

## DIVERSIONS

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## Badder up: The good/bad ideas from Week 1091

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1091**, we repeated a contest from way back in 1995, in which we asked you to cite a “good idea” and turn it into a “bad idea” with a small wording change. The Empress was utterly shocked to find that a large number of entries concerned the reproductive and excretory systems. What sort of operation do you think we run here?



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

**Good idea:** Give a bowl of irises to your wife.

**Bad idea:** Give Ebola viruses to your wife. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

## 2nd place and the genuine 1990s Loser T-shirt:

**Good idea:** Groom nails before your best friend's wedding.

**Bad idea:** Nail groom before your best friend's wedding. (Jan Forman, Great Falls)

## 3rd place

**Good idea:** Use power tools to keep your car functioning properly.

**Bad idea:** Use power tools to keep your ear functioning properly. (Larry Carnahan, Arlington)

## 4th place

**Good idea:** Reply to all sensitive e-mails.

**Bad idea:** Reply All to sensitive e-mails. (Eric Yttri, Arlington, a First Offender)

## Almost good/bad enough: honorable mentions

**Good idea:** Celibate before marriage.

**Bad idea:** Sell a bit before marriage. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

**Good idea:** Snowed in with your date.

**Bad idea:** Snowden with your data. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

**Good idea:** Hiking the Appalachian Trail.

**Bad idea:** “Hiking the Appalachian Trail.” (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

**Good idea:** Conscious uncoupling.

**Bad idea:** Unconscious coupling. (Kathleen DeBold, Burtonsville)

**Good idea:** Wiping out poison ivy.

**Bad idea:** Wiping with poison ivy. (David Patch, Toledo)

**Good idea:** 3 square meals a day.

**Bad idea:** 3<sup>2</sup> meals a day. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

**Good idea:** Doing things to help when the wife is away.

**Bad idea:** Doing the help when the wife is away. — Arnold S., formerly of Sacramento (Brendan Beary)

**Good idea:** Eating some beef with a side of potatoes.

**Bad idea:** Eating some potatoes with a side of beef. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

**Good idea:** Cutting out your junk food.

**Bad idea:** Cutting out your junk. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

**Good idea:** Add “in bed” or “dressed as Elvis” to a cookie fortune.

**Bad idea:** Add “in bed” or “dressed as Elvis” to the Oath of Office. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**Good idea:** Taking the position of associate deputy assistant undersecretary.

**Bad idea:** Taking the position of deputy assistant associate undersecretary. Duh! (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

**Good idea:** To fertilize your plants.

**Bad idea:** To fertilize your pants. (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

**Good idea:** Trying to hit a home run into Section 141 of Nationals Park.

**Bad idea:** Trying to get to second base in Section 141 of Nationals Park. (Frank Mann, Washington)

**Good idea:** Reusing plastic grocery bags as dog poop bags.

**Bad idea:** Reusing plastic dog poop bags as grocery bags. (Dinah Tabbah, Annandale, a First Offender)

**Good idea:** Keeping a supply of Head & Shoulders in the bathroom.

**Bad idea:** Keeping a supply of heads and shoulders in the freezer. (P. Diane Schneider, Clinton, Wash., a First Offender)

**Good idea:** A letter to the editor about Iraq.

**Bad idea:** A letter to the editor about her rack. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

**Good idea:** Show girls you're a fun guy.

**Bad idea:** Show girls your fungi. (John McCooley, Rehoboth Beach, Del.)

**Good idea:** Overtipping a good waitress.

**Bad idea:** Tipping over a good waitress. (Lori Petterson, College Park)

**Good idea:** A sightseeing tour to see a jungle refuge for gorillas.

**Bad idea:** A sightseeing tour to see a jungle refuge for guerrillas. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

**Good idea:** Uncle Sam wants you.

**Bad idea:** Your uncle Sam wants you. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

**Good idea:** Teaching natural selection in science class.

**Bad idea:** Teaching natural selection in gym class. (Josh Feldblyum, Louisville)

**Good idea:** Speed reading.

**Bad idea:** Read, speeding. (G.T. Bowman, Falls Church)

**Good idea:** Time-share condominiums.

**Bad idea:** Time-share condoms. (Ray Gallucci, Frederick)

**Good idea:** Teaching your toddler colors.

**Bad idea:** Teaching your toddler “Fifty Shades of Grey.” (Mark Hagenau, Derry, N.H.)

**Good idea:** When in D.C., stand to the right.

**Bad idea:** When in D.C., grandstand to the right. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

See more honorable mentions in the online Invite at [bit.ly/invite1095](http://bit.ly/invite1095).

**Still running — deadline Monday night: Our contest for new words including the letter block T-A-X-I. See [bit.ly/invite1094](http://bit.ly/invite1094).**



**This week's second prize: The best third-bearded shell-farmer riding three shell-turtles that we've ever seen.**

## New contest for Week 1095: TankaWanka!

**Just memorize this: SAT is B-A-D.**

**ACT? PU!**

**Learn-by-rote is not the best. (Later, there will be a test.)**

Cretinous oafs that we are, in several contests over the years The Style Invitational has desecrated the exquisite poetic form of haiku, utterly disregarding the classic focus on nature, the distilling of a single moment into a few perfectly chosen words, and instead awarding actual prizes for pun-filled jokes about Martians, tourists, Donald Trump, etc. — as long as the “poems” had three lines of five, seven and five syllables.

