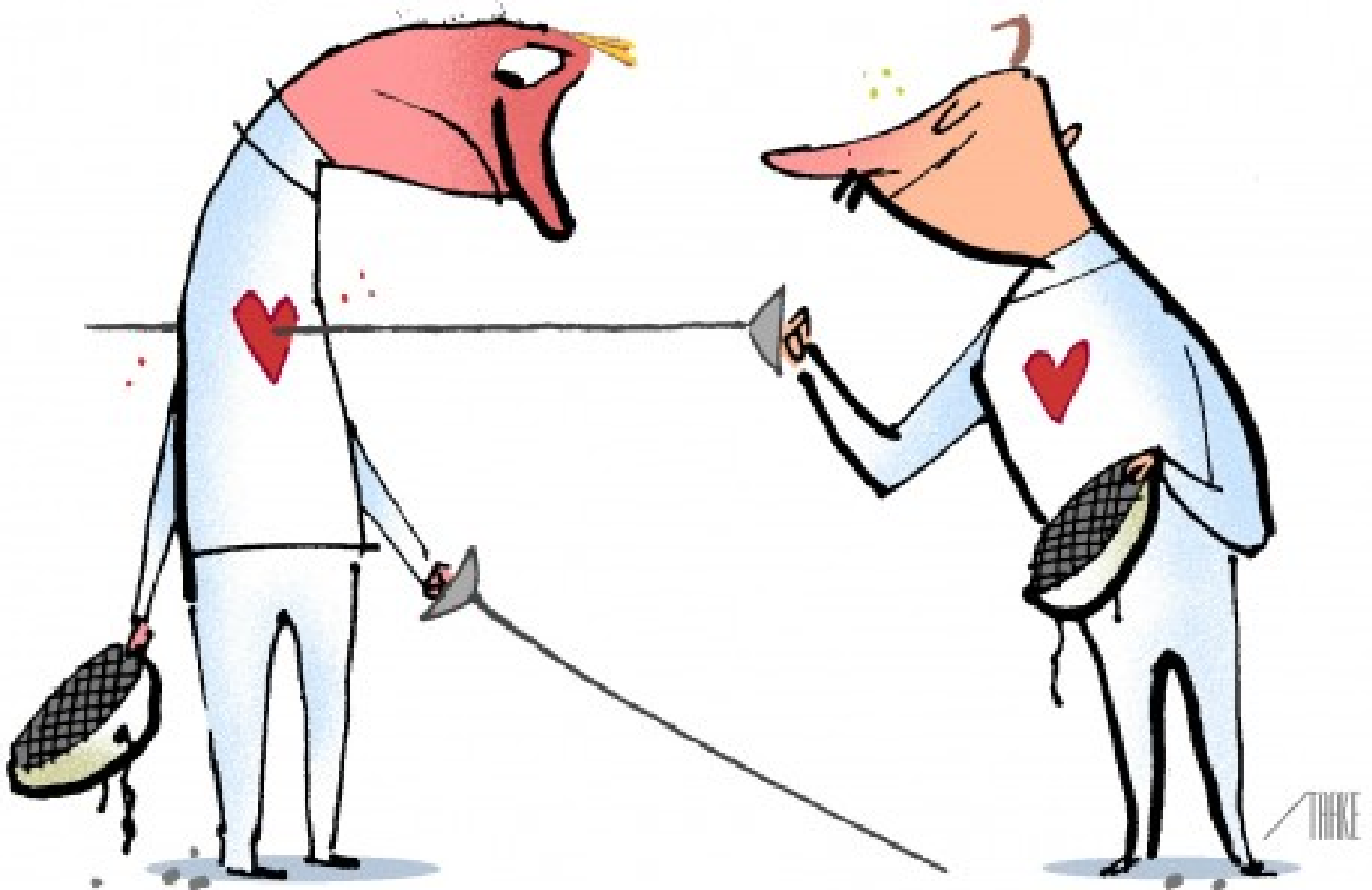


Style Invitational Week 1192: Ask Backwards

Plus: Big ideas writ small — the 1-syllable-word contest winners



The Olympic philosophy, summed up by cartoonist Bob Staake and, below, Melissa Balmain's runner-up poem consisting entirely of 1-syllable words. See the results below the new contest. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers • Entertainment September 8

