

## DIVERSIONS

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## Laugh after death: Obit poems

BY PAT MYERS

In our annual obit poem contest, the Empress asked for short poems about those who reached their expiration dates in 2019. As usual, the Loser Community dug up — er, discovered — some fascinating formers.

## 4th place:

**Fred Cox (1938-2019)**, co-inventor of Nerf football  
His toy's a neurologist's dream — Soft footballs won't get you concussed!  
If only pro leagues would adjust By issuing one to each team  
And swapping each stadium's turf For 1.3 acres of Nerf.  
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

## 3rd place:

**Dan Robbins (1925-2019)**, inventor of the paint-by-numbers kit  
He's gone to his eternal slumber In (7) Earth and (18) UMBER.  
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

## 2nd place and the little monster head that pops up from your pocket:

**John Dingell (1926-2019)**, longest-serving member of Congress  
Of late Representative Dingell, A person with class might have said,  
"With statesmen in heaven you mingle!"  
Trump chose to be classless instead.  
To Dingell, with great veneration, We offer a toast, raise your cup to him!  
Though Trump gives him no admiration,  
One day he will surely look up to him.  
(Bill Dornier, Indianapolis)

## And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

**George Laurer (1925-2019)**, inventor of the bar code  
In the annals of science, no person did more  
To relieve the long lines in the grocery store  
Than did George Joseph Laurer, whose bar code allows  
Us to breeze through the checkout with no time to browse.  
But I wish that he'd minored in English in school  
And invented a bar-coded grammar-check tool  
To inform the unedited store-sign reviewer,  
This checkout's for folks with "10 ITEMS OR FEWER."  
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

## Fail of tears: Honorable mentions

**Don Imus (1940-2019)**, frequently offensive radio host  
I. His fans will miss his slurs and slime;  
Grief their (low) brow's adorning, I found him crude and dumb, so I'm For Imus not in mourning.  
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

II. Some Rutgers alumnae may feel a bit happy  
That Imus is taking his eternal nappy.  
(Ken Kaufman, Derwood, Md.)

**Ronald Cyr (1954-2019)**, Darwin Award winner  
Ronald Cyr, age 65, a most distrustful chap,  
Determined to defend his home, devised a booby trap.  
He rigged a handgun's trigger so when opening the door,  
An unsuspecting burglar would be burgle-ing no more.  
His booby trap worked right on cue!  
The burglar, is he dead?  
No, Ronald absent-mindedly walked through the door instead.  
The moral's not mysterious: Don't mess with guns — they're Cynious.

(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

**George Rosenkranz (1916-2019)**, an inventor of the birth control pill  
Higgledy piggledy,  
Mister George Rosenkranz:  
World population is Lower (a ton)

Thanks to his efforts in Biotechnology;  
Thanks to his passing, it's Lower by one.  
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

**Ric Ocasek (1944-2019)**, lead singer of the Cars  
The Beetle, the Gremlin, the Pinto — so classic —  
The Yugo, the Chevy Chevette.  
And now we can add to this list Ric Ocasek:  
These Cars have their makers all met.  
(Jesse Frankovich)

**Russ Gibb (1931-2019)**, started 1969's "Paul is dead" rumor



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## New contest for Week 1369: Shoot us some oops

**A text:** Hi, Max. This is Richard, next door. I've been riddled with guilt for months and haven't had the courage to tell you face-to-face. When you're not around, I've been sharing your wife, day and night, probably more than you. See, I know it's no excuse, but I haven't been getting it at home recently. I hope you'll accept my sincere apology and forgive me. Please suggest a fee for usage and I'll pay you. — Richard

**Second text a moment later:** Damn auto-correct. Not "wife" — WiFi!!!

When Loser Michelle Stupak shared the joke above in the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook (and Loser Elden Carnahan suggested it as a contest), there was a middle section about Max shooting Richard to death and then getting this second text, but you get the idea without the violence. So: **This week: Tell us a concise original joke that revolves around a typo or misheard word.** Shoot for 100 words or fewer; the example above comes in at 86. Good, effective joke-writing will get the ink: The best jokes will be clear but won't hit the reader over the head with an obvious punchline. You can use any genre of humor if it doesn't run too long.

Submit up to 25 entries at [wapo.st/enter-invite-1369](http://wapo.st/enter-invite-1369) (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, Feb. 10; results will appear March 1 in print, Feb. 27 online.

**Winner gets the Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a lovely and useful addition to any fine home or motorcar: It's a winsome plush monkey that dispenses tissues from its red-rimmed butt. Donated by rookie Loser Steve Smith.

