming skills and learning words. Also has Word Judge capabilities.

LEXIFIND WORD FINDER
Type a word to check for acceptability (includes Collins words and TWL06). Also includes anagramming and constraint-based retrieval.

FRANKLIN SCRABBLE® PLAYERS DICTIONARY
An electronic handheld dictionary and anagrammer, with many helpful options and games. Includes the latest word lists, and can be adjusted from OSPD4 to OWL2 lists with a code.

CLICK HERE TO HELP END WORD HUNGER AS YOU LEARN WORDS
A free vocabulary testing site. For every correct word, grains of rice are donated through the United Nations World Food Program. Feed hungry people as you expand your vocabulary!
Online SCRABBLE® Discussion Groups

**CGP (crossword-games-pro@yahoogroups.com)**
This group, for tournament players and directors only, has the largest membership of any online tournament SCRABBLE® discussion group. Most important events and changes in the SCRABBLE® world are discussed on cgp. Admission is by approval only. Details can be found in the **NASPA Tournament SCRABBLE® Newsletter #1**.

**OSPD (ospd-scrabble@yahoogroups.com)**
This group, dedicated to players using *The Official SCRABBLE® Players’ Dictionary*, offers light-hearted humor, daily word lists, and more. Admission is to all SCRABBLE® lovers. Details can be found in the **NASPA Tournament SCRABBLE® Newsletter #1**.

**SCRABBLE® Blogs**

**THE BADQOPH DIRECTORY**
This is a database of blogs by known SCRABBLE® bloggers, primarily tournament players. As of March 29th there were 196 blogs in the directory.

**Cheat Sheets**

**MIKE BARON’S CHEAT SHEET**
A great cheat sheet with 2s, 3s, vowel dumps, short high-point-tile words, and good bingo stems. Includes useful front and back hook letters to make 3s from 2s. Adapted from Mike Barron’s *SCRABBLE® Wordbook* and the *Official Tournament and Club Word List, 2nd Edition*.

**MIKE BARON’S CHEAT SHEET (for School SCRABBLE® and home play)**
A great cheat sheet with 2s, 3s, vowel dumps, short high-point-tile words, and good bingo stems. Includes useful front and back hook letters to make 3s from 2s. Adapted from Mike Barron’s *SCRABBLE® Wordbook* and the *Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 4th Edition*.

**COOL WORDS TO KNOW**
A terrific cheat sheet from the National SCRABBLE® Association for School SCRABBLE® and home play. Gives useful information on how to find bingos, plus the 2s, 3s, vowel dumps, and short high-point-tile plays.

**COLLINS-ONLY CHEAT SHEET**
A cheat sheet of short Collins words NOT found in the *OWL2*. 2s, 3s, short high-point-tile words, and Q-without-U words.

**COLLINS WORD LISTS**
Useful links to Collins word lists can be found at the following websites: [http://](http://)

**Tournament Management Software**

**DIRECTOR!**
Marc Levesque’s software for managing tournaments (see story on page 74) Also has a Yahoo user group you can join as a support option.

**TOURNEYMAN**
Jeff Widergren’s software for managing tournaments.

**TSH**
John Chew’s software for managing tournaments, recently updated with new features.

**BOOKS**

**BOB’S BIBLE**
A terrific book to build word power for tournaments.

**BOB’S BIBLE, SCHOOL EDITION**
For School SCRABBLE® and home play.

**BROW-RAISERS II**
A brilliantly organized study guide geared towards the success of beginning and intermediate players.
THE CHAMPION’S STRATEGY FOR WINNING AT SCRABBLE® BRAND CROSSWORD GAME
A guide from North American SCRABBLE® Champion Joel Wapnick. Out of print, but available sometimes at Amazon.com and on disc. Note: New words not included.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE WORD BUILDER
Bob Jackman’s guide to building a strong Collins vocabulary, organized by word length, familiarity, and part of speech.

EVERYTHING SCRABBLE®, THIRD EDITION
The ultimate guide to winning at SCRABBLE® by 3-time National Champion Joe Edley and John D. Williams, Jr. Completely updated to include all new words. (See review in the January issue of The Last word.)

THE OFFICIAL SCRABBLE® PLAYERS DICTIONARY, FOURTH EDITION
The official word source for School SCRABBLE® and casual play.

THE OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT AND CLUB WORD LIST, 2ND EDITION
The official word source for NASPA tournament and club play.

SCRABBLE® TOURNAMENT & CLUB WORD LIST (COLLINS)
The official word list for international tournament play. (Available at SamTimer.com.)

SCRABBLE® WORDBOOK
A great word book for SCRABBLE® players by Mike Baron. OSPD4 words. (POO Lists available with words excluded from the OWL2.)
JULY TOURNAMENTS

**WEST**
- Reno NV Early Bird 2 7/1
- Reno NV Main Event 7/2-5
- Laguna Woods CA 7/4
- Berkeley CA 7/11
- Arcata CA 7/16
- Mountain View CA 7/18
- Portland OR 7/25

**MIDWEST**
- Akron OH 7/10-11
- Omaha NE 7/10-11
- Findlay OH (Restricted MI v. OH) 7/24-25
- La Grange Park IL 7/31

**NORTHEAST**
- Albany NY 7/1-5
- Bayside NY 7/10
- Philadelphia PA 7/18
- Concord MA 7/24
- Rockville MD 7/24

**SOUTH**
- Ft. Lauderdale FL 7/10
- Tampa FL 7/10
- Ft. Lauderdale FL 6/12
- Lexington KY LCT 7/18

**SOUTHWEST**
- Austin TX 7/16
- Dallas TX 7/24

**CANADA**
- Thunder Bay ON 7/3
- Guelph ON 7/11
- Toronto ON 7/16-18
AUGUST TOURNAMENTS

WEST
Berkeley CA 8/1
Laguna Woods CA 8/1
Mountain View CA 8/15
Sherwood OR 8/22

MIDWEST
Independence OH 8/21-22
Minneapolis MN 8/21-22
Flint MI 8/28-29

NORTHEAST
Bayside NY 8/14
Dover DE 8/28-30

SOUTH
Bluffton SC 8/14-15
Tampa FL 8/14
Lexington KY 8/22
Durham NC 8/28
Ft. Lauderdale FL 8/28

SOUTHWEST
National SCRABBLE® Championship (Dallas TX) 8/7-11
World Players Championship (Dallas TX) 8/13-16
Pagosa Springs CO

CANADA
Guelph ON CAN 8/15
Edmonton AB 8/21
Stratford ON CAN 8/21
Vancouver BC CAN 8/21
Archives

To access previous issues of *The Last Word* click the links below.

**Issue 1: November 2009**

**Issue 2: December 2009**

**Issue 3: January 2010**

**Issue 4: February 2010**

**Issue 5: March 2010**

**Issue 6: April 2010**

**Issue 7: May 2010**

**Issue 8: June 2010**