

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

TAXI-term: The 'Tour de Fours' from Week 1094

BY PAT MYERS

In honor of the 11th running of our Tour de Fours neologism contest, the four-letter block included "XI." And the challenge was to make up a term incorporating the letter block T-A-X-I, in any order. So of course there were lots of entries on taxes and taxis, but with, as always, cleverly varying approaches.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Prophylaxity: The way to unplanned parenthood. (Ann Martin, Falls Church)

2nd place and the Bubble Geezer machine:

A_XI_TY: The consuming fear that you're about to blow it on "Wheel of Fortune." (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

3rd place

Imaxative: That gut-wrenching 3-D scene where the camera appears to go over the waterfall or off the cliff. (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

4th place

Punxatini: Special Groundhog Day cocktail made with ice-cold gin and a touch of furmouth. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

wTAXed: honorable mentions

Taxidormy: The unspoken dream of many a college student toward an annoying roommate. (Christopher Lamora, Los Angeles)

Taxiti: Offshore paradise where the rich hide their bank accounts. (Jim Stiles, Rockville)

Flixtank: To go straight to DVD. "Who would have thought 'Edison Force,' with both Kevin Spacey and Morgan Freeman, would flixtank?" (Chris Doyle)

Taxilax: What the government uses to clean you out. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

Mexitacky: Restaurant decor featuring cactuses, pinatas, and chihuahuas in sombreros. (Kathleen DeBold, Burtonsville)

Intaxication: The giddy feeling Democrats get when they think of all the social ills they can solve by raising the tax on liquor. (Steve Glomb, Alexandria)

Xi attack: Getting the most Scrabble points with the shortest word possible. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

Aspxiate: To smother with cloying cuteness. "That 'My Little Pony' special aspxiated me in five minutes flat." (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Taxticles: What the IRS comes for when you're out of arms and legs. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

Earwax-Tip: This product was a marketing failure until someone thought of a more appealing name. (Not that it should ever be used for that purpose, of course.) (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Natxiety: Familiar feeling of dread among D.C. baseball fans in the ninth inning of a close game. (Mark Raffman)

Shtixa: Non-Jewish female comic. Many people don't realize that Tina Fey is a shtixa. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Asphnixiate: To stop breathing because your nose fell off. (Jeff Shirley)

Twixathon: The day after Halloween. (Mark Raffman)

Zitax: The toll exacted on teenagers for their existence. (Wendy Sparks, Rockville, a First Offender)

Cat-o'-IX-tails: Used to give the llrd degree; outlawed by the VIIIth Amendment. (Alex Heppenheimer, New York)

Extail: Divorce with benefits. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Mannexation: What the "other woman" is guilty of. (Tom Witte)

Christmasphysixiation: Every year, it seems to strangle its victims earlier and earlier. (Frank Mann, Washington)

Betwixt-air: A very polite term for a fart. (Tom Witte)

Exitation: The feeling that surges through FedEx Field during many a fourth quarter. (Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge)

Spandexitation: Girdle-off euphoria. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

Exitañata: The person who leaves a gathering and then gets bashed



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1098: Prime time for some Amazon reviews

Review for a box of Morton's Iodized Salt: This product works great for killing the slugs in my garden. I just roll the cylinder between the rows and it smushes them really good. Please send me the next size up so I can deal with the gophers. — David Genser, Week 960

A couple of years ago, the Empress capitalized on the thousands of "product reviews" — most of them would have been printed in Sarcasm Font had that typeface been available — that people had posted on Amazon.com for some of the literally millions of items available through Amazon's portal. The review above got ink in our early 2012 contest in which the E solicited reviews for any of five boring everyday products.

Not only did Week 960 find some zingy paeans to emery boards and dish cloths, but we've concluded that the contest also must have caught the attention of Amazon's chairman and CEO — and that The Style Invitational must have so utterly beguiled him that he decided he wanted a Washington Post of his very own.

So now that it's all in the family, let's give it another go. **This week: Send us a creative "review" for any of the items below that are listed on Amazon.com,** mostly through third-party sellers. The reviews must not be harmful to the manufacturer or seller. Feel free to post the reviews on Amazon itself, but not until we post the results online Dec. 11. While some reviews on Amazon run hundreds of words, we're looking for much shorter entries; 75 words would be lengthy for us. Search on Amazon.com with the exact words below to find the product to "review."

