DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

c‘LOSE R’eading from Week 1359

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1359** the Empress put a spin on the Invitational’s recurring “air quotes” contest; this time the quote had to span two or more words. She yawned throug a multitude of “pen is” jokes to unearth the gems here. **Note:** To read some of the air quotes, you’ll have to move the spaces around a bit; below, for instance, “pant, son” becomes “pants on.”

4th place:

The president’s motives were clear, as anyone can see by reading the t**“ext or t”**ranscript of his calls. *(Mark Raffman, Reston)*

3rd place:

“The Flat Earth Society is having a meeting — if you want to be a partici**‘pant, son, head’** on in.” *(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)*

2nd place and the Hanukkah socks with the 7-branch menorah:

“That will absolutely be your la**‘st fu’**lmination, Rudy!” *(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)*

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

“Honey, I just got the Ancestry.com results in and . . . thi**‘s is ter’**-rible . . .” *(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)*

Indisputa‘ble h’onor: Honorable mentions

As we watched Fiona H**“ill wind”**-ing up her testimony, it was clear she smelled something rotten. *(Sam Mertens)*

“Honest**‘ly, in g’**iving you the car for this price, I’m losing money!” *(Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)*

What do I love most about you? Hm-m-m . . . oh, yeah! You are Nirv**“ana to my”** soul! *(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)*

Although never a fait ac**“compli, cit”**ations from legal cases proved it was still an impeachable offense. *(Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)*

All this bravado and big talk is ho**“w I’m p”**ublicly making myself look strong and powerful!! *(Sarah Walsh, Rockville)*

I **“hear Se”**an is hitching a ride to go volcano surfing today — do you know if he has a ride back? *(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)*

“Your second inauguration, Mr. President? I’d be delighted to pla**‘n it wit’**h Jared.” *(Chris Doyle)*

Two weeks ago, the freezer went ka**“put. Rid”**iculous to throw away all that good food, though! *(Beverley Sharp)*

At their weekly golf match, if he could shoot**“par, Don”**ald Trump promised Roger Stone a big prize. *(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)*

A wife who tinkers with the temperature settings at home will pu**“t her most at”** odds with her husband. *(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)*

“Listen, intelligence agencies: I don’t need any more of your in**‘put; in’**deed, I have a better source of data.” *(Mark Raffman)*

Going out on a l**“imb, I be”**t I know how some people are dealing with the whole impeachment news. *(Sam Mertens)*

Analysts expect that the outlook for the budget motel indus**“try st”**ays strong this holiday season. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond)*

Many a pla**“ce o”**f business has at least one overpaid, underqualified executive. *(Sam Mertens)*

“At those pageants, oh, I’m so sl**‘ick. Y’**ou can do anything when you’re a celebrity.” *(Joanne Free, Clifton)*

“Why don’t you put that thing away so we can talk about our feelings on this tr**‘ip, hone’**y?” *Jeff Shirley)*

Did the ’Skins choose the wrong quarterback to go wit**“h? ask ins”**iders. *(Steve Fahey, Olney)*

Can you believe the . . . amazing husban**“d I’m wit”**h? — M. Trump *(Jesse Frankovich)*

Hey, i**“f I red”**irected a few company funds into my bank account, is that a problem? *(Hildy Zampella, Alexandria)*

“As your next president I promise change, a new direction, and better live**‘s. Ame’**rica, you can trust me!” *(Sarah Walsh)*

“If you ask **‘me, th’**is trailer park has everything we need.” *(Lee Graham, Rockville)*

DESIGN BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Announcing our new Loser Mug for third- and fourth-place finishers, replacing our “Gotta Play to Lose” model. The idea got ink for Drew Bennett in a long-ago contest. Limited edition of 72!

New contest for Week 1363: The Year in Redo, Part 2

Winner of Week 1351, Halloween ideas: **Stick some googly eyes on your rotating lawn sprinkler and say it’s Rudy Giuliani.** *(Hildy Zampella)*

Winner of Week 1336, something you could say both at a restaurant and when Trump visits your country: **“Can we get it to go?”** *(Rob Cohen)*

Winner of Week 1340, change a famous name slightly: **Marlon Blando: “Stella, could you come here for a minute?”** *(Jonathan Jensen)*

Winner of Week 1348, compare two items from a list: **How is a hard Brexit like a pair of Jockey shorts? They’re both things we hope we never see Boris Johnson pull off.** *(Jon Ketzner)*

It’s Week 2 of our annual retrospective, in which you get to enter any of the previous year’s contests. Last week we covered November 2018 to May; now you get a crack at the 25 newer ones, all the way up to this week’s results. That stretch includes fake trivia; cartoon captions; two song parody contests that more or less overlap; timely Halloween ideas; poems featuring new dictionary words; limericks; double-entendres; more more more — and of course several contests for neologisms, in which you coin a new word. So: **Enter (or reenter) any Style Invitational contest from Week 1334 through Week 1359.** You may enter multiple contests as long as you don’t submit more than 25 entries in all. Feel free to refer to more recent news in any of the contests. You may even resubmit non-inking entries from earlier contests.

