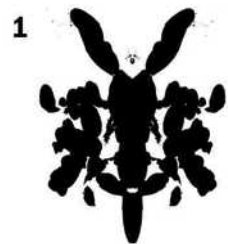


DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Ink-conceivable: The winning blots



BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1185 the Empress asked you to interpret any of these five genuine symmetrical inkblots (you could turn them upside down or sideways). We did promise not to psychoanalyze you, but man — some of you out there are likely to keep the shrink business thriving.

4th place

Blot 5 (upside down): Popeye's grandmother still enjoyed flying the trapeze, although spectators wished she would wear a sports bra. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring)

3rd place

Blot 5: Kilroy looks a little worse for wear these days. (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

2nd place and the stegosaurus/dragon hat:

Blot 3: "I am the Walrus, and I'm ready to PARTY!" (David Franks, Greenland, Ark.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Blot 2 (upside down): The OB/GYN knew he shouldn't be playing at work, but he was pretty excited to find a Pokemon sitting atop his patient's uterus. (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

Blotsam: honorable mentions

BLOT 1
Pressing leaves and flowers between the pages of a book can produce lovely keepsakes. Not so much with moths. (John Hutchins)

For the rest, look at Blot 1 upside down: A Stetson-wearing "good guy" double-fists two of the latest multi-clip auto-load fast-discharge combination grenade-launcher/bazooka/assault rifles with switchblade bayonets. Oh, sorry, SELF-DEFENSE rifles! (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

The new sheriff misunderstood the term "pushing up daisies." (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

Blot 1 upside down seems awfully . . . interested in Blot 5 upside down. (William Kennard, Arlington, Va.)

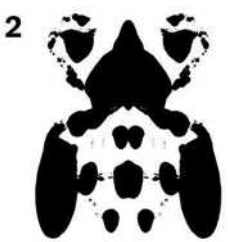
A short-armed cowboy with an archaepteryx in each hand: Tyrannosaurus Tex. (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Proof that even men with big hands can have problems down there. (Dave Matuskey, Sacramento, Calif.)

In an effort to attract a more diverse fan base, the new Dallas Cowboys logo features a buckaroo in chaps toting two feather boas. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

A Pilgrim shows off the two turkeys he bagged for Thanksgiving dinner. (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

A map of Virginia's 8th congressional district. (Martin Smith, McLean, Va., a First Offender)



BLOT 2
(Upside down) Mia Hamm's ultrasound. (David Patch, Toledo)

D.C. was much more crime-ridden back when the first panda came to town. (Mike Gips)

To add "fun" to the game, Major League Baseball is requiring catchers to wear mitts on both hands. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

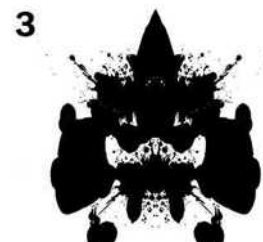
After retiring its dancing elephants, Ringling Bros. tried featuring stone crabs that juggle. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church, Va.)

Campaign ads have become so noxious that Nielsen offers gas masks as part of its TV survey gear. (David Patch)

(Upside down) Aerial view of Nationals Park during the seventh inning; note the exodus of fans and

crowding at subway stations. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Proverb for the Apocalypse: From little acorns grow mighty oak-crab monsters. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)



BLOT 3
The entrance to the "Tunnel of Love" at Trump Immigrant World amusement park. (Mark Raffman)

The Cheshire Cat found it easy, if not pleasant, to disappear into freshly paved asphalt. (Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.)

Two snails racing down Main Street USA to see the Disney fireworks. (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

The new North Korean fighter jet is so slow, geese can keep up with it. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Trump's attempt to clone himself for vice president went awry. (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

At the spotlight, Ginger finally caught the car. (Tom Logan, Sterling, Va., a First Offender)

Chucky gives two thumbs up after being hired by Putin to terrorize Clinton's campaign. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

They've finally identified the actual Devil that's in the details! (Beverly Sharp)

Blot 3 upside down plus Blot 5 right side up: The finalists in the GOP Angry Elephant logo contest. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)



BLOT 4
The only known collaboration between Georgia O'Keeffe and Jackson Pollock. (Drew Bennett)

Exacting vengeance on the pin that spoiled the perfect 300 game, thanks to the open-carry law. (Joanne Free, Clifton, Va.)

On the road after leaving her husband for the last time, Lorena Bobbitt saw a spider on the car seat next to her. (Lynne Larkin, Vero Beach, Fla.)

In Hasbro's Chess for Millennials, the bishops shoot lightning bolts. (Mark Raffman)

The pressure of the campaign finally gets to Melania. (Jeff Hazle, San Antonio, Tex.)

After gender reassignment surgery, Pig-Pen was pretty much the same person. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Discovered: the root cause of The Donald's anger: yuge hemorrhoids. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.)

