

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Haiku plus two: The TankaWanka news poems

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1095 we asked for a poem relating to events in the news, in a form something like the Japanese tanka: five lines with a syllable count of 5-7-5-7-7. But since real tankas don't rhyme, and we insisted on at least one rhyme per poem, we're calling ours TankaWanka. The deadline for this contest was before Election Day.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

"Gamergate," harassment of women in the gaming world:

Gamer dweebs all say
Girls are not supposed to play.
Hey, guys: Get a clue.
We have learned what we can do
With our joysticks, without you.
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

2nd place and the shell sculpture of a farmer riding a stack of turtles:

Midterm votes are done:
Optimism's fading fast
That the folks who won
Somehow will — unlike the last —
See that more than gas gets
passed. (Melissa Balmain,
Rochester, N.Y.)

3rd place

Sunni on Shia,
Russian troops in Crimea,
Ebola, ISIS,
Worldwide crisis and drama —
As per Fox: Thanks, Obama! (Frank
Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

4th place

Re Ms. Zellweger:
Were she the sole entrant in
A contest to choose
The one who looked most like her,
Could Renée herself still lose?
(Perry Beider, Silver Spring)

Stanka:
honorable mentions

Department of Human Services
employees put \$30,000 worth of
Starbucks on government credit card
At the DHS,
When they make a coffee run
It costs thirty thou.
If they want to get Starbucks,
They should not pay with OUR
bucks. (Nan Reiner)

Kerry won't pander,
So Israelis throw a fit
From State staff's candor:
"Netanyahu's chicken[poop]" —
(I confess I laughed a bit.)
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

The conservative

Wing of the Catholic Church
Was left in the lurch.
The libs are ecstatic in
Pope Francis's Vatican.
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Secret Service guys!

Use your brains and ears and eyes.
Watch the fence posts more.
Sic the dogs — that's what they're
for!
(Also lock the White House door?)
(Nan Reiner)

Though Colt McCoy won

against the hated Cowboys,
RG3 is back!
Watch and you can clearly tell.
Just look for the big red L.
(Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

Quarantine today!

We can risk no more delay.
Only ban and purge
Can protect us from this scourge:
Lock the Congress up right now.
(Nan Reiner)

In Eastern Ukraine

The Russians foment trouble
Surreptitiously.
They're hiding their mischief well —
Says Putin: "Donetsk, don't tell."
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

Ebola, viral,

Then turned transatlantic.
The news went frantic
And contagiously manic:
There's no vaccine for panic. (Frank
Osen)

On the Big Island

Kilauea awakens.
Fox reports this fact,
Then the left goes volcanic
Denouncing "lava panic." (Jeff
Contompassis, Ashburn)

College can be hard:

The student athlete suffers
So many questions,
But just one at UNC:
"Would you like an A or B?" (Jeff
Shirley, Richmond)

Fake classes for jocks

At UNC Chapel Hill?
Imagine our shock
That (pick any college name)
Was not busted for the same. (Gary
Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Sarah Palin hopes

To run for office again.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1099:
Questionable journalism

Sentence from a Post article:

This is the place that made me who I am.

Question that sentence might answer:

What's so special about the back seat of your parents' SUV? (Jay Shuck, 2007)Post: **It's a blasphemy wrapped in an atrocity.**Q: **Have you tried our new kosher cheesesteak on Wonder Bread?** (David Kleeman, 2003)Post: **Great legs in a short skirt make me melt.**Q: **Hey, Pillsbury Doughboy, why won't you work with Tina Turner?** (Jean Sorensen, 1998)

It's a contest that keeps on giving — not surprisingly, since the pool of source material is almost infinitely vast. The Empress's predecessor, the Czar, first presented this challenge in Week 254, and we've done it about a dozen times since. **This week: Take a sentence (or most of a sentence) that appears in an article in The Washington Post or on washingtonpost.com dated Nov. 20 through Dec. 1 (in print, any article from those days' papers), and make up a question that the sentence could answer,** as in the examples above from three of our earlier contests. For print stories, please include the date and page number; for online stories, copying out the URL above or below your entry would be very helpful.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a fabulously fabulous genuine 1958 hardcover advice book, donated by Christopher Larsen, titled "Twixt Twelve and Twenty: Pat Talks to Teenagers" — by Pat