See descriptions and links for all the old contests in this week’s Style Conversational column at **wapo.st/conv1363** (published late Thursday afternoon, Dec. 19). Please check the results of that week’s contest (four weeks down the list) to make sure your idea didn’t already get ink. Please begin each entry with the week number plus a reminder of which contest that is (e.g., “Week 1340, puns on people’s names”). If you’re not a Post subscriber, email me at pat.myers@washpost.com and I’ll give you other directions.

Submit up to 25 entries at **wapo.st/enter-invite-1363** (no capitals in the Web address). Don’t use the entry forms for the earlier contests! Deadline is Monday, Dec. 30; results will appear Jan. 19 in print, Jan. 16 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a thin, stretchy mouth-mask in a cheery hideous-skull motif, modeled obligingly here by the Crown Princess of The Style Invitational, a.k.a. Valerie Holt and Thing Two.

Other runners-up win one of the new “For Best Results, Pour Into Top End” Loser Mugs or our “Whole Fools” Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, “Too-Weak Notice” or “Certificate of (de) Merit.” First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at *wapo.st/InvRules*. The headline “C‘lose R’eadings’ is by Chris Doyle; Kathy El-Assal wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at *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 reviews each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter — I’ll include synopses and links for of the contests you can use for this week’s recap — check it out at **wapo.st/conv1363**.

PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

You’re never fully dressed without a smile! This week’s second prize.

Nine out of 10 Fox News viewers say the administration’s immigration recor**“d is a ster”**ling success. *(Chris Doyle)*

Our neighbor will occasionally get ti**“psy, chop at h”**is hand and bury a finger in the backyard, but otherwise he seems like a normal guy. *(Chris Doyle)*

Professor, are you sure giving the class a take-home fin**“al exa”**m was a good idea? *(Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring)*

“I’m always the smartest person in the roo**‘m or on’**line!” he tweeted. *(Joe Neff, Warrington, Pa.)*

After they leave the **“spa, Ms. Pam’s pa, Ms. Pam’”**s ma and her children will lead us in some Monty Python songs. *(Jeff Shirley)*

Who’s the most sni**“de, vin”**dictive member of Congress? *(Frank Mann, Washington)*

Who’s to blame for gu**“n ra”**mpages? Oh, it’s a mystery. *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

And Last: I’m installing ex**“tra sh”**elves for all my Style Invitational prizes. *(Sam Mertens)*

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1363.

Still running — deadline Monday, Dec. 23: Part 1 of our 2019 do-over contest. See

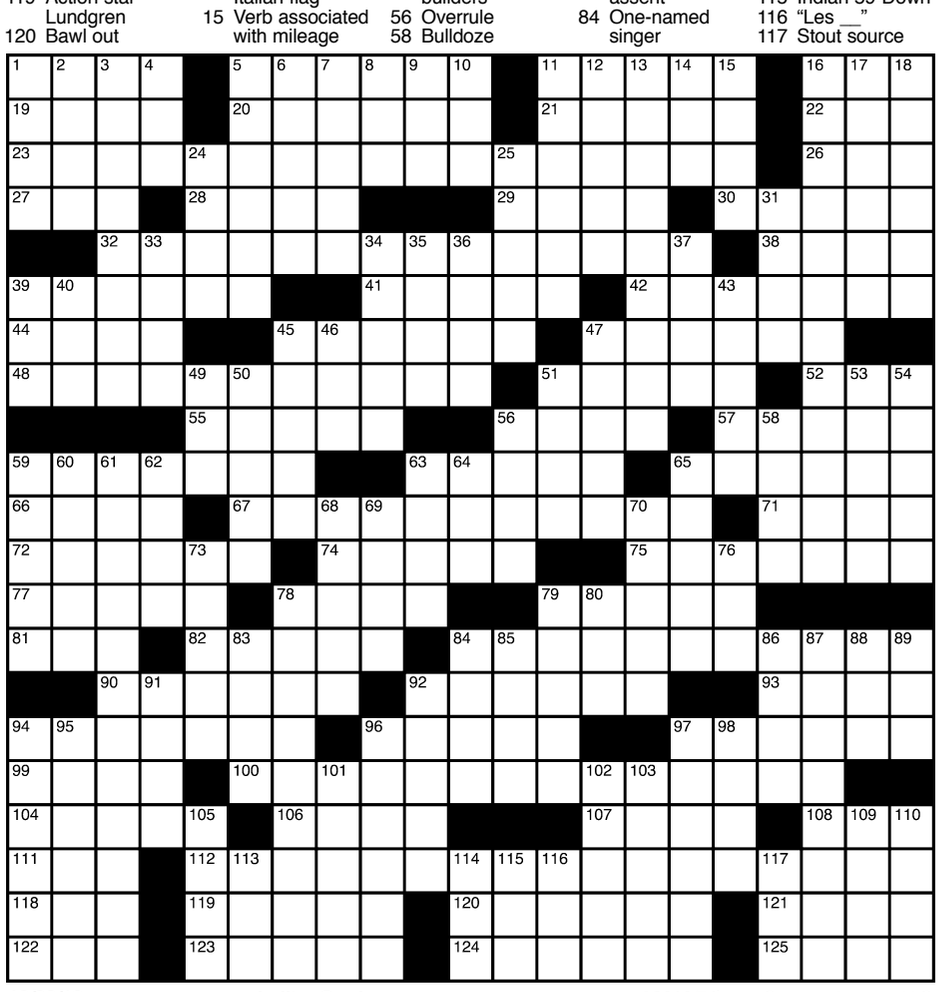
L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