**Other runners-up** win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mugs or our "Whole Fools" Grocery 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](http://wapo.st/InvRules). Jesse Frankovich, Jon Gearhart and Tom Witte all came up the headline "Laugh After Death"; Duncan Stevens wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. 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](https://www.facebook.com/bit.ly/inkofday); follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

**The Style Conversational:** The Empress's weekly online column reviews each new contest and set of results. Check it out at [wapo.st/conv1369](http://wapo.st/conv1369).



**Monkey sneeze, monkey doo: This week's second prize.**

On McCartney's next album, just slow down that whir, isolate, play it back, and he'll chant: "Daed si sssuR." (Frank Osen)

**H. Ross Perot (1930-2019)**, third-party presidential candidate and fierce opponent of NAFTA  
I. When you were laid upon the bier,  
Then lowered in the ground, I hope that no one said, "I hear A giant sucking sound!"  
(Duncan Stevens)

II. Is Ross Perot now down below, Or up above ascendant?  
Or has he found a middle ground That suits an independent?  
(Jesse Frankovich)

**Peter Tork (1942-2019)**, of the Monkees  
I just heard the news on my shortwave receiver  
That Peter Tork died, and now I'm a bavearer.  
(Chris Doyle)

**Unnamed poacher in Kruger National Park, South Africa, killed by an elephant, eaten by lions**  
One night a greedy poacher in pursuit of rhino horn  
Came face to face with justice,

leaving family to mourn.  
He and his pals sneaked in the park; an elephant attacked!  
His friends were in a frenzy as they watched him getting whacked.  
The lions were delighted! An embarrassment of riches  
Just waiting to be eaten! (What they left: his skull and britches.)  
The moral of this story (it's a pun; I know, it hurts):  
When poachers prey in national parks, there might be just desserts.  
(Beverly Sharp)

## What a Way to Go

**Various decedents**  
A temp worker drowned in a chocolate-filled vat;  
An elephant fell on a hunter — kersplat!  
In Australia, a woman died getting an egg  
When a rooster attacked her and pecked at her leg.  
A device that was rigged by some self-taught schlemiel  
Killed a granny attending a gender reveal.  
What with all the weird ways people breathed their last breaths, I'd say 2019 was a year for weird deaths.  
(Chris Doyle)

**Philip Gips (1931-2019)**, movie poster designer  
His best work? Could be "Rosemary's Baby."  
Or "Superman," "Network" or "Alien," maybe.  
Great talent gets passed down, you all might be thinking.  
Yet I'm only good at the art of not inking.  
(Mike Gips, Bethesda, his son)

Many more honorable mentions in the online [Invite at wapo.st/invite1369](http://wapo.st/invite1369).

**Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 3: Our cartoon caption contest. See wapo.st/invite1368.**

## L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

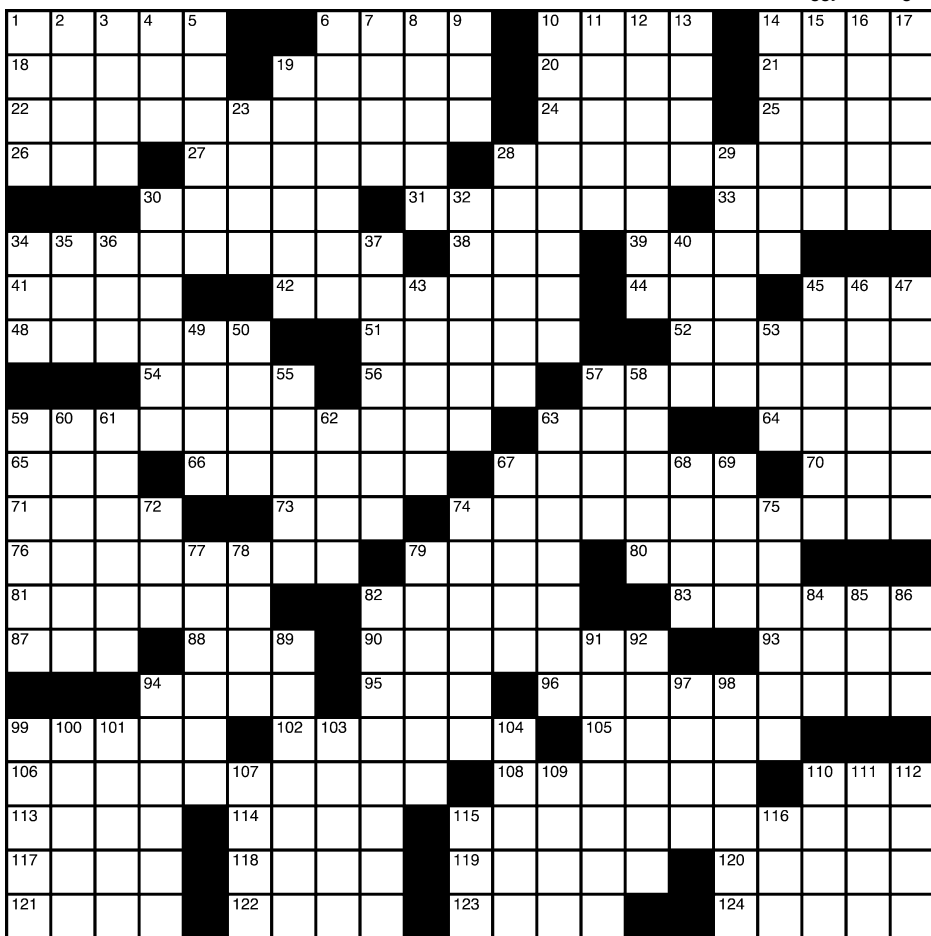
## "WHEN IN ROME" By MIKE PELUSO

**ACROSS**  
1 Learn to fit in  
6 Wilson's predecessor  
10 Eponymous  
14 2000s TV sitcom  
18 Funs for it  
18 Chili dish with green sauce  
19 Early Arizona natives  
20 Tourney format, briefly  
21 Siouan people  
22 Show for which Erika Szlezak won six Daytime Emmys  
24 Amt. rarely charged  
25 Lahore tongue  
26 Carried out  
27 Theater sight  
28 Films with depth?  
30 Hammed it up  
33 Border range  
34 Video poker basis  
38 Home security giant  
39 Tom Joad, e.g.  
41 Kolkata wrap  
42 Heavy marble  
44 Slime  
45 Inflation spec  
48 Capital north of Syracuse  
51 Window treatment  
52 Rolled up  
54 Scand. country  
56 Gospel singer  
57 Winans  
57 It's not good to be behind it  
59 It's usually attached to a house  
63 Former Hanford overseer: Abbr.  
64 Key, perhaps  
65 Management deg.  
66 Charming rural  
67 Takes in, say  
70 La Méditerranée, e.g.  
71 Hall of Fame pitcher  
73 One always reaching for the sky?  
74 Certain incumbent's rally cry  
76 1995 Hugh Grant film  
79 Decada components  
80 Pride and envy  
81 Barry Gibb, for one  
82 Wing it  
83 Aggravate  
87 Immigrant's subj.  
88 Soup legume

90 Transmission need  
93 "I'm on it, I'm on it!"  
94 Ratted  
95 Nevada Northern Railway  
96 Symbol of untouchability  
99 Stand for a canvas  
102 Swallow  
105 Exhaust  
106 Set of schools that includes Vassar  
108 Sun-Maid product  
110 Portland summer hrs., perhaps  
113 Theta follower  
114 El  
115 2000s series set in a funeral home  
117 Shut (up)  
118 Alaskan island in the Eastern Hemisphere  
119 "Sorry, not for me"

**DOWN**  
1 Lifelong, as a fan  
2 Seller of dogs  
3 Like the Namib  
4 Adobe file format  
5 Disc golf starting point  
6 Attacks, knight-style  
7 Friend of François  
8 Green Bay legend  
9 Mao \_\_\_-tung  
10 Sent in  
11 Pitcher of milk?  
12 Pudelpointer, say  
13 Time toggle  
14 Site of Pei's pyramid  
15 Glass-roofed lobbies

16 Runway walker  
17 Grinch creator  
19 Toughies  
23 All \_\_\_; including everything  
28 One of the halogens  
29 "Yes, yes, Dominique"  
30 Scurry, 1999 Women's World Cup championship U.S. team goalkeeper  
32 Evil intent  
34 Brandy letters point  
35 Siamese, e.g.  
36 Museum works  
37 Online program  
40 2001 Peace Prize sharer  
43 Poem of loss  
45 Hospital supply  
46 Word with best or book  
47 Cars in jams, say  
49 "Star Trek" franchise  
Klingon pyramid  
50 2012 Best Picture  
53 DH's stat  
55 Former 49ers coach Bill  
57 Nix  
58 Bakery workers  
59 Reach for the Sky  
60 Alpine goats  
61 Monterey neighbor  
62 Old-time cinemas  
63 Collection plate alternative  
67 French 101 verb  
68 Jockey strap  
69 "Auld Lang \_\_\_"  
72 Dress (up) fancily  
74 Mosaic pieces  
75 Prevents, by law  
77 Sherpa, commonly  
78 Suffix with ump-  
79 Astaire and a singer  
82 Survey category  
84 Fight stopper, for short  
85 Online response to humor  
86 Barely manage, with "out"  
89 Disturb  
91 Most up in the air  
92 Botches, with "up"  
94 Option at the bagel shop  
97 Forget to mention  
98 Academic job security  
99 Throw out  
100 Its name is derived from Provençal words for "garlic" and "oil"  
101 Stringed Asian instrument  
103 Homes in the woods  
104 Nonsense  
107 Engage in verbal jousting  
109 In the distance  
110 Marine hazard  
111 Word with sleep or freeze  
112 Pace with a wide range of speeds  
115 Guest in a team owner's skybox, often  
116 Eggy beverage