Boone. Let's say that it won't be confused with Dan Savage's "Savage Love." Here, Pat (who was considered square even then) explains why he dumped his "first steady": "She was a very pretty girl . . . but she let me see her in her curlers. Invited me over when she was suffering from a cold in the head. Next thing you know, even when she was all fixed up I could still see those curlers and that runny nose. Sad, isn't it? But that's the teenage male." Pat also notes, uncritically, that his mother routinely beat him and his siblings with a sewing machine belt, and that he was spanked until he was 17 years old.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grocery 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, Dec. 1; results published Dec. 21 (online Dec. 18). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include "Week 1099" 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 Jeff Contompassis; the honorable-mentions subhead was submitted by everybody. 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 GOP needs,
So she says, to have "more guts."
(What they don't need is more
nuts.) (Chris Doyle)

For 2016,
GOP candidate groups
Will soon be on-scene,
Like the Organization
Of Perry Supporters (OOPS).
(Frank Osen)

*A new theory that some of J.S. Bach's
greatest music was written by his wife:*

New discordant notes?
Some of Bach's great music was
Not, perhaps, his own.
Let us credit *all* the Bachs:
Anna Magdalena rocks!
(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Rick Scott demanded
That Charlie Crist should be
banned
From debates with fans,
Although he thought it was fair
When Clint debated a chair.
(Frank Osen)

Doritos topped with
Syrups, spices and veggies:
A Mexican fad.
With each spoonful in your mouth,
Your border moves farther south.
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

When donors who spent
Four billion dollars on the
Midterm elections

Cash in on their connections,
They don't expect objections.
(Chris Doyle)

*Substitute English teacher charged
with having sex with student*

"I don't tell I show,"
The teacher texted the boy,
And it all came out.
Should she go to the slammer
For the sex, or bad grammar?
(Mark Raffman)

Hail fecal transplants!

Changing gut bacteria
Can cure your C. diff.
A bitter pill to swallow
So better poop will follow. (Chris
Doyle)

Though I write before

Midterm elections are done,
I'll bravely predict—
Whichever senator's picked —
This much: that big money won.
(Frank Osen)

Defective airbags

In cars across the country
Pose a threat for some.
But the airbags you should fear
Are those elected this year. (Kevin
Dopart)

**Still running — deadline Monday
night: our contest for funny
reviews for products sold on
Amazon.com. See bit.ly/
invite1098.**

POST PUZZLER

No. 242

BY KAREN M. TRACEY EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

ACROSS
1 Fleecy fiber sources
8 Oddball
15 "I'm okay with that"
17 Zamboni, e.g.
18 One-hit wonder of 1984
19 Quote by rote
20 SAT developer
21 Coming next
23 Please, in French:
Abbr.
25 "¡____!vego!"
27 Stadium from which you
can see the Unisphere
29 Baroness Karen's pen
name
33 Oilers, since 1999
35 Without grace
37 Human general
38 Popcorn bowl leftovers
40 Not neath
41 "Game" played by busy
people
43 Dweller on the Gulf of
Aden

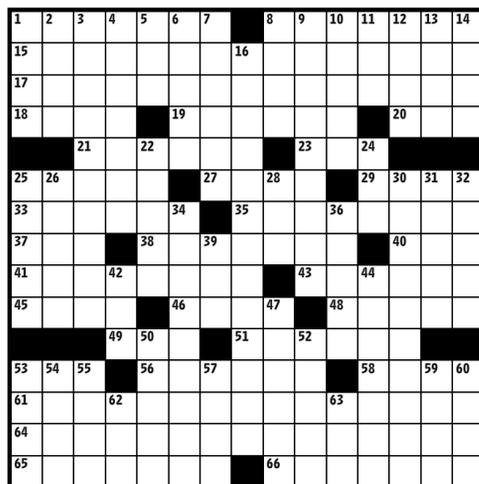
DOWN

1 Clarifying words
2 Minstrel's instrument
3 Support for a certain
player
4 Phillips Arena setting
5 TV franchise whose
theme songs are all by
the Who

6 Stoudemire of the New
York Knicks
7 Roman philosopher and
dramatist
8 Japanese calligraphy
ink
9 Trypanosomiasis
spreader
10 Anglican bishop's
address: Abbr.
11 Louis B. Mayer Library
org.
12 "Excellent!"
13 Swarmer at dusk
14 Dusks, in poetry
16 Host of Animal Planet's
"My Cat From Hell"
22 Grateful word overseas

24 Greek consonants used
in circle formulas
25 Protective online
address starter
26 Actress and comedian
Tyler
28 Scott's "own"
spreader
31 Coeur d'____, Idaho
32 2014 NBA All-Star Game
MVP Irving
34 Agree to, after
compromising
36 Ship that brought the
Statue of Liberty to the
U.S.
39 Co-star of "The Facts of
Life"