“AT THE HELM” By PETER KOETTERS

ACROSS
1 Glimpse
5 Way up
11 “Modern Family” network
16 Bush found in Florida
19 Taiwanese superstar Jay
20 Indiana Big Ten school
21 Anne of comedy
22 Kerfuffle
23 *Without hesitation
26 “Young Sheldon” network
27 Big-eyed bird
28 Johns in Scotland
29 Thought of Monet
30 Farm team links
32 *Opponent of the U.S. entry into WWII
38 Poop out
39 Certain noble’s domain
41 “Speed-the-Plow” playwright
42 Broadcasts
44 Underway, in a way
45 Upbraids
47 Bear witness
48 *“Sheik of ... burning sand” in a Ray Stevens hit
51 Michelangelo work
52 Curable aliment
55 “Death, be not proud” poet
56 Stylish Christian
57 Espresso foam
59 “Death Wish” star Charles
63 Tire material
65 Unkempt
66 Automation prefix
67 *Back-to-basics food regimen
71 “J’Accuse...!” author
72 Middle-earth tongue
74 Modeling agent?
75 Rubber glove materials
77 Kavanaugh colleague
78 Awestruck
79 Chile con __: cheesy Tex-Mex sauce
81 Brit. medal
82 Fountain choices
84 *Moments requiring decisive action
90 Wasatch dweller, perhaps
92 Believer
93 Zilch
94 Greek letter that inspired the euro symbol
96 “__ you done?”
97 Aptly named Vt. ski resort
99 Small indentation
100 *Groups that pervert justice
104 Beatnik’s “Got it!”
106 Oscilloscope knob
107 Twice tetra-
108 PC brain
111 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame architect
112 1865 classic not written for the characters that start the answers to starred clues
118 Annex
119 Action star Lundgren
120 Bawl out
121 Mirrored
122 Silent consent
123 “Hasta la vista!”
124 Digestion aid
125 Tender in Havana

DOWN
1 Smart speaker brand
2 Display
3 Lifeguard’s domain
4 Goofy laugh
5 Drone shelter
6 Largest division of Islam
7 Dramatic mus. marking
8 Writer LeShan
9 Vow taker
10 Youngest of nine Kennedy siblings
11 In the thick of
12 “John Brown’s Body” poet
13 Self-indulgent sort
14 Numero di colori on the Italian flag
15 Verb associated with mileage
16 *Food chain with a roundheaded spokesman
17 Stefan of tennis
18 Heads
24 Legal encumbrance
25 Horse fathers
31 Elevator guy
33 Ancient Dead Sea kingdom
34 Dino’s love
35 FDR’s dog
36 Cinephile’s website
37 “Hud” director Martin
39 Barnyard bleat
40 Tray filler
43 Come to, as an agreement
45 Medicinal shrub
46 Spam holder
47 Garlicky sauce
49 NFL stats
50 Bootlegger’s haul
51 Variegated
53 Mosey
54 Chichén Itzá builders
56 Overrule
58 Bulldoze
59 Basketful on the table
60 Basketful on the table
61 *1990 Paul Simon song, with “The”
62 “__ isn’t!”: emphatic rebuttal
63 Industrial settler?
64 Duty
65 Tuck away
68 Like the Impossible Burger
69 Heroic poem
70 Pick
73 San Bernardino Co. is part of it
76 Tater __
78 Bing Crosby’s role in “Robin and the 7 Hoods”
79 Westernmost South American capital
80 Young __
83 Reluctant assent
84 One-named singer
85 Vegas rival
86 Caltech, e.g.: Abbr.
87 Guy’s grooming portmanteau
88 Pre-1868 Tokyo
89 Jug band instrument
91 __ bar
92 Cheery refrain
94 Auto-injector brand
95 Big citrus fruit
96 __ Raisin, British whodunit sleuth named for a British writer
97 Change in form
98 Something under the sink
101 Chilly
102 With feigned shyness
103 Logical “razor” creator
105 Bean bags?
109 Bakery array
110 Reverse
113 Iowa college
114 Spleen
115 Indian 59-Down
116 “Les __”
117 Stout source