Universal paper clips 72210
White Cloud cotton balls, jumbo, 200ct
Westcott 12-inch wood ruler, beveled edge
Pringles Original, 5.68 oz
Solar dancing turkey

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a solar dancing turkey, or at least a bobbing turkey, donated by Jeffrey P. Bezos of the Seattle area. (Indirectly, anyway.)

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 or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 24; results published Dec. 14 (online Dec. 11). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include "Week 1098" 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 headline for the results is by Mark Raffman; the 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.



The best (or even second-best) review of this solar-powered turkey may win you the guy.

by everyone else: Henry was the exitañata of the party — as soon as he walked out the door, we all started talking about his hairpiece. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Plaxity: Poor dental hygiene. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

Luxative: White-truffle and beluga Metamucil. (Gary Crockett)

Foxating: Binge-watching Megyn Kelly, Ainsley Earhardt, etc., just for the news and analysis, mind you. (Mike Gips; Frank Mann)

Taxigermny: One reason to switch to Zipcar. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

Dexitasse: Espresso with a shot of amphetamines. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Axit/Taxit: The usual Republican-Democratic "debate" in Congress. (Robert Gerstl, Silver Spring, a First Offender; Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Taxidermatology: The surgical

science of making a person look like a mannequin; see "Joan Rivers," "Renee Zellweger" (David Garratt, Silver City, N.M.)

Lunatix: Stadium seats being scalped for so much you'd have to be insane to even consider — ooh, they're on the 50-yard line! (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)

ITAXU: Gov. O'Malley's license plate. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Dyslexiat: A new political class whose motto is "Workers of the world, untie!" (Frank Osen)

Trix tartare: Chilly rabbit. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Axtion figure: A Lizzie Borden doll. (Kevin Dopart)

Extiara: A beauty pageant has-been: "Dodie was Miss Disposable Diaper of 2012, but now she's lucky to get some extiara work on daytime cable." (Frank Osen)

Syntaxic: Having poisonously bad language skills: "Our syntactic translator declared that the vice president desired to have warm relations with the Iranian delegation on the table right now. (Frank Osen)

Raxtiles: Fabrics used to make bras. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

Nixathon: The Empress's weekly slog through the entries. (Chris Doyle)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our contest to "clarify" some advice in a horoscope. See bit.ly/invite1097.

POST PUZZLER

No. 241

BY BYRON WALDEN EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

ACROSS
1 Make a lot?
5 Baroque and others
15 "Heaven's ___ vault, / Studded with stars ...": Shelley
16 Alfalfa, for one
17 Baseball's all-time leader in grand slams, familiarly
18 Partied and then some
19 Acclaim
21 Floating impurities
22 Scala of "Ride a Crooked Trail"
23 Cub reporter's bailiwick?
25 "Old Possum's Book of Practical ___"
26 Keats poem that begins "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness"
27 Muharram is the first Islamic one
28 Flag

Answer to last week, No. 240

S	P	A	C	E	C	A	D	E	T	E	R	A	S
T	I	N	A	L	O	U	I	S	E	C	A	R	E
I	N	D	I	S	T	R	E	S	S	L	I	T	E
C	H	A	S	T	A	C	O	S	T	A	N	D	S
K	E	N	S	A	S	I	A	I	M	E	R		
S	A	T	O	N		D	O	G	R	A	C	E	
D	E	N	E	B		P	A	L	S	N	O	D	
						S	O	U	R	C	R	E	A
T	A	Y				G	R	E	S		G	L	E
E	L	E	V	E	N	S				E	G	G	E
E	L	L	E	N		S	A	K		M	A	D	E
N	O	P	R	E	S	S	U	R	E	A	L	I	T
A	V	I	S		A	T	A	N	Y	P	R	I	C
G	E	N	E		M	O	V	I	E	A	C	T	O
E	R	G	S		S	P	E	E	D	C	H	E	S

DOWN
1 Whipped egg white formations
2 Not flowing
3 New Orleans's Arena Football League team
4 Sister to Uncle Arthur on "Bewitched"
5 Part of ANC: Abbr.
6 Possible result of a cycling crash
7 Ancient warship
8 El ___
9 Opposite of absorb

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15				16									
17				18									
19				20		21				22			
23				24					25				
				26					27				
30	31	32	33					34					
35								36					
37								38			39	40	41
42								43					44
45								46					
48								49			50		51
52											53		
54													55