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the concepts explained in one-syllable words)

'New' for Week 1192:

Ask Backwards

- Waist-slimming compression wrap
- 2,002 old emails
- Florida Man's résumé
- An elevator and an alligator, but not a waiter
- 149 yards rushing
- The Maltese Parakeet
- Ryan Lochte's urine sample
- Lobster roll trucks on every corner
- A \$27 donation

- Cockroach milk
- Swiss chard but not a Swiss bank account
- The National Postal Museum
- “The Punisher”
- Donald Trump’s birth certificate
- Stinky boots on the ground

Coming your way with such regularity it could get the Serutan endorsement, a contest the Invite has run dozens of times since Year 1 in 1993. **This week: The 15 phrases above are the answers. You provide the questions** to as many as you’d like (up to 25 entries total, as usual). Please precede each question with the pertinent answer so that the Empress can search for it while she judges each category. See the Style Conversational at bit.ly/conv1192 for examples from past contests.



Feeling rejected? Yes, you'll get this electronic button that will say yes to you incessantly if you lose to only one other entry this week. (But you'll probably be rejected. Sorry.) (zanytoys.com)

Submit entries at the website bit.ly/enter-invite-1192 (just click here).

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — just to give the lie to people who think we’re always so negative here at the Invite — a big electronic button you push and it says “YES” in [all sorts of voices](#). This is the counterpart to our previously awarded [No Pen](#), and of course it’s gotten a lot less use than the pen while it’s been sitting on the Empress’s desk during judging sessions. Donated, as was the pen, by the positively positive Loser Dave Prevar.

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, Sept. 19; results published Oct. 9 (online Oct. 6). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week’s results is by Jon Gearhart; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Tom Witte. 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, published late Thursday afternoons, discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

IT'S A SMALL-WORD LAUGH FOR ALL: REPORT FROM WEEK 1188

In Week 1188 the Empress asked you to explain a concept only in one-syllable words, and no more than 100 of them. As Loser Jesse Frankovich put it in an entry: "Write on some theme with words that have just one sound chunk each. The count of the words must not be more than ten squared. . . . If one of yours is deemed the best of the bunch, you will get a cheap Abe thing with a big head."

4th place

THE OLYMPIC PHILOSOPHY

CREED OF THE FIVE RINGS

Use your bod, from feet to hands,
To vie with folks from strange new lands:
Chase them, rush them, ace them, crush them,
Flip them, cream them, trip them, ream them,
Throw and shove them . . . oh, and love them. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

3rd place

LIBERTARIANISM

Me. Mine. Me. Mine. Me. Mine.
Oh no, a flood!
We. Ours. We. Ours. We. Ours. Help!
The flood is gone!
Me. Mine. Me. Mine . . . (Ed Sobansky, Bowie, Md.)

2nd place

and the "[snot nose](#)" and [windup Groucho glasses](#):

BASEBALL

"Look, Jacques, one guy throws the ball, one guy tries to hit the ball with a bat. If the ball is thrown to the guy wrong, it is called a ball."

"But we knew it was a ball, *non?*"

"Yes. Now if he swings but does not hit the ball, it is a strike. Three strikes and he is out. A foul ball is a strike, too, but if the count is strike two, then a foul ball is not a strike.

"Are you with me so far, Jacques?"

"*Non!* Just get me a hot dog and a beer." (Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

When my child was young, I could do no wrong — Best Mom in the World! But when she was a teen, I got so dumb. My rules were lame! My clothes sucked! I was a mess! It's true — she told me.

In spite of my bad mom-skills, she did grow up. And I got fixed! I'm smart once more, so she asks me things. She likes my clothes, so my taste must not suck the way it used to. I'm glad my kid stuck with me while I went through that rough phase. (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

What a pithy party: honorable mentions

VOTER FRAUD, NORTH CAROLINA-STYLE

"We can't let all those dark folks vote. There's more and more of them and less and less of us. If we let them all vote, we'll lose. What to do?"