12/22/19 xwordeditor@aol.com ©2019 Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Answers to last week’s puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Dec. 22: What you can expect this year is the unexpected. Once you find your life settling down and working well, do not be surprised at the wave of excitement that falls on you. Children and loved ones could be involved. If single, you could be overwhelmed by a series of passionate love affairs; with each affair, you might believe this is the right person. Let time be the judge. If attached, you will not be able to complain about boredom. It will be as if you are newlyweds or new lovers again. Scorpio encourages you to live life with passion.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
One-on-one relating can take you down an unexpected path. Do not fight the inevitable. Instead, toss yourself into the situation — even if it is just a snowball fight. Check in with an older relative.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Continue to defer to a strong-willed person in your life. At times, you can get stubborn and resist this person’s leadership. Right now is not the time to make an issue out of his or her behavior.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Pace yourself, and you could be pleased at how much you complete. You might opt to join the family on an outing that is tied to the season. A loved one could be difficult but does not intend to be.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Your romantic nature could emerge with the celebrations. You might even consider tackling a loved one under the mistletoe. No matter what age you are or what stage in life, smiles and winks lighten up your face as well as those around you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Activity surrounds your home and domestic life. Though you might go off to church or some other get-together in the morning, you eventually head home. Many of you will be catching up on last-minute details.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Speak your mind with care. If not careful, you could unleash a powder keg. You might have had enough of someone or a certain situation. There are many ways of expressing your discontent other than tumbling into a squabble.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Your more positive and optimistic personality emerges. You could go off, if your budget permits, to buy some last-minute gifts or add one or two people on your gift list. Others notice the look of mischief on your face.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
The moon in your sign makes you the star and centerpiece of the day. Technically, others should go out of their way to please you. But if you don’t expect that response, you can’t be disappointed.

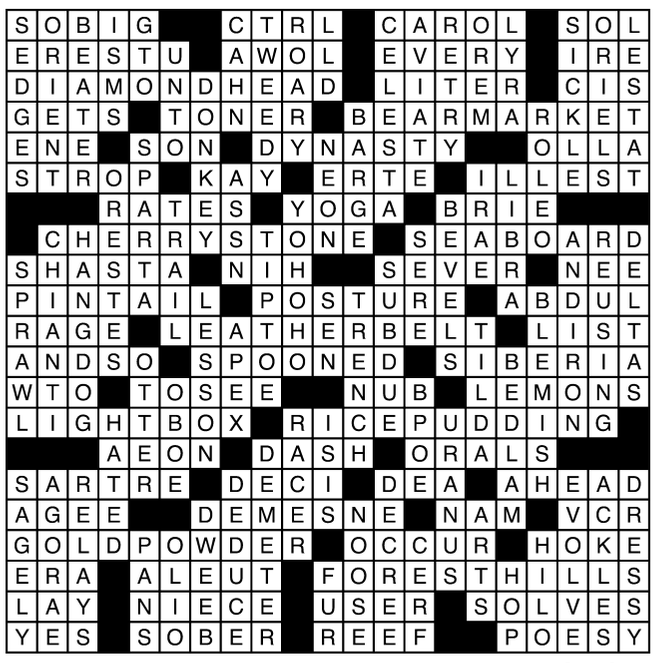
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Step back and remain sure of yourself and what you need to do. You might want to make a list of everything you feel you need to do before Santa slides down your chimney.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Circle the wagons around a fun holiday happening that you and many of your friends enjoy. Be reasonable about expectations. Someone whose response you dearly care about could be disappointed.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Many eyes turn to you. Calls come in, friends knock on the door, emails show up. It appears as if others want you to join them, or vice versa. Pick and choose according to your preferences. A friend could be demanding.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Reach out to loved ones at a distance. You also might want to start thanking that same group for presents received. One friend really would appreciate some extra time with you. Make it so.

Answers to last week’s puzzle.



12/15/19