This week we set ourselves upon an even more venerable Japanese form: the tanka. Dating back to the 8th century and revived about a century ago, the form consists of 31 of what, in Japanese, are sort of like English syllables, arranged 5-7-5 like a haiku but with two seven-syllable lines added. Tanka in English by serious poets don't tend to hew too strictly to the syllable count, and, as Wikipedia notes, “traditionally tanka had no concept of rhyme,” and in fact some rhymes “were considered dire faults.”

Well, this here is a humor contest, and we like rhyme, and so instead of being accused of misusing the term “tanka,” we'll just say we created a new genre. So for the first-ever TankaWanka anthology, to appear here in four weeks: **Write a TankaWanka about something that's been in the news lately. The poem must consist of five lines of 5, 7, 5, 7 and 7 syllables in that order. And it must include at least one rhyme**, as in the example above by the great man of letters (indeed, often the letters P and U) Gene Weingarten.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives an almost indescribable piece of sculpture of the Weird Things Made of Glued-Together Shells genre: This intricate work, no more than four inches high, contains *twenty* little shells and depicts — as far as we can figure — a smiling/grimacing farmer, wearing a beard of red thread and wearing a straw hat, riding astride two turtles that each have not only a bobble-head but wire eyeglasses. But that's not all! The two shell-turtles are astride yet another shell-turtle bobblehead, this one wearing an itty-bitty straw hat. And oh, yeah, the man also has a straw basket of doll-size produce. This ultra-fabulous prize was obtained for us by Ultra-Fabulous-Prize-Obtainer Cheryl Davis in St. Augustine, Fla.

**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 in one of our two new Bob Staake designs: either “The Wit Hit the Fan” or “Hardly Har-Har.” First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 3; results published Nov. 23 (online Nov. 20). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include “Week 1095” 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](http://wapo.st/InvRules). This week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Kevin Dopart. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev), and click “like” on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at [bit.ly/inkofday](http://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](http://wapo.st/styleconv).

## POST PUZZLER

## No. 238

BY PATRICK BERRY EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

**ACROSS**

1 Piece of sporting equipment that weighs a tenth of an ounce

13 Balanced payment scheme?

15 The wages of sin?

17 Climbed

18 Things to brood on

19 CBS show with two spinoffs

21 Grandson of Adam and Eve

22 Talk at length

23 Euphoric feeling

24 Room to read in

25 Not fuzzy

26 It's often said

27 Room to read in

28 Short-billed wader

29 Wants someone else to try?

32 Expertise

33 Capital of Albania

34 Actor Wilson of “The Office”

35 Upright

36 Boot camp figure

37 “On the Road” narrator

Paradise

40 R&B singer Gray

41 Some multivolume novels

42 Symbolic representation of the Holy Ghost

43 Banana part

44 Stamped

45 Matches up

46 Triangular treats

49 Synthpop group that won a 1986 Grammy for its version of Mancini's “Peter Gunn” theme

50 Crack that kills

**DOWN**

1 Put together, in a way

2 Awaiting service, maybe

3 Trafalgar Square honoree

4 Ring of \_\_\_\_ (mythological Greek artifact that rendered its wearer invisible)

5 Many a cube farm worker

6 In many cases

7 Reporters' purchases

8 Former “Meet the Press” host David

9 First-rate

10 Inner turmoil

11 Pasture

12 Stretched out

14 Landlocked territory with only one neighbor

16 Much medieval warfare

20 Reading group?

22 Head coach for a record six Super Bowls

25 Remain valid

26 Without backup

27 Daughters of Oceanus

28 Easily offended bunch

29 Really small matter

30 Animal attacked by bats?

31 Rule of conduct

32 Send in from above

34 French stews

36 Author who said “When the rich wage war, it's the poor who die”

37 “If that's your decision, okay”

38 Disinclined

39 Not as important

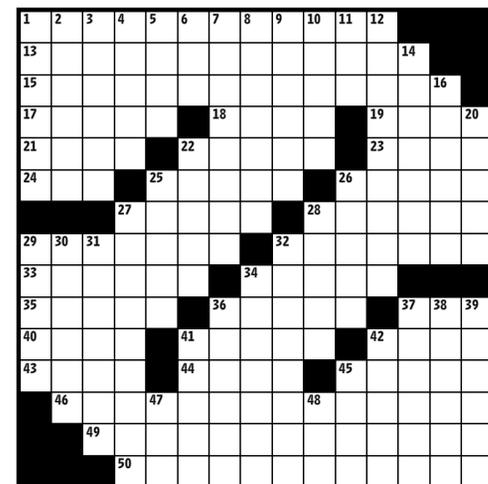
41 Place

42 Chunk of fairway

45 Mitchell of folk

47 Pikeake creation

48 Org. with a draft



Answer to last week, No. 237

B I S Q U I C K C S T I G M A  
A B O U N D I N H O N O U R  
S E T A D A T E I N F E S T  
S T O R E G A R A G E S  
T R I O D E U R I A H  
P I Z Z A S E N C E I N T E  
U S E G R A D E A O D D S  
J A R H E A D G L A R E A T  
O B O E E D S E L S B W I  
L E T S S L I P M T E T N A  
S L O P E N O S E U P  
H E X A G O N D O B I E  
C H E R I E F I R E W A L L  
D E R U L O E D O N E I L L  
C H O S E N D E X T R O S E

## HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | OCT. 26:** This year you will have the drive and energy to achieve your goals. You will be hard to stop once you decide to head down a certain path. You might become increasingly strong-willed to achieve what you want. If you are single, you may become involved in a relationship where you put your partner on a pedestal. The problem is that he or she eventually will fall off. If you are attached, the two of you need to demonstrate more give-and-take. If you do, you will enter a very romantic phase.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**  
You finally may take action on a longstanding problem. Others naturally will respond positively to your ideas. Listen to your intuition, even if what it tells you is contrary to your decisions.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**  
Spend time with a loved one. You might find that you are able to identify with this person's perceptions and choices. Listen to your inner voice about someone you look up to.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**  
You will be flooded with ideas and suggestions. A complaint might be headed your way as well. You may wonder who the real source of the gripe is. Reach out to a friend.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**  
Get some errands done. You might discover that a close loved

one is on the warpath. Your first reaction might be to avoid this person. If you do, it will only get worse.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**  
You can put a situation on the back burner for only so long. You might not want to discuss what is going on, so keep a talk as light as possible.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**  
Tension builds on the home front. Get down to the real problem, which seems to surround a child or loved one. Be open and have what might be a hard conversation.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**  
You may see a situation differently after having an animated chat. Be willing to make an adjustment, even if you have to make an extra effort or change your immediate plans.

## Boyfriend refuses to change his ways

## Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

**Dear Amy:** I've been dating a guy for two months. He is funny, smart, handsome, generous and really good to me. We almost never argue, but there are two things I can't get over. He lives with four other guys in a big house. They each have their own room, so privacy isn't an issue. They're all very good friends and hang out a lot.

The first problem is that my boyfriend is naked a lot when he's at home. The other guys come and go that way too sometimes, but my boyfriend pretty much lives that way. The second problem is that he's really physical and affectionate with everyone. He doesn't hug and kiss just me, but all of his friends too, and all the time! Guy or girl, gay or straight — I feel like he's always hanging onto someone.

What do I do to get him to understand that these two expressions of intimacy should be between a guy and a girl, and not shared with the whole world? We've talked about it, but he says this is the way he is. I've asked his friends to make him stop, but they don't care how he

behaves and say I should just let him be himself. I've told them that I think he's acting gay, but one of the guys in the house is gay, and he assures me that this isn't the case.

**Let's imagine** your boyfriend wrote to me, saying, “My new girlfriend is great, except she wears clothes, like, almost all the time. And she's such a prude! I told her friends she was acting really straight but they won't make her stop. They say, ‘That's just the way she is!’ ”

The reason your boyfriend's friends won't make him change is because they are his friends. They like him this way. The reason your boyfriend won't change is because he likes himself this way. You are the only person in this household who doesn't like him this way. If you've asked him to adjust and he won't, it's not because he can't behave differently, it's because he doesn't want to. “Acting gay” might not be as insulting to him as you intend it to be. Your choices now are to accept him as is or move on.

**Dear Amy:** Recently I hosted a holiday dinner. After all the

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**

Your possessive side might emerge when dealing with a neighbor or sibling. Anger might build between the two of you. Perhaps some distance from each other would help.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

You could be more in touch with your feelings than you have been in a while. Others will sense a change in you, and they will start responding differently to you.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**

Be more in touch with your needs. You will become combative if you are not careful. Do not let anger build; instead, discuss your feelings before that happens.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

Friends surround you, and you might be overwhelmed by all their attention and invitations. Ask yourself where the real source of your feelings is coming from.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

If you feel so strongly about a long-term desire, why not take an active role in making it happen? A friend may push your buttons while you attempt to handle responsibilities.

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leftovers were wrapped and put away, one of the guests approached me and asked if she could have some of the leftovers for her dog. I was mortified, and the only response I was able to utter was, “Sure.” I was taught that you never ask for leftovers unless the host offers them. I am mad at myself for not saying anything, but what could I have said? With more holidays coming up, I'm sure people would like to know how to handle this sort of thing. Tongue-Tied Hostess

**How's this for an answer:** “Can you take our holiday leftovers home for your dog? Um, no.” Being a gracious hostess does not mean that you are required to provide leftovers for guests to take home for their own consumption — or their pets. Anyone can ask for anything from you, but a request doesn't compel you to comply.

Amy's column appears seven days a week at [www.washingtonpost.com/advice](http://www.washingtonpost.com/advice). Write to Amy Dickinson at [askamy@tribune.com](mailto:askamy@tribune.com) or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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