

## DIVERSIONS

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## Game of Groans: The story puns of Week 1100

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1100 we asked for feghoots — little stories that end in a pun on some well-known line or expression. The format of the Invitational demands very little stories; perhaps we'll call them fhts. Warning: These puns are outrageous groaners. It's part of the genre. And you can groan over even more of them in the online Invite at [bit.ly/invite1104](http://bit.ly/invite1104).

## The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Despite trying and trying and trying and not getting any early action on WMDs, Operation Iraqi Freedom did ultimately nab Hussein and many of his henchmen. But after the former Iraqi president was hanged, Dubya nixed the plan to transfer the rest of the inner circle to Guantanamo. "Political opposition is too great," he said. **"I can't Gitmo Saddam's faction."** (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

## 2nd place and the tiny rubbery brain and plastic nose:

The famed businessman Victor Kiam told a story about his service in World War II: "At the Battle of the Bulge, a colonel kept ordering waves of grunts like me out of the trench we were in, only to see them cut down by cannon fire. So I shouted, "Hey, why are you doing that?" He replied, **"Look, Kiam, you're fodder."** (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

## 3rd place

Yet another reason for Americans' expanding waists — this time it's the recent craze of adding fatty fish to your diet. They may be getting lots of omega-3 and all that, but still, **their butts for the grease of cod go wide.** (Marc Shapiro, Alexandria)

## 4th place

The place: Heaven. The event: the annual cook-off. This year, Chinese. The team: the inventor of the sewing machine, the grande dame of the Grand Ole Opry, the founder of what is now Zimababwe, and Charles Gulden of condiment fame. The group was just about to complete its pièce de résistance when in flew the Angel in Charge to announce that time was up: **"Howe, Minnie, Rhodes, Mustard Man — wok down!"** (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

## Thin Pun Alley: honorable mentions

Methane released by livestock is a major contributor to global warming. For several years, climatologists have been working with the tea industry to develop crops that thrive on these greenhouse gases. It doesn't look promising, though; **they've been trying for fart-oolong.** (Brian Cohen, Norfolk, Va.)

Humphrey Bogart had several rather odd hobbies; one of them was collecting miniatures of Greek mythological characters. One day he was talking about his collection with fellow movie star Ray Milland. "You know, Broderick Crawford has always greatly admired them," Milland said. "Yes, I know," answered Bogie. "Tell you what: **Give my wee gods to Brod, Ray.**" (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Twenty years ago, Earl Scroggs started a two-year gig at the Flamingo in Las Vegas. About 10 months in, the legendary banjo player took three weeks off to do a series of charity concerts, so the casino replaced his act with Robert Earl Keen, offering a 40 percent discount on tickets. The successful move became known as the **"1995 Earl Change Special."** (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Although Ms. Witherspoon had already received acclaim for several movie roles, the director of her latest film found her performance terribly wooden and unconvincing, so he demanded that the producer take some immediate action. The savvy producer quickly decided what needed to be done: He drafted an **immediate Reese training order.** (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

When I arrived for a three-month stay on Olympus, Mercury told me he would rent his house to me while I was there, at a very low cost. There was only one restriction: I could not remove the carcass of a songbird from his freezer, because Zeus had promised to restore it to life when he returned. When I entered the



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## New contest for Week 1104: A pair of threes

**FLL: First Lego League and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport** (the IATA code): Stacking isn't so much fun at the airport.

**HME: Hereditary medical exostoses** (a condition in which bumps grow on the arms and legs) and **homemade explosives:** The second is generally not recommended by doctors as a way to remove the first.

We continue this week with a contest that made its debut this past May, with an earlier chunk of the alphabet. There are several pages on Wikipedia that each consist of literally thousands of three-letter combinations. Each one is an itty-bitty link either to a page about something the letters stand for or to a list of several possibilities. And this week we're concentrating on the E-through-H page: **Choose two or three entities represented by a single three-letter combination beginning with E- through H- — see the links at bit.ly/abbrevs-e-h — and say how they are alike or different,** as in the examples above. **Note:** The entity could be something abbreviated by the three letters, as above, or it might be a full three-letter word or name: "FOG" or "fog," say. *And it doesn't have to be mentioned in the Wikipedia link,* as long as it's real. But the three letters must fall between EAA and HZZ. Be sure to include the three-letter block in your entry — as three consecutive letters — so that the Empress may search for them with her Imperial Ctrl-f.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a **tiny box of genuine fossilized dinosaur poop**, donated by Mike Creveling. The pooplets look just like any other tiny rocks, but they are from Skulls Unlimited, "the world's leading supplier of osteological specimens," and so we'll take its word for it.

**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 designed by Bob Staake: 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, Jan. 5; results published Jan. 25 (online Jan. 22). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1104" 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). The headline for this week's results is by Tom Witte; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Chris Doyle. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev).

