DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Ask Backwards: Our answers are questioned

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1088 was the umpteenth installment, give or take an ump, of the contest in which the Invite supplies a list of "answers" in the form of short phrases, and you come up with questions they could answer. One answer was read variously as "14, 102 and 39,000" (i.e., three items) and "14,102 and 39,000" (two items). The Empress accepted either because, like Your Mama, she is just too easy.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

A. Rick Perry's glasses.
Q. Name something that you can see right through besides Rick Perry. (Danny Gallagher, Frisco, Tex.)

2nd place and Pest World, the house of critter-motif nesting dolls:

A. A Your Mama joke about a bicycle.
Q. What is "I hear New York City has a program where folks can use Your Mama for up to half an hour with no charge"? (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

3rd place

A. Romeo and Joliet.
Q. Who were stir-crossed lovers? (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.; Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

4th place

A. A cross-country trip in a Miata.
Q. What was the plea deal that Bob McDonnell rejected? (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Flopping the question: honorable mentions

JAMES AND THE GIANT BRUSSELS SPROUT
What was the only book written by Roald Dull? (Danny Gallagher)

Whose marriage will they want to legalize next if you just let those vegan-marriage-equality agitators get their way, huh? (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)

What are the two best reasons to relocate to Cleveland? (Larry Carnahan, Arlington)

14, 102 AND 39,000
What were the Redskins' Week 1 stats for first downs, yards and excuses? (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

What numbers will be called at the MVA immediately before yours? (Pam Sweeney, Burlington, Mass.)

14,102 AND 39,000
In the Defense Department contract, how many "person-hours" were specified for screwing in a light bulb, and how many did it actually take? (Peter Siegwald, Lauzerte, France)

A YOUR MAMA JOKE ABOUT A BICYCLE
What is "She's so fat her Schwinn is an 18-wheeler"? (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

What is "Your Mama's so dumb, she thinks a bicycle helmet goes on the bicycle"? (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

What is "Your Mama's so fat, they pay her to ride on the shoulder to make those grooves in the pavement"? (Mark Raffman, Reston)

What ends with "She can usually be rented near train stations and parks"? (Frank Osen)

MARY HAD A LITTLE LEMMING
What nursery rhyme ends in a cliffhanger? (Harold Mantle, Lafayette, Calif.; Lawrence McGuire)

Did anybody try anything exotic at the Roadkill Cafe? (Pam Sweeney)

What happened six months after Mary hurriedly married Lou Lemming? (Frank Osen)

Why is there a rodent smoking a cigarette in the bedroom? (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

THE PRINT VERSION OF THE WASHINGTON POST
Ironically, what is one of the few things you can't buy on Amazon.com? (Stephen Dudzik, Olney; David Garratt, Silver City, N.M.)

What do you have to get rid of before you can use your dog-do bag? (Joseph Mat Schech, Colesville)

What is a lot easier to read than the cursive version of The Washington Post? (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)

What local icon was the surprise winner on ABC's "Extreme Weight Loss"? (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

What do 10 out of 10 fishmongers prefer over the online version of The Washington Post? (Ken Schwartz, Burke)

Where is the word "beaver" automatically replaced with the word "lemming"? (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

The what? (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

RICK PERRY'S GLASSES
What is more transparent than pig lipstick? (Deb Stewart, Damascus)

What hides the secret identity of Xenophobia Man? (Jim Stiles, Rockville)

What will an occupant of the Oval Office never accidentally sit on? (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

A CROSS-COUNTRY TRIP IN A MIATA
(which was actually taken, both ways, by 14-time Loser J.J. Gertler to a Miata owners convention in California last month. He survived.)

What should be the punishment for using a Knee Defender? (Deb Stewart)

What's more uncomfortable than sharing an elevator with Ray Rice? (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

What event does the Grand Masochistic Order of Hemorrhoid Sufferers sponsor each year? (Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

After flying coach from D.C. to L.A., how did the six of you get more leg room for the return? (Gary Crockett)

TYSONS CORONER
What is the new sister city of Quincy, M.E.? (Stephen Dudzik)

Who determined why the chicken died crossing the road? (Jim Stiles; Gary Crockett)

On the Silver Line, what station precedes Reston Piece? (Jonathan Hardis, Gaithersburg)

Which mall has Crate & Burial, Pottery Urn and Six Below? (Rob Huffman)

A MAN, A PLAN, A CANNOLI
What is subtitled "The Silvio Berlusconi Guide to Picking Up Women"? (Kathleen DeBold, Burtonsville)

NOT KIM KARDASHIAN, BUT KANYE WEST
Whose name comes up first when you do a Google search for "biggest butt in Hollywood"? (Rob Wolf, Gaithersburg)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our good-idea/bad-idea contest. See bit.ly/invite1091.

MAGNETS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Can you be inadequate enough to win one of these? Above and below, the latest Style Invitational honorable-mention magnets by Bob Staake. The slogans, submitted for earlier contests, are by Bird Waring and Jon Hamblin ("The Wit Hit the Fan") and Barbara Turner ("Hardly Har-Har").

