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# *Broad Street Review*

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## August Letters: 'Guys and Dolls'....

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in *Editor's Letters*



Readers respond about 'Guys and Dolls,' 'As You Like It,' 'Crucifixion Resurrection,' Kile Smith's composer's block, Trump's family, and compensation for WHYY's chief.

*comments on*

[Making 'Guys and Dolls' great again](#)

by [Cameron Kelsall](#)

**Steve Cohen**

**of King of Prussia, PA on August 02, 2017**

*BSR's* reviewer of *Guys and Dolls* asked: "Has anyone ever figured out what a 'lickerish tooth' is?" An actor in that role wrote: "It was part of the description of the guy Arvide would wish on Sarah — standing there, gazing at you, with a longing gaze (sheep's eye), and a sweet smile (licorice tooth)."

Lickerish and licorish connote a fondness for liquor, which is also related to licorice, a sweet derived from a liquor. It means a fondness for food and, by extension, other sensual delights. Frank Loesser wrote in a 1961 letter: "I consulted Roget to find that 'covetous' (which was the key meaning in my mind) could be described as 'lecherous.' I then looked up 'lecherous' ... and found to my great delight two archaic spellings. One was 'licorice,' somehow combining the literal sense of 'sweet tooth' with the fundamental meaning of the word, and the other 'lickerish,' which had a much more satisfying adjective suffix."

Frank's daughter Susan paraphrased this in her biography of her father, *A Most Remarkable Fella*: "The short of it is that he wanted a companion word that meant 'covetous,' fearing 'sheep's eye' did not completely convey the exact thoughts of the guy who would be gazing at her. He went to Roget's and found that 'lecherous' was a sort of synonym for covetous, but didn't quite like the way it sounded, so he consulted the Oxford English Dictionary and found that two archaic spellings of 'lecherous' were 'licorice' and 'lickerish.' He chose the latter."