**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).

house I went straight to the refrigerator and looked in: Yep. **Chilled wren of a lesser god.** (Ted Remington, Marion, N.C., a First Offender)

Did you read about the ordinance in Fort Lauderdale that restricted the feeding of the homeless? The city passed it, but protests threatened to turn ugly, and a judge suspended the law. Apparently he feared it might cause **a riot to bear alms.** (Chris Doyle)

"This was no suicide," said Poirot. "He was murdered with the bolo of an Argentinian cowboy, who then tried to make it look like a hanging. But the pattern of neck bruises is unmistakable: It is a **dead-on impression of gaucho marks.**" (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

The group photo wasn't going well at a 1965 U.N. reception honoring celebrities for their efforts to fight global hunger: The famed French German chef Michel Obercumb and his fiancée had had a tiff and were maintaining a chilly distance. Fortunately, the secretary general worked his charm and reunited the couple with a mock frown and gentle elbow to the ribs. And the photographer never forgot seeing **U Thant nudge a cook by his lover.** (Perry Beider, Silver Spring)

A mystic from the East came to visit a small Nebraska town and received quite a welcome in the town hall. But a Native American man made a joke about "real Indians," which confused the visitor and embarrassed the other townspeople. The joker then felt terrible, as no slight had been intended. You see, things like this **weigh down a Pawnee swami-ribber.** (Mae Scanlan)

If John Dryden were alive today and having lunch at McDonald's, he would never order a hamburger: He believed that **a bun is the lowest form of wheat.** (Gary Crockett)

Lois always accompanied her husband during his bowling tournaments by bringing along her antique harp, which she played continually. Finally, someone on the other team had had enough — he yanked the instrument out of Lois's hands, hurled it to the floor, and slammed his bowling ball on it. "Don't worry," said her husband, "we can fix it." "Fix it?" sobbed Lois. "Look at it! It's **nothing but a ball-defaced lyre!**" (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

The tribal council wanted to hold an event for married couples only, so it decided to require each couple to display wedding rings at the door. As the sign read: **"A band on all Hopi who enter here."** (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Traveling in New Brunswick, you're invited to a local's home for a traditional Acadian meal of poutine, pea soup and fried smelt. In the middle of the meal, with your mouth full, you have to sneeze. Fearing you're about to splatter your hosts with chewed-up fish, you clamp your mouth shut and clasp your hands over your face. The result: **Smelts in your mouth, snot in your hands.** (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

**And Last:** The Empress's predecessor at The Style Invitational scored two tickets to "The Importance of Being Earnest" at the National Theatre. Dressing for the show, he draped one of his wife's silk scarves around his neck, tied it into an elaborate bow and asked, "What d'ya think, hon?" She turned, rolled her eyes and said: "Yeah, sure, **wear the Wilde thing, Czar.**" (Chris Doyle)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at [bit.ly/invite1104](http://bit.ly/invite1104).

**Still running — deadline Monday night: Our contest to pair a TV show with a comically fitting song. See bit.ly/invite1103.**

## POST PUZZLER

## No. 247

BY PATRICK BERRY EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

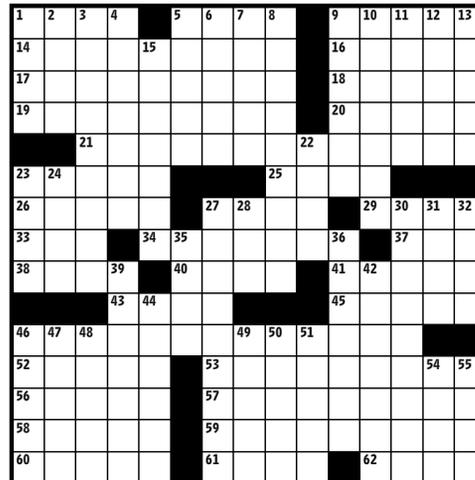
**ACROSS**  
**1** Play starter  
**5** Woefully unimpressive  
**9** Squash, e.g.  
**14** 1959 No. 1 hit for Paul Anka  
**16** Pal of Threepio  
**17** TV series loosely based on the life of Mark Wahlberg  
**18** Lacking color  
**19** Living an exciting life, slangily  
**20** Five-time Oscar nominee Dunne  
**21** "If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm" speaker  
**23** Leave-taking  
**25** Outside lane of a racetrack  
**26** Let it all out, say

**27** Mafia title  
**29** Gets off the dime, so to speak  
**33** Campus extension?  
**34** People waiting for payment  
**37** Puzzle solver's cry  
**38** Subtraction word  
**40** Cavett contemporary  
**41** 10/10/1973 resignee  
**43** One of the creators of the land of Midgard  
**45** League members  
**46** Fishkill cause  
**52** Counter formations  
**53** They're shooting stars  
**56** Front cover  
**57** Small orbiter  
**58** Skipper on the water  
**59** Excoriates  
**60** Food that can crystallize  
**61** Arcadian females  
**62** Rush drummer Peart

**DOWN**  
**1** Take to the hills, maybe  
**2** Rule violation  
**3** Bug zapper  
**4** Big blooms  
**5** Having a songlike quality  
**6** Taper off  
**7** Captain of industry  
**8** Stunning sight  
**9** Raj honchos  
**10** How dividends may be distributed  
**11** Box often accompanied by a blank  
**12** 18 holes of golf  
**13** Co-star of Rourke in "The Wrestler"

