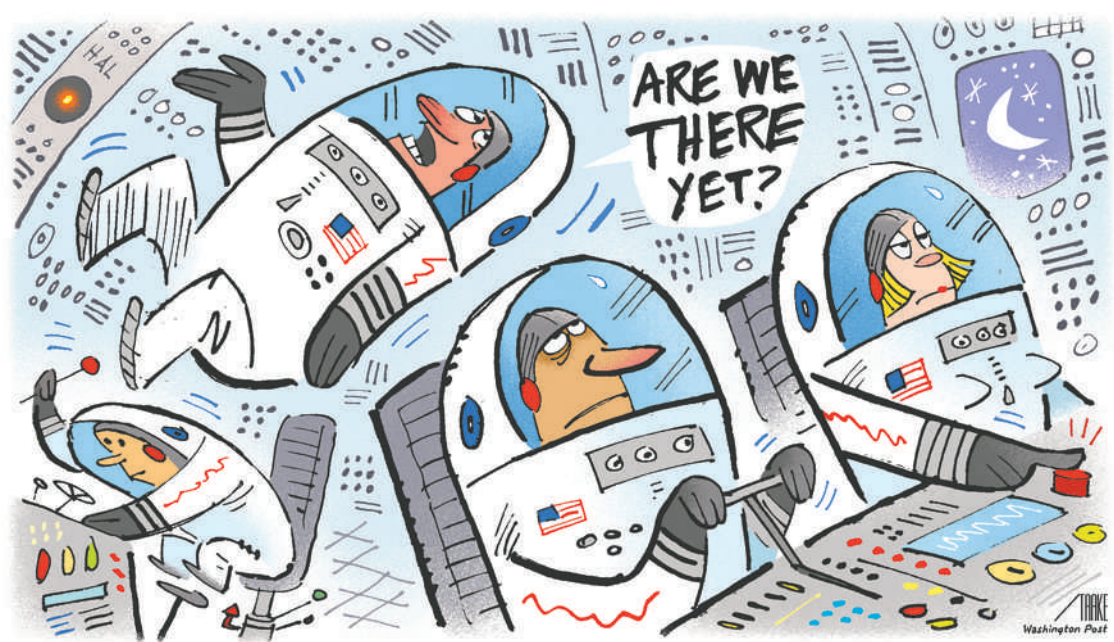


DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL



BOB STAAKE/ILLUSTRATION FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

LinkedOut: Signs of job incompetence

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1486, the Empress asked for signs that someone was incompetent at a particular job. Among some 2,000 entries, too many to credit were of a proctologist directing a patient to "open wide and say 'ah.'"

4th place:

Sign of an incompetent astronaut: "Are we there yet?" (Diana Oertel, San Francisco)

3rd place:

Sign of an incompetent cake decorator: "Happy Birthday Brian With a Y!" (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

2nd place and the Cheetos socks:

Sign of an incompetent stand-up comic: "There aren't any of those oversensitive people in the audience tonight, are there?" (Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Sign of an incompetent babysitter: "Don't worry about me touching your booze. I brought my own." (Rob Cohen, Potomac)

CAN'T EVEN: Honorable mentions

Cop: "Come on over here, folks. Lots to see!" (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Husband: "C'mon honey, nobody cares how fat your butt looks." (Allan Zackowitz, Brookeville)

Drill sergeant: Barks, "Left! Left! Left! Left! ... (Leif Picoult, Rockville)

Spa massage therapist: "Do you prefer Metallica or AC/DC?" (Drew Bennett, Rogers, Ark.)

Brain surgeon: (whispers to self) "You got this!" (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

Anesthesiologist: "Now count backward from 28,564,931." (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Dog groomer: "I just thought your collie might enjoy these cornrows." (John Hutchins, Silver Spring)

Drill sergeant: "What a fine-looking bunch of soldiers! Shall we do some push-ups?" (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

Tollbooth attendant: A sign in the window reads, "Taking a break — back in 10." (Pam Sherman, Lathrup Village, Mich.)

Accountant: "The font kept showing up red at the bottom of the column, so I just changed the settings to black-and-white." (Kate Sammons, Ashburn)

Algebra teacher: "Let's simplify the equation by multiplying each side by zero." (Greg Dobbins, Boynton Beach, Fla.)

Baby: Neglects to wake parents at 1:30, 3 and 4 a.m. for important babbling. (Coleman Glenn, Huntingdon Valley, Pa., father of four)

Bank robber: "Give me your money. I have a gun in the car and I'm not afraid to get it!" (Frank Mann, Washington)

Astronaut: "This helmet makes it really hard to smoke." (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Aztec: "Hey Monty, that's the liver!" (Pia Palamidessi, Cumberland, Md.)