42 Japanese IT services
firm
44 Morphs
47 Classic Ford
50 Delve into
52 "Homicide: Life on the
Street" actor Kyle
53 Greek peak
54 School known for its
collar
55 Holds in check
57 Contents of many
hypos
59 Hemisphere
60 Small bills
62 Conifer with red arils
63 The Cavaliers of the
ACC



Answer to last week, No. 241

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

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | NOV. 23: This year you become more responsive to others, though by Christmas you may be worn out. Maybe it is time to veer from going the traditional route. Beware overthinking. If you are single, you'll meet someone with ease. He or she might come from a different culture. If you are attached, try to avoid scuffles, and accept your sweetie the way he or she is. This type of caring is contagious and will be returned.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

The call of adventure summons you once more. How you factor that need into your plans may prove to be interesting. Your creative personality needs an outlet; find one.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Relate to a partner or loved one directly. You may be working through an issue about the relationship on a highly personal level.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You might accomplish much more if you relax and tackle one task at a time. Bring others together later in the day. People will be in the mood to celebrate with just a little to nibble on and some good company.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Observe how someone else reacts under pressure; you may be surprised. You might not have the control over your schedule that you would like.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Your fiery yet charming personality draws a loved one in closer. This person will open up about a personal issue, as he or she trusts you to understand.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You may have to process a lot quite quickly. Don't worry — you'll land like a cat, on all fours. Tonight, make your home your castle.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

You'll enjoy your friends more than usual. You feel a natural kinship with this group of pals, as if they are part of your family.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Be aware of your expenses. An older friend or relative will let you know how much he or she thinks of you. This person also will make it clear that you have his or her support.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Your energy attracts many people, whether it is simply to chat or to make big plans. Spontaneity will work well for you, so consider taking off for a movie.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You'll be tired of being pushed so hard. One sharp remark, and you're likely to pull back. You just might like to have a space where you can have some time to yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Pick and choose your company, as well as what you want to do. You'll see the power of lying low for now.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Pressure will build around an authority figure. You might make demands of this person without realizing it. It would be better to give him or her some space.

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Sister stirs the pot with family gossip

Ask Amy

AMY
DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I have a sister who has been mentally ill for 44 years, with schizophrenia. She is not able to work and has been on welfare. I have helped her out for the past 25 years.

When my husband died, I asked my brother to share some of the responsibility for her care.

Now that he's helping out he has more contact with our sister. She seems to delight in repeating any negative remarks that he makes about me back to me. This makes me angry, so that I don't wish to speak to him. I have asked my sister not to repeat his remarks, but she keeps doing it.

My brother has always been very defensive, perhaps because he's jealous. I am considering calling to inform him that our sister is repeating some of his negative remarks. I have been advised not to do this because he can be so defensive.

I believe it is better to have things out in the open. How would you handle this?

Tired Older Sister

It's futile to hold her completely responsible for her actions, but to some extent she may enjoy being the originator of family gossip and she may inflate or invent some of this negativity. She might also be repeating things you say to your brother.

You have asked her to stop, and now the logical and loving thing to do is remain as neutral as possible and simply inform your brother: "I need to tell you that, FYI, everything you say to our sister gets back to me, and probably some things you don't say to her also get back to me."

Otherwise, consider the source and steel yourself for more. Remind her to please not repeat private statements. If you and your brother can have an honest conference about her care, you could emerge from this experience as more of a team, and that will be best for everyone.

Dear Amy: I regularly stop by

my local McDonald's for a "senior coffee" and a quiet spot to read my daily newspaper. The staff (entirely young) are just wonderful: friendly to all. They are always courteous and patient, and quick to have my coffee ready, even before I order. I would like to thank them, individually or collectively, during the upcoming holiday season, but am unsure what would be appropriate. Any suggestions?

Thankful Senior in Los Angeles

How nice. Aside from clipping this column to present to the employees, you should write a personal letter, using examples

of exemplary service and naming each employee. You should copy this to the branch manager, and also send a copy to national headquarters.

When I stop into McDonald's and see seniors, often in groups, gathering for their daily coffee and chat, I am grateful for businesses that encourage this sort of community.

Dear Amy: After three years of marriage I barely talk to my wife. What do you do when you know you still love someone and you know she still loves you, but the betrayal and actions of both parties were so great that forgiveness isn't even an option?

So Sad

I cannot imagine misbehavior that is so great that forgiveness isn't an option. Forgiveness is always an option. The path toward forgiveness is paved through talk, connection and apology. You can't undertake this journey without being truthful and heartbreakingly vulnerable with your partner.

It is possible to repair a relationship, but only if you are both willing to do the hard work necessary. I hope you will at least try.

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