Rare X-ray of a sweet tooth reveals a tiny, heart-shaped sugar lump at the core. (Kimberly Baer, Woodbridge, Va.)

ALL FIVE: Running over all these Style Invitational prizes had zero effect on their market value. (Jeff Martin, Rockville)

Still running — deadline Monday, Aug. 22: Our contest to describe a concept in one-syllable words. See bit.ly/invite1188.

Like clockwork — if your clock shows years — we present the latest Limerixon, our annual check-in with OEDILF.com, the ever-continuing project by Chris J. Strolin and various henchpersons to compile a dictionary of limericks featuring every word in the English language. The website has collected about 96,000 of the five-liners, with a projected completion date of Sept. 25, 2076. Last August, Chris and pals were up to the ga- words. **This week: Supply a humorous, previously unpublished limerick significantly featuring any English word, name or term beginning with "ge-,"** as in the example above by Nan Reiner that we're repurposing from the fa-word contest three years ago. See bit.ly/limericks2016 for our fairly strict rules on limerick rhyme and meter (in a nutshell: "perfect" rhyme, and a strong "hickory-dickory-dock" rhythm in Lines 1, 2 and 5; a "dickory-dock" in Lines 3 and 4; plus "weak" syllables on either side). See OEDILF.com about submitting limericks there after this contest is over.

Submit entries at the website bit.ly/enter-invite-1189 (all lowercase). Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a 1911 copy — that's the date of the handwritten inscription — of "The Last Days of Pompeii" by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, famed for the line "It was a dark and stormy night" and for the annual bad-writing contest that bears his name. Sample prose from the 1834 novel: "Beautiful Ione!" said Arbaces, as he bent to touch her hand, "it is you that have eclipsed the day — it is your eyes that light up the halls — it is your breath which fills them with perfumes." From Loser Elden Carnahan, who also includes a catalogue from a Bulwer-Lytton exhibition in England.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug, the older-model "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" mug or our new Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Magnet Dum Laude" or "Falling Jest Short." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Aug. 29; results published Sept. 18 (online Sept. 15). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules in addition to the limerick guide at bit.ly/limericks2016. The headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Dave Prevar. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/invdev). "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

BY ALAN ARBESFELD © 2016 CROSSYENERGY SYNDICATE LLC

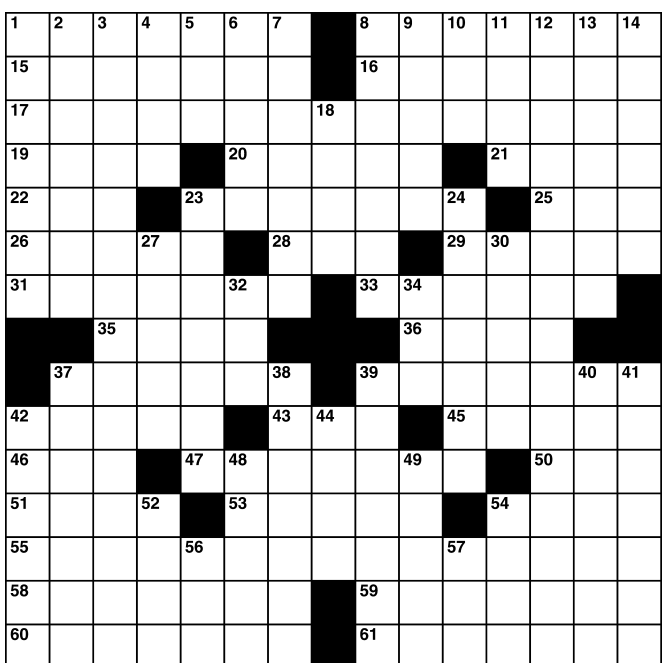
ACROSS
1 Notable success
8 Achieves success
15 Ship out
16 Another friendly enough to talk
19 Sticking point at the dinner table?
20 Jalapeño feature
21 To be, in Toulouse
22 When repeated, a '65 Dixie Cups hit
23 Comfort
25 Brooding sort?
26 Brief brawl
28 Hoedown partner
29 Explosive experiment, briefly
31 Auditions
33 Journalist Peter or actor Will

DOWN
35 "That hurt!"
36 Yesterday, in Roma
37 Duke locale
39 Like a knight preparing to joust
42 Longship crewmen
43 Put two and two together
45 Big name on the farm
46 Gut reaction?
47 Minerals used in glassmaking
50 Storage unit
51 True, to Thérèse
53 Fantastic bargain
54 Clown-sized shoe width
55 "This is too amazing to comprehend!"
58 Coldhearted

ACROSS
59 His nickname was "Schnozzola"
60 Understanding, of a sort
61 Walk unsteadily