Dairy farmer: "I like these cows that got only one — they take a lot less time to milk." (Tim Livengood, Columbia)

Cat trainer: They think their job is possible. (Aaron Olszewski, Silver Spring, a First Offender)

Dentist: "I wear these earplugs so I'm not distracted by the screaming." (Terri Berg Smith, Rockville)

Dietitian: "Are you going to finish that?" (Andy Promisel, Fairfax)

Fox News anchor: "I can't read this. It's too ridiculous." (Bill Bouyer, Ocoee, Fla.)

Grave robber: Plunders columbaria. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Marriage counselor: "So this is the old ball-and-chain, eh." (John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)

Life support system technician: Asks, "Have you tried turning it off and on again?" (Ryan Martinez, Takoma Park)

Oyster shucker: "Anybody want this shiny white marble I found?" (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Nurse: Forgets to say "for me" with each request. (Dave Leveton, Gainesville, Va.)

Plastic surgeon: "Ohh, I thought you meant Marilyn Manson!" (Gregory Huyck, Frederick)

Poker player: "Oh boy oh boy oh boy oh boy!" (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

Doctor's receptionist: Calls people by their maladies instead of their names: "Mr. Hernia, the doctor will see you now; you're next, Ms. Breast Augmentation Candidate." (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

Psychiatrist: "Don't be shy. I talk to crazy people all day!" (Bill Smith, Reston)

Rabbi: Wears a yarmulke with a propeller. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Real estate agent: "Plus it has 3% crappers!" (Jean Sorensen)

Reality TV contestant: "The one thing I will not do is humiliate myself!" (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

Zillionaire: "Next I'm buying Coca-Cola to put the cocaine back in." (Kira Robbins, Los Angeles, a First Offender)

Wedding planner: "Buy one, your next is 50 percent off!" (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Wine taster: "I'm detecting notes of . . . grape? Yeah, definitely grapy." (Coleman Glenn)

Zookeeper: "Aww, look — the fox wants to play with the flamingos! Isn't that cute?" (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Capitol tour guide: "And here's where important members of Congress go to get evacuated if there's an insurrection or something." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

And Last: Style Invitational entrant: "Hey, Empress, if you don't understand this entry, just email me and I'll e-x-p-l-a-i-n." (Jeff Shirley)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1490.

Still running — deadline Monday, May 30: Our contest to rearrange the words in a movie title and describe the new movie. See wapo.st/invite1489.

New contest for Week 1490: It's parody time — sing the news

Last weekend the Empress joined 70-some sweaty but otherwise jovial Losers and assorted hangers-on at the 26th (!!!) annual Flushies, the Loser Community's own awards "banquet," a spirited potluck/schmoozefest; congratulations to Loser of the Year Frank Mann, who scored more Invite ink last year than anyone else, except for some previous Losers of the Year — nine of them. How Loserly is that! The E's favorite part of the Flushies is the singalong of Loser-penned songs — so let's make some more: Write a satiric song about anything in the news these days, set to any familiar tune. Online we'll link to a recording of the original so readers can sing along, but the results that will run in the print Post — including the top four winners — will be set to very well-known songs. Videos are welcome as well (send us a YouTube link along with your lyrics); in fact, if you make a video, feel free to write your own tune. See this week's entry form for more instructions about how to submit your entries, and this week's Style Conversational for more about Invite songs in general.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1490 (no capitals in the Web address). As usual with song contests, you get an extra week: Deadline is Monday, June 13; results appear June 26 in print, June 23 online.



This week's second prize, a Humphrey-Muskie campaign bottle. (They came in second, too.)

Invitational, so you can understand the tchotchke deaccessioning.

Other runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "A Small Jester of Appreciation" or "Close, but Ceci N'est Pas un Cigare." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviteFAQ. The headline "LinkedOut" was submitted by both Jon Ketzner and Tom Witte; Kevin Dopart wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invodev; "like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday.

The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week's at wapo.st/conv1490.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