2/2/20

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

## HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Feb. 2:** This year, you experience an innate tension between your personal life and what you would like to do emotionally. You might be vested in being viewed a certain way. If single, you meet people through family, real estate or by being close to home. Someone you believe is cool at first could become a stick in the mud. If attached, you will be juggling your desires vs. security and family. Expect some conflict but do not give up. Taurus might be stubborn and unpredictable.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)  
Do not become distracted by a group of friends or loved ones. You might want to deal with a financial matter that keeps coming up. You might not have anticipated this issue. Pull back and do some deep thinking.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)  
Tension mounts when dealing with a domestic issue or a personal desire. You feel as if you are roped into a no-win situation. Give the matter a break. Go off and escape to a movie or a late brunch.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)  
A nagging question keeps coming up in the back of your mind. You will know the answer soon enough. You might be tempted to take off and go for a drive in the country or to the movies to clear your mind and thoughts.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22)  
You might be sure about what is needed to make a situation work. Friends support this idea. They also would like to get together to party in the afternoon. Is there any reason not to?

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22)  
You often feel tested this month, especially around your half birthday. What occurs lets you know how well you are living your year. If you experience a lot of flak, you might want to clear out the source. If this period flows, you are living your year well.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)  
Reach out for someone you value who lives at a distance. Often, your conversations with this person are noteworthy and help you see another perspective. Be open to change around a key relationship.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)  
Defer to others with pleasure. What they could come up with might

delight you and a friend. Let go of a need to control for now and just relax. You have a group of fun-loving people around you.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)  
You could head in another direction; however, a loved one keeps roping you in. Be happy that this bond exists. Tension builds around your home and family. Just accept the moment as it is, and don't try to change it.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)  
Where your friends are might be the most fun place to be. Nevertheless, you need to clear out a project that has been on the back burner for too long. Do not hesitate to say no when someone asks you to pitch in on a project.

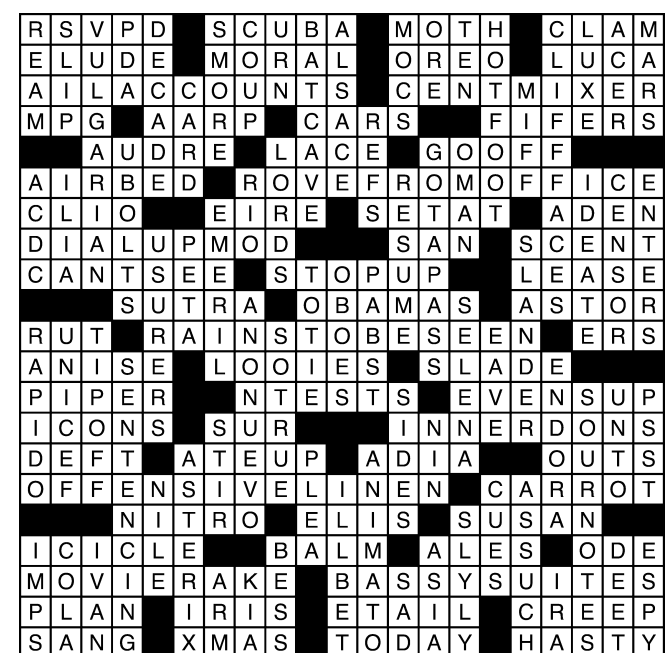
**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)  
Your creativity emerges, and

though you tend to have a more conservative outlook than many people, you will open up to a new idea and an unusual friend. Be your own best friend dealing with finances. You will not make a mistake that way.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)  
You might want to see a personal issue in a new light. How you deal with a key matter could change with ease and time. Stay centered, and understand the importance of your domestic and home life.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)  
You need to keep a conversation flowing without revealing certain facts that are necessary to keep out of the public domain. Keeping this secret hush-hush will take awareness and caring.

## Answers to last week's puzzle.



1/26/20