New Contest for Week 1092: Are we having funds yet?

Apple's charitable foundation: Make a video of someone pouring water on his head without having to recharge your iPhone.

The Sierra Club: It had to change its campaign to the Lukewarm Bucket Challenge — all the ice melted.

D.C.'s Metro system: Run all the way up the Dupont Circle station escalator before it breaks down.

The good news is that the ALS Association has raised more than $100 million in this past summer's Ice Bucket Challenge, in which people were asked either to contribute or to pour a bucket of freezing water over their heads. (Its revenue the previous year, before the Miracle on Ice Water, was $2.8 million.) The bad news — oh, let's not be so negative all the time; let's call it "the other good news" — is that lots of other worthy organizations surely will be inspired to come up with challenges of their own. Loser and recidivist contest-suggester Mike Gips suggest we help out: **This week: Suggest a humorous fundraising "challenge" for any organization,** as in Mike's examples above.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a fabulous brand-new jigsaw puzzle donated by Loser Christopher Larsen. Part of the "Disney Dreams Collection," it's a lush landscape labeled as "original art by Thomas Kinkade." In the background is Cinderella's Castle; in the foreground, Ms. Ella and Prince Charming on a footbridge, suffused with the garish colors and unnatural glow that typify the "Painter of Light." Finally we can appreciate Kinkade's work in a fitting context: as the background for cartoon characters. Just think how fulfilling it will be to study 1/300th of the masterpiece at a time.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet — one of the ones announced today, unless we still have some of either the Po' Wit Laureate or Puns of Steel. First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 13; results published Nov. 2 (online Oct. 30). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include "Week 1092" in your e-mail subject line, or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at *wapo.st/InvRules*. This week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Danielle Nowlin. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at *on.fb.me/invdev*, and click "like" on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at *bit.ly/inkofday*.

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*.

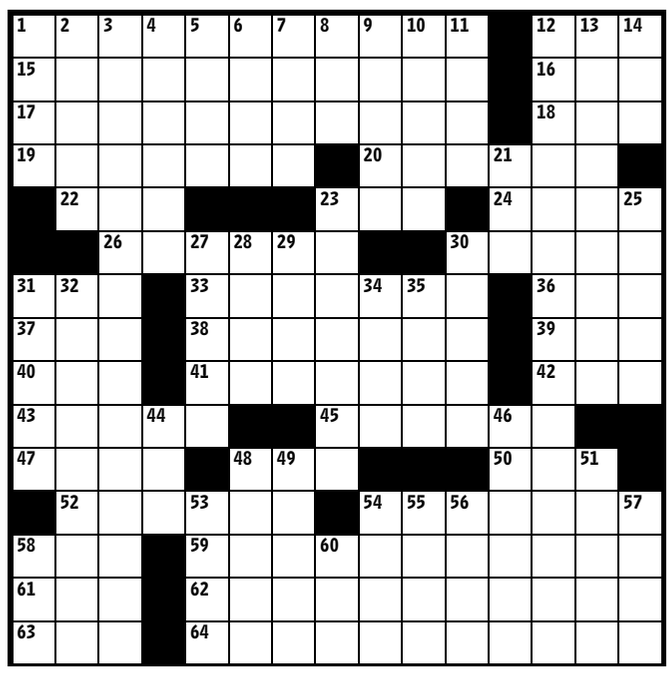
POST PUZZLER

No. 235

BY JEFFREY HARRIS EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

ACROSS
1 Could no longer be ignored
12 Bottom halves of tickets, briefly
15 Pope who was Cesare Borgia's father
16 Possible rollover target
17 Home to busts of Blake and Burns
18 This time
19 Specials, often
20 Bothering
22 A.M. show since 1975
23 Subway Series player
24 Arabian father
26 Criss Angel feat
30 Something that may have two hips?
31 2010 title role for Denzel
33 Song before a face-off
36 Eagles' gp.
37 Vietnam Veterans Memorial architect
38 Bounce back
39 Nincompoop
40 Ambulance letters
41 It doesn't provide much coverage
42 Eggs on toast, maybe
43 Don John
45 Stick to a surface
47 Wiccan celebration
48 Acad.
50 Hammer home?
52 Beethoven's "Pathétique," e.g.
54 Assembly manual feature
58 "Elementary" co-star
59 Indian cuisine staple
61 Folk rocker DiFranco
62 Character with the catchphrase "Get out!"
63 "Mm-hmm?"
64 Company that owns Supercharger stations