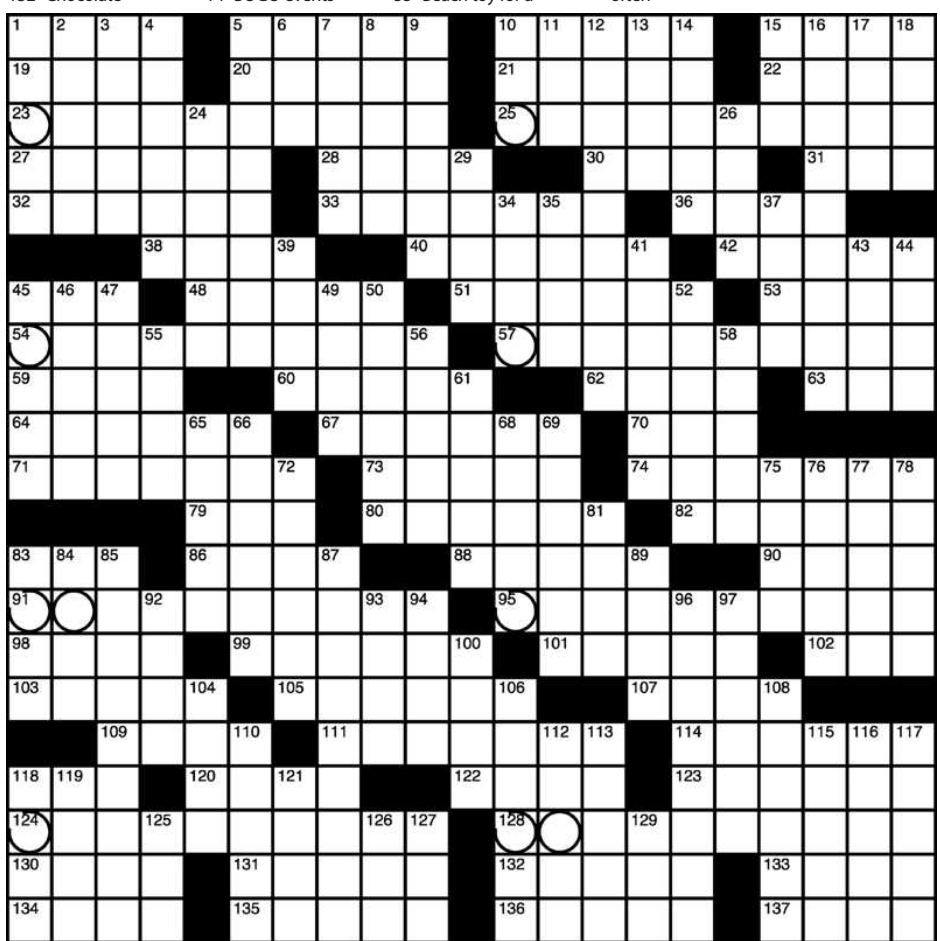
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"DAY TRADING" BY DAVID ALFRED BYWATERS

- ACROSS
1 Prepare for parking or driving
5 Stared open-mouthed
10 Liabilities
15 Did laps
19 Mountain goat
20 Not out of contention yet
21 Word for a leeper
22 "Hrm ... I doubt that!"
23 First the chardonnay, then the merlot, then the cabernet?
25 Invisible walls?
27 Be there for
28 Sandler of "Uncut Gems"
30 Brewpub pour
31 Ran across
32 Mystical gathering
33 Felt hats
36 Has a good cry
38 Vocal quality
40 Land
42 Imitate a horse
45 Place for a deep-tissue massage
48 Hands out cards
51 Unwrapped with enthusiasm
53 Land parcel
54 Inept caner's resource?
57 Meteorology lectures?
59 Voting no
60 Fleet parts
62 Have followers
63 British co.
64 Fair shelters
67 Cookbook offering
70 WSJ headline topic
71 Watches on Hulu, say
73 Like farmers' market veggies
74 River through Reno
79 ___ and vigor
80 Intervene
82 Quick post office run, say
83 Subj. for a non-native speaker
86 Ear-related
88 "Time is money" or "money is power"
90 Greek Cupid
91 Bungalow owner's challenge to a roofer?
95 Makes doubly

- DOWN
1 Fillable flatbreads
2 Taper off
3 Roman goddess of the hearth
4 Range
5 Person who makes beds?
6 European mountain
7 Rice dish
8 Get around with cats, proverbially
9 "Gracias" response
10 Beaver creation
11 Pharmaceutical giant ___ Lilly
12 2019 film starring Charize Theron as Megyn Kelly
13 "Good News" rapper Megan Stallion
14 BOGO events
15 Dim ___
16 Amusingly capricious
17 Upfront stake
18 More than half protected URL
137 Office surface
26 Remove wrinkles from
29 Slip some skin
34 Laugh-a-minute sort
35 Taj Mahal site
37 "The Martian" actor Sean
39 Has for lunch
41 "Here!"
43 Determination
44 Do the impossible with
45 DNA lab items
46 Wine grape
47 One in a cast
49 Cowardly Lion
50 Pitches to customers
52 Term with a check mark on an airport sign
55 Beach toy for a

