## LANGUAGE CORNER: Ask George. May 2009.

## Zillion Symmetries...

The intense interest aroused by my last month's discussion of large and very large numbers encourages me to continue! In fact, we were scrutinizing together only two words-billion and trillion.

But can you count beyond them? Have you ever asked yourselves what may come after? In other words, can you count beyond trillion? If you are not so sure, let's do it together! Let's count up to centillion and see what happens.

G1: one thousand is followed by 3 zeros, or 10 to the power of 3 . million 6 billion 9 trillion $\quad 12$ 6. 9.

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12 .
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G2: quadrillion ..... 15 ..... 15.
quintillion ..... 18 ..... 18.
sextillion ..... 21 ..... 21.
septillion ..... 24 ..... 24.
G3: octillion ..... 27 ..... 27.
nonillion ..... 30 ..... 30.
decillion ..... 33 ..... 33.
. ..... 63
vigintillion ..... 63.
G4: centillion 303 zeros ..... 303.

So many new words! And all of them, if they were to be accepted by the Chambers Dictionary, would be a treasure trove for the playing of Scrabble!

But from my own egoistically literary point of view, they are all tantamount to zillion: a fuzzy, indefinable, most remote sum-quite unencompassable...
ends