DOWN
1 May, for one
2 Last word of "Ol' Man River"
3 Garland classic
4 Spares
5 Use a controversial weapon on
6 As soon as
7 Bothers
8 Movie that won the 2013 Best Original Screenplay Oscar
9 Inspiration for the "Avenue Q" character Nicky
10 Turn aside
11 Stiletto relative
12 Fictional attendee of James Buchanan High
13 Brand with the slogan "Keep it simple"
14 Word with band or hand
21 Nationality suffix
23 Literally, "candlestick"
25 Wipe
27 One of a pair of pets for Queen Elizabeth II
28 Starters who are stoppers
29 Possible outcome of a summit
30 Contents of some bays
31 Mournful song
32 Common wedding rental
34 Zealous
35 TV settings
44 Jack's predecessor?
46 First filly to win the Kentucky Derby
48 Flat
49 Residencias
51 Rallye participant
53 Provide immoral support?
54 Washington Post columnist Milbank
55 Bullet point
56 Discontinued robotic pet from Sony
57 Clutter
58 Install, as carpeting
60 Thousandth of an inch



Answer to last week, No. 234

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HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | OCT. 5: This year you make friends easily. People count on you, perhaps a little too much for your taste. Learn to establish boundaries before you get to the point at which you get angry. If you are single, your circle of friends broadens, and you are likely to meet someone who makes your imagination run wild. Make no commitments for a while. If you are attached, the two of you need to look at your long-term goals and decide if it is time to fulfill at least one of them. Your relationship will be enhanced as a result.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You might decide to go your own way, or spend a lazy day at home perfecting your couch-potato act. Do whatever feels right.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Once you go along with a partner's request, you might be delighted by how much of a good time the two of you will have. Tonight, the action swirls around you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You might want to adjust to someone else's request. This person could be demanding in some way. Enjoy his or her personality, because you cannot change it.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Discuss a potential trip and start making plans. A loved one suddenly might become much more talkative. Enjoy this moment, and don't let another matter interfere.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
A loved one will monopolize your time. Your inner voice may urge you to move on to other things, but quiet it down. You simply can't have enough time with this special person.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Others will come forward with suggestions, but you have your own ideas. You seem to be in a period in which misunderstandings happen more often. Clear the air.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Despite an inclination to join your pals, you will decide to throw yourself into your work. A financial matter might crop up, but you'll be ready to handle it. Your willpower will be needed to resist meeting up with a loved one.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
A new friend might decide to bring out your imagination. Let go and allow spontaneity take over, as you rarely have fun times like this.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You might want to retreat and cocoon. You may be overtired. Relax and center yourself. A conversation will open up an important issue for you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You tend to get what you want. However, in the next few weeks you might witness a few backfires. Lighten up and don't make it a big deal — it is just a phase.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You may feel a need to balance your budget and decide how you are going to handle the approaching holidays. Usually you are more impulsive. See how this more logical approach works for you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You'll be in the mood for nearly anything, which might surprise your friends. A conversation with a loved one at a distance might encourage you to take off.

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Correcting a compulsive corrector

Ask Amy
AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: Please tell me *how to deal with my condescending son-in-law.*

Whenever we are together at family gatherings, he repeatedly corrects me in front of others and speaks to me in a condescending tone of voice.

He often corrects my pronunciation of words or speaks to me in a tone of voice implying that I am stupid. I've noticed that he also does this to his mother and my daughter; however, he does not do this to my husband or his father.

I was told that he was cited for this on his job evaluation, so I assume that he also does it to others. So far, I haven't said anything in order to keep peace in the family, but enough is enough. What can I do?

Mother-in-Law

Your son-in-law has been called on this behavior before — so he knows he does it and he knows it's a problem.

The kindest assumption is that this is a long-standing reflexive behavior that he needs to work on changing. You should deal with this directly and discreetly — modeling behavior he would be wise to emulate.

Speak with him privately. Say, "Benjamin, I've noticed that you correct me quite a bit in front of other people. I want you to know that I find this embarrassing and I'd appreciate it if you'd stop doing it. If you want to correct me, please do it privately, the way I am doing with you now. Can you do that?"

If he completely disregards this, you'll have to catch him when he does it publicly and counter his correction with one of your own.

Dear Amy: I am in my mid-50s *and reentering the dating scene.*

When out on a date, if the person I am with smokes (I am a nonsmoker), what is the proper way to handle her going out for a cigarette while at dinner?

Should I accompany her outside and stand with her? Should I remain at the table, waiting for her to return, or fake a need to use the restroom during her break? Should she refrain until we are leaving and then light up outside?

I am not overly concerned about smoking. I do not stop people from smoking in my car, etc. I just don't know the right way to address this, and it is especially uncomfortable on a first date. Any suggestions on how I should handle this?

Inexperienced

Smoking would be a deal-breaker for many nonsmokers (and letting people smoke in your car is exposing you to carcinogens).

It is a rude red flag if your date cannot make it through a meal without taking a smoke break. (If this happens on a first date, you should not pursue a second date.) You could use the five-minute meal interruption to visit the men's room, or sit and passively check your Twitter feed. And if both of you exit the restaurant in the middle of the meal, the management might assume you have skipped out on the check.

A smoker should wait for you both to exit the restaurant before lighting up. Smoke-free zones around entrances to public places could mean that you and your date are huddled together like fugitives in an alley, which sounds way more fun than it is.

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