- windy day
61 Command to an attack dog
65 Utter chaos
66 Metalworkers
68 Green-skinned tropical fruit
69 Cure-all mixture
72 Wallops, quantity
75 All hands on deck
76 "Pieces of Her" novelist
77 "How to Get Away With Murder" actor Alfred ___
78 Unsuccessful Ford model
81 Spanish boy
83 Mark for good
84 Actress Elisabeth
85 Maze
87 Pills for pets, often
89 NYSE, NASDAQ, etc.
92 Diggs of "Empire"
93 "There's no one else"
94 Labor Day mo.
96 Scoundrels
97 Experiment with
100 Academic VIP
104 Cathedral alcove
106 Single-malt pour
108 Storie sailor
110 Backpack holder
112 Drum kit cymbals
113 Official mandate
115 Induce fear in
116 Makes less harsh
117 Be sly
118 Way off
119 Polynesian dance
121 Golden St. campus
125 Haircuts
126 Fine print, e.g.
127 Sch. group
129 Flo Mill's music genre



5/29/22

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

Happy Birthday | May 29: You are clever, bright and communicative. Your fast mind generates lots of ideas. You have a charming personality but are guarded about your personal life. This year is a time of work, construction and building both in a physical sense as well as inner structures in your life.

Moon Alert: Avoid shopping or important decisions from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. After that, the Moon moves from Taurus into Gemini.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You have boundless energy because your ruler Mars is lined up with Jupiter in your sign. It doesn't get better than this. This is a day of great activity in which you will work hard to further your own interests and assert yourself among others.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) This might be a tricky day because it's easy to fall into self-defeating behavior where you create a poor impression or undermine your position even though you don't mean to do so. Ironically, you have lots of energy. Make sure you channel it in the right way.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) This is a fabulous day to define goals and start to actively pursue them because you have lots of energy to deal with others, especially friends and groups. You will excel at physical activity with others, especially in groups or in competition.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Because your ambition to achieve is aroused, you will work hard. However, you want independent authority over whatever you do because you want to be your own boss. This could make relations with a supervisor or boss a bit touchy.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You're full of enthusiasm. This is why you want to make travel plans or do anything to expand your horizons. You will also be keen to defend your beliefs and your ideas about politics and religion because you are bold and confident.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You will have no trouble protecting your own best interests in discussions about inheritances or

how to share or divide something because you are pumped with enthusiasm, confidence and optimism. Others will listen to you even if you encounter disputes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You are a people pleaser; however, you will be unusually confident when dealing with friends and partners. This is why you will stand your ground if someone has any grievance with you. (A compromise might be a win-win solution.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) This will be a super-productive day because you're keen to work. You have lots of physical energy, which means whatever you do, you will do with strength and vigor.

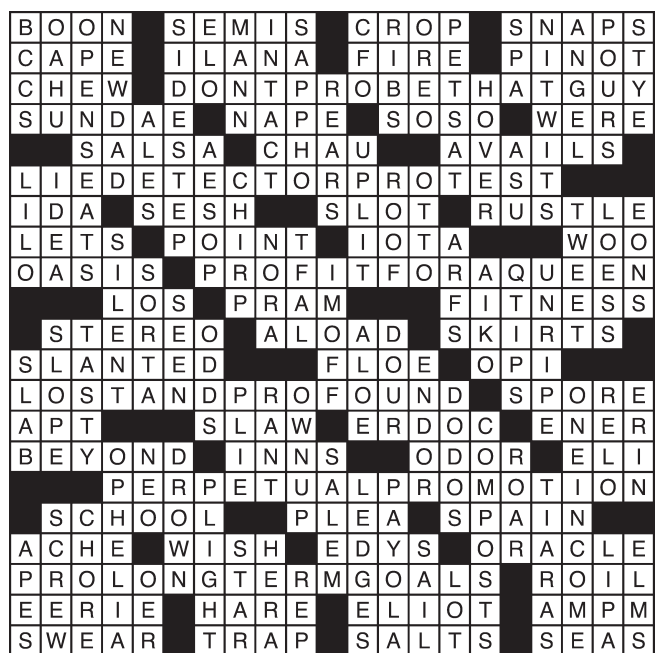
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) This is a fantastic day for competitive sports and physical athletics. You also will enjoy fun outings with children and entertaining diversions. However, your energy is so pumped, be careful about taking risks, both

physically or gambling.
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You have tremendous energy for making home improvements or winning an argument with a family member. This is because you are confident and convinced of what you want to achieve. Remember that others have their own ideas, too.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You can do a lot because you are confident and enthusiastic. This is why your communications with others will be positive and persuasive, which, in turn, makes this a strong day for those in sales, marketing, teaching, acting or writing.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) You are confident in financial negotiations. However, your confidence will be so strong that you must be careful. Don't take unnecessary risks in financial ventures or financial speculation. Do your homework.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



5/22/22