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | NOV. 16: This year you experience a renewed joie de vivre. Your views about various issues in life will change accordingly. If you are single, look to summer 2015 onward for a momentous relationship to knock on your door. At first, there may be some disagreements to work through, but ultimately the two of you will bond. If you are attached, you are more committed to making a mutual long-term goal a reality. As a couple, you'll expand your circle of friends.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You'll have certain responsibilities that will require your attention. You may become too involved with life's demands. A call from a friend might pull you out of a funk.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Your imagination may lead you into some interesting situations. You might be unsure of yourself, but take a difficult leap anyway.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Your thoughts keep returning to a family member. A partner will share some important information that may help explain why someone is being so demanding.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You'll say what you feel and do what you want, for the most part. A controlling loved one may be coaxed into releasing the reins for a brief time.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Conversations surround family and what would be best to do. Your day-to-day life might be subject to change. The idea of an adventure captures your imagination.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Your playfulness comes out with a loved one. Be more open with a friend who does the unexpected and may unnerve you. Indulge the wild child within you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You might feel as if someone close to you has a different agenda that won't work well with yours. Instead of saying no, try out some of this person's ideas, then decide.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Others seek you out and want your company. Wherever you are, there

will be a lot of people milling around. Treat a loved one to dinner.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Slow down, and make some calls in the morning to people you don't often speak with. You will enjoy catching up on their news. A surprise may come up with a new friend.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You may draw a strong reaction from a roommate or family member. You might not have realized how much you are changing. Allow your imagination to enrich your daily life.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You might be taken aback by a change of direction. Though people might find you unpredictable, you still like a certain amount of stability. Think about an important partnership that you depend on. Perhaps you would like to be more available.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You may be more in touch with your feelings than usual. Others drop a lot of news on you. Do not make anything a big deal. Just relax with the moment.

© 2014 by King Features Syndicate Inc.

Host in search of a dinner blessing

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: My partner and I are fortunate to have many wonderful friends of diverse religions and

backgrounds. We host dinner parties that may include folks of the Muslim, Jewish, Catholic and Baptist faiths (there may also be a few atheists and agnostics).

I was raised Catholic but consider myself an agnostic. My partner was raised reformed Jewish.

I find that asking for a moment of silence/prayer before dinner is a cheap way out of the situation.

Guests have asked if they could say grace and have been allowed to do so. Each time they have insulted my partner by breaking one of the commandments (as his faith/background/upbringing sees it). They say the word "God" aloud, instead of offering a silent recognition.

It is stressful enough having to deal with the diet requirements for a large group because of allergies and religious beliefs. A proper blessing seems to elude me. Can you suggest a blessing that is all inclusive and non-insulting? Do we hold hands around the table? Is it okay to sit, or should we stand?

Dinner next week will include an Episcopalian, a few Southern Baptists, a couple of Catholics, my Jewish partner and a few other friends.

Bill

If people are determined to be insulted, they will find a way to be insulted. Your partner, for instance.

Because he is so spiritually sensitive, perhaps he should provide a blessing for your group meals.

Otherwise, given the wide variety of faiths and non-faiths represented in your circle, you might do best to offer a more general greeting to your guests and an expression of gratitude to all of the unknown people who grew and harvested your food and helped get it to your table.

This should be done just after all of your guests are seated and before the food is presented. Please — no hand-holding.

Dear Amy: My husband and I have been together for 34 years; he has a daughter, "Angie," from his first marriage. Angie dumped her first husband and retained their home and custody of their teenage daughter. She recently lost the home to foreclosure, spending the money on parties and her second

husband (who is in jail for having sexual relations with Angie's daughter). She is now with a third husband who cannot keep a job because he's constantly drunk.

I work full time and my husband is retired. Angie falls off the face of the Earth until she needs something — like a place to live, a car, a phone, etc.

We feel sorry for her, but we can't handle all the drama! Is there something we can do to help? She does not want to work, she just wants to drink and smoke weed. Any advice?

Sad Situation

You and your husband need to take a cold, hard look at the life "Angie" has created — with your "help."

And then you need to stop helping. You two should hold hands and comfort each other through the anxiety and frustration this family member is creating. You have to help yourselves.

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

© 2014 by the Chicago Tribune