"I know! Let's cut our state up in odd shapes and split up their votes. Spread those folks out so their votes can't hurt us."

"Nice."

"And let's make it so you have to have proof of who you are to vote. And let's make it so just one or two types of proof will work — the kind WE have, but THEY don't."

"Hey, you boys are real smart." (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

HUMAN REPRODUCTION:

When a dad loves a mom, they will hug a long time till Mom yells "Oh, God" and is glad. Dad says "Ugh" and goes to sleep.

A small thing that came from Dad goes in an egg that Mom has and makes a new thing. It grows and grows for nine months. Then Mom screams "Oh God" once more but is not glad this time. It hurts and she gets mad at Dad. That is where young ones come from. Now you can tell the folks at church in a loud voice. (Combined entries from Ward Kay, Vienna, Va., and Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

WHY THE WORLD HATES AMERICANS

"Well, you see, we were in this cab and got stopped. Um, no, I don't know why, but then this cop put a gun to my head and cocked it. He said, 'Give me cash now!' Or at least I think that's what he said, but I know he robbed us, that's for sure. Yeah, that's it, he robbed us. Or not. We were a bit drunk — Oh, did I leave out how we trashed a store?" (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Each hour, day, week, month, year, our world grows more hot. Smart folks try to learn the cause.

Ooh! Ask me! I know!

I left the stove on. (Mary Kappus, Washington)

THE TRUMP DOCTRINE

That weird rude guy says we ought to make this land great the way it used to be. But that “great” was *not* great. It was bad for girls, those whose skin is not white, and men who love men.

We should not buy it that things were so great then – in fact, we should own it that they were not. Why don’t the rude guy’s fans get that this land should be great for white guys *and* all the folks who are not the same as they are? (It seems so, you know, DUH.) (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

CLINTON’S EXPLANATION FOR USING A PRIVATE EMAIL SERVER

Oops. My bad. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

THE WEALTH OF NATIONS

There’s this hand we can’t see that lets us all win if we buy and sell stuff with no checks or regs. But if you are Trump, then such a hand is too small. You need a huge hand, one you can see, to put its thumb down on trade deals. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

SUPPLY SIDE ECONOMICS

Just tax poor folks. If you tax the rich folks, that is bad, for they will not launch and spread wealth and grow our land. So cut the tax for those rich guys, and then we will all be rich. (Note: The time frame for the last part is up in the air. We’re sure it will take place real soon.) (Duncan Stevens)

IF YOU HEAR A NOISE, SOMETHING HAD TO MAKE IT

I learned this the hard way. One cold night at home, I heard a big “whump!” I looked and looked, but no, not one thing out of place. So I just let it go.

The next spring there was a stench near my front porch – from the well next to a glass pane. What was it? A huge ring tail coon fell off the roof and froze down there. Then it thawed. Then it stank. My spouse had to hoist it out. I held the bag. It was not fun. Then we had a stiff drink. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

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THE MIRANDA WARNING, BY A PUBLIC DEFENDER

You have the right to not talk. If you talk, things may go wrong for you in court. Don’t talk. You have the right at all times to have a smart guy be with you and think for you. Please, don’t talk. You can stop your talk if you want to. Please, please, don’t talk. If you can’t pay the smart guy, you can have a free one. Please, please shut up. Do you want to talk? SAY NO!!! (Ed Sobansky)

HARMONIC RESONANCE

This is when things swing and bounce in big ways with just a small force. And this, too, is why sports bras are not prized by all of us. (Kevin Dopart)

THE POINT OF THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

“To lose, not to win, is the way to win, boss,” she said. “High wit and low puns. Sly prose and tight rhymes. If you win (I am the judge) you get a crap prize. The goal for most is just to get ink. What do you think?”

Jeff said, “I don’t get it, but fine. We will still print it, but not on the back page. And [black and white](#) from now on.” (Rob Cohen)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Sept. 12: our Mess With Our Heads bank-head contest. See bit.ly/invite1191 .

 **0 Comments**

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