DOWN
7 Georgia of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show"
8 Asian holiday
9 Barrie baddie
10 Temporarily
11 It's often shared in theaters
12 Feel indignant about
13 Rick's love
14 Potato sites?
15 The Muses and baseball lineups
16 Vacation excursions
17 Haute, Indiana
18 "Fab!"
19 Gate
20 Sight from the Bridge of Sighs
21 Member of the toy group
22 Checkpoint requests
23 East, in Ecuador
24 Bridge blunderer
25 Tiro
26 Stopped working
27 "From the sublime to the ridiculous — a step" (Napoleon Bonaparte)
28 Native of Attu
29 Vacation destination
30 Salon or Slate
31 Slew
32 Palindromic constellation

Answer to last week



HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Aug. 21: This year you have the combination of energy and enthusiasm, which makes the impossible possible. You might find that your creativity is high at times, yet at other times you can't seem to come up with a solution. Do not stress out; instead, choose to go with the flow. If you are single, your magnetism and charisma do an amazing job of attracting all types of admirers. If you are attached, the two of you often agree to disagree, mainly about a hobby or an issue that pervades your daily life. Don't make it a big deal. Aries is always fired up when he or she visits with you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You could be on the warpath in the morning. Slow down and assess the intensity of your reaction to get to the bottom of what triggered you. Your sense of humor helps you to lighten up.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
You have a lot to go over. You might feel pressured by someone and will want to nix an expenditure. Don't tell others what to do. One-on-one relating takes you down a sometimes hostile or dark path.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You are ready to be angry and/or withdrawn. If you try to have a conversation with this person, you are likely to be shut out. Know that this has nothing to do with you.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Listen to someone who wields clout over others. You often feel judged by this person. You also may experience a lot of fatigue when dealing with them.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You have a playful attitude that emerges when dealing with a love interest. This person could be touchy and/or difficult until you start giving him or her attention.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Someone will contact you with an invitation to go to the casino or to get into some other type of fun activity. Don't be surprised if there is money involved. You'll need to let this person know that you don't feel comfortable joining him or her.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You are ready for a change, but you could get a lot of flak from someone else involved in this decision. This person might not be interested in making any changes, even one as simple as rearranging a room. Don't let this situation get out of hand.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Be aware of your spending habits. You may have some difficulty pulling back right now, even though you know you should. Get down to the basics in a discussion where there might be a difference of opinion.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You might be more of a handoff than you realize. Perhaps you aren't aware of how much you are distancing yourself from others. Anger could pop up from out of nowhere. Understand what about this situation is triggering you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You might be keeping a lot of thoughts and feelings to yourself. When you suppress negativity or do not express it, it is likely to cause a strong reaction. Relieve some tension by taking a walk.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Look at what is happening within a friendship or in an important situation. Your vision of what is possible emerges. Once you start talking, you could reveal some intense feelings.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You could experience some pressure over a financial matter that is tying you up. A loved one could be unusually demanding. Open up to other points of view.

Coach's call: to leave kids unsupervised

Ask Amy
Dear Amy: I am a high school teacher and fifth-grade basketball coach.

I was recently coaching a fifth-grade practice when a disgruntled parent walked into the gym with 10 minutes left to go and started harassing me. He got into my face and started yelling at me with foul language. The parent was a rather large individual, and I did not want to start a physical altercation, so I handed him the ball and walked away.

I did not want to try to negotiate with him, because I didn't know how he would react.

The children's safety was not at stake, but I felt that mine was.

I left the gym and sat in my truck because I didn't have access to a phone inside the gymnasium.

There were about five or 10 parents and children who were on the sidelines who witnessed the event.

Afterward, the parents told me that the disgruntled parent just yelled at the kids to go home. No one was hurt.

The schools superintendent charged me with leaving the kids unsupervised for a period of 10 minutes. I felt I handled the situation best by walking away, keeping my distance from the parent and not trying to negotiate.

Do you feel that this is how most reasonable people would have reacted? Does the school have the right to charge me with leaving the children unattended for 10 minutes when my own personal safety was at stake?

Upset Coach

Upset Coach: I am very sorry this happened to you. I do happen to agree with the school's reprimand, however.

If there were a different sort of episode that frightened you (a lightning storm, power outage, etc.), would you have left these fifth-graders unsupervised (by school personnel) in the gym?

Obviously not. You should have asked a witnessing parent to please call school security (or the police) while you tried to deal with the parent.

Dear Amy: I want to weigh in on your advice to "Worried," who wondered how to help her husband's elderly grandmother.

Amy, I am a police officer, sometimes called upon to do "welfare checks" for elderly people. My heart breaks when I see how neglected and vulnerable some of our older citizens are.

Concerned

Concerned: We can all do a better job of taking care of one another.

Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribune.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.