

SCRABBLE HAS NOT LOST ITS PIZZAZZ



by
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Writer, Meg Wolitzer said, “I really love Scrabble. I played it with my mother growing up. We took it everywhere with us. We didn’t know then about the two letter words. Who knew that AA, or more controversially, ZA, or QI were words? We were games family generally.”

Do you play Scrabble? If so, you’ll be interested in knowing that many Yiddish words have been added to Merriam-Webster’s Official Scrabble Dictionary.

In 2012, the JCC Camp Kingswood wrote, “GET YOUR TUCHIS TO JEWISH CAMP.” In 2014, the word “tuchis” is now acceptable in Scrabble!

“Tuchis” is a Yiddish word for bottom or buttocks. A “tuchis” is what a Jewish grandmother might call a baby’s bottom. They also give their grandchildren a “potch” or a gentle slap in “tuchis.”

Jews talk about “a pain in the tuchis/tuchus” or you might hear some teenager say, “This job at Burger King is a pain in the tuchus.” Or, we might hear, “Irving worked his tuchus off at the UJA fund-raising affair.”

Leigh Ann Jasheway composed a list of funny (“komish”) words to help you write funnier stories. “Tuchis” is one of them.

There are other meanings to the word:

A “toches-lecher” is a brown-noser, an apple-polisher.

A “toches in droissen” is a bare behind.

Leo Rosten (“Hooray for Yiddish”) writes about “T.O.T.--a vulgarism meaning the acronym for “toches oyfn tish”: backside on the table.

T.O.T. means:

Put all your cards on the table.

Stop beating around the bush.

Put up or shut up.

Let’s get down to brass tacks.

Rosten also writes about “tough toches”: Literally, it means “tough ass.” It also means, “touch luck,” “too bad,” “Nothing can be done about it,” and (ironically) “You better learn to like it.”

He uses this example: “If I have to pay you, I won’t be able to go to Vegas!” “Tough toches.”

“Ikh hob im in toches” means “I have him in the ass.” Meaning: I ignore him, don’t pay no heed.

Rosten said, “To describe someone who is a cold fish, street Yiddish goes “Er iz (hawt) a kalten toches: He is (has) a cold ass.

Joe Levin, a private investigator in Brooklyn, is an Orthodox Jew, a member of the Bobov Hasidic sect and the founder of T.O.T. Private Investigation and Consulting. One of his duties is to do background checks for prospective shidduchim, or Orthodox marital arrangements. T.O.T. is an acronym for the Yiddish expression, “Tuchis afn tish.” It means “Put your tuchis on the table.”

And, of course, speaking of weddings, we hear, “Nokh di khupe iz shpet di kharote.” (After the wedding it’s late to have regrets.)

Bruce Freeman wrote a piece [8/21/14] titled, “Small Business Professor.” He said, “One of the problems of a solo entrepreneur is having a limited skill set. You want to do everything and soon find out you cannot. There is an old European expression that a good friend reminded me of:

“With one tuchus, you can’t dance at two weddings.”

We could use the Yiddish expression, “Mit eyn tokhes ken men nit zayn oyf tsvey yaridn.” (You can’t do two things at one time. Or, “With one rear

end you can't be at two fairs.)

In the "Dictionary of Jewish Words" by Joyce Eisenberg and Ellen Scolnic, we are introduced to the word "tushee"--a cleaned up version of tuchis. This is a more acceptable euphemism for buttocks or rump. Used in the phrase "a potch in tuchis (a slap on the behind)."

MARJORIE WOLFE reminds her readers of these additional newly sanctioned words:

Mitzvah, aliyah, tallis, shmuck, shlub, schmutz and shlep. The chance of having "SHLEP" in your Scrabble tiles is 0.000023%. The best definition for the word: Ronnie Caplane writes, "What other word would you use to describe a woman with a purse falling off one shoulder, ill-assorted papers and books in one arm, a pen between her teeth, glasses slipping off her nose, a cup of coffee in one hand and a basket of bagels balanced in the other, walking to a meeting?"

Bromance - n. A close sexual relationship between men.

Frenemy - n. One who pretends to be a friend but is actually an enemy.

Jockdom - n. The world of athletes

Schmutz - dirt, grime

Texter - One who texts.

Selfie - An image of oneself taken by oneself using a phone camera.

Quinzhee - A shelter made by hollowing out a pile of snow.

MARJORIE has suggested that the Yinglish word "shtummie" (dummy--one who doesn't say much) be added to the list of new Scrabble words. "Shtum" means silent. "Look at him! At home he doesn't shut up, but the minute a pretty girl walks into the room, suddenly he's a shtummie!"