**15** Lansing minor-leaguers  
**22** Peat-rich habitat  
**23** Biblical martyr  
**24** Skater's exclamation  
**27** Juice brand introduced in 1963  
**28** Palindromic name  
**30** Former U.S. territory whose motto was "The land divided, the world united"  
**31** The enemy  
**32** Maxims  
**35** Typical DeMille film  
**36** Swift attacks?  
**39** Name

**42** Bavarian cream ingredient  
**44** Lucasfilm owner  
**46** Butt heads  
**47** Well aware of  
**48** Subject of the book "The Smartest Guys in the Room"  
**49** Show about the firm McKenzie, Brackman  
**50** Break character  
**51** Rectangular plates  
**54** Baked Italian dish  
**55** Jungle adventure film prop



Answer to last week, No. 246

BAD ORANGEJUICE  
 ELI POLARVORTEX  
 EMS EDDIEALBERT  
 ROMANMILELAMAS  
 CLAUSES TWIN  
 HINTON FIREEXIT  
 ANTON BENESASH  
 SALS ALIGNACME  
 ERE BLOGS LUTED  
 ROSARIAN PAROLE  
 LIFT DISABLE  
 EMOTE WRISTSLAP  
 MIRANDAOTTOARE  
 INCINERATOR DAN  
 TEACEREMONY ETD

## HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | DEC. 28:** This year you have a lot of excitement in your life, especially involving your loved ones. You never know what you will walk into next, and for the most part, you like it that way. You have a tendency to withdraw and sometimes overanalyze situations. Don't put yourself in a situation where you are not comfortable. If you are single, take your time getting to know someone. If you are attached, the two of you can be argumentative. Understand that a fight is the surest way to put distance between you.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**  
 You might find that a friend at a distance seems rather quiet once you start sharing. Find out why. Someone may let you know that he or she admires how you handle yourself.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**  
 You feel more inhibited with someone than usual. What occurs may be much subtler than you realize. In fact, you might miss out on the true symbolism of a conversation altogether.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**  
 Focus on your friends, who often are indulgent of your whims. One friend may act in a most unexpected way. A partner opens up.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**  
 You will enjoy bringing others together, no matter what the

excuse. Lighten up a bit more. A loved one may be very controlling. Know that you don't need to react to that behavior.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**  
 Your spontaneity will take you down a new path. Break past your judgments, and new ideas will emerge. You know that you are your own biggest obstacle.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**  
 You may decide to let someone else take the lead in making plans. An unexpected conversation reveals a weakness in your bond. Don't worry; it can be corrected.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**  
 You have a way of getting what you want. A family member may become demanding, and he or she might rain on your parade.

## Only 20, and she's got baby fever

**Ask Amy**  
 AMY DICKINSON  
 Dear Amy: I am a 20-year-old woman who has graduated from college. I have a wonderful full-time job and am in a new relationship with a much older man.

Although the relationship is new, I am constantly daydreaming about becoming pregnant. You know that baby-fever feeling that makes you want to cry about being so empty and barren?

I realize that since my boyfriend is older he's at a stage in his life where he is ready to start settling down. I want so much, so fast. I want the marriage, the kids, the home. But I want it after only a couple months of dating. My question is, how fast is too fast?

Impatient

I can say with total honesty that I do not know the "baby-fever" feeling that makes you want to cry about being so empty and barren.

At the age of 20, describing your womb as "empty and barren" because there isn't a baby in it is extreme.

I do know the feeling,

however, of being so hyper-charged smitten that you want to make a baby together before you even know each other's middle names. This is evolutionary, hormonal and beautifully irrational.

You might be preternaturally mature. The fact that you have a college degree and a full-time job at the age of 20 is a sign that you are self-directed and ambitious.

I can only pass along the advice I would offer if you were my daughter: Once you have children everything changes. You may not think you will regret all of the years of experience you would miss by having a child at your age, but you probably would. Most importantly, driving at the speed of light toward marriage, babies, houses, etc., after only two months of dating is unwise. In your haste to get the prize you perceive, you will miss many necessary experiences and opportunities to get to know your partner.

**Dear Amy: I think my mother is jealous and resentful of me. Any accomplishments over the course of my lifetime (I'm middle aged) have gone completely unheralded by her for as long as I can remember. She is sarcastic and**

*unsupportive and seems to want to take me down a notch. My hair? It's either too long or too short. My body? It's either too thin or too heavy. I never heard from her that I was kind, or smart, or capable, or attractive. And on it goes.*

*I cannot fathom not wanting better for my children than I have. I cannot imagine being jealous or resentful of them. I want to believe my mother is simply an unhappy person whose unhappiness has nothing to do with me, but she brags about my sibling relentlessly, so how could I come to any other conclusion than that she resents me?*

*Can you shed some light? Downtrodden Daughter*

**I agree** with your conclusion. I also agree about the reason — your mother is deeply unhappy. It is not unusual for a dysfunctional parent to single out one child to treat poorly. You should feel sorry that your mother is so insecure and unhappy and resolve to do better in your own life.

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.