

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

I'm with Cupid: The valentines of Week 1108

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1108 the Empress asked for valentine sentiments to and/or from particular people, real or fictional. In Loserly fashion, we present the results a week after everyone stopped thinking about valentines.

4th place

To the NEA on Valentine's Day: I just wanted to remind you how much I love and respect teachers. They are the most undervalued and overworked group in America. — I'm Scott Walker, and I approve this message.
(Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

3rd place

Dear Passenger: Please don't be hasty! Oh, will you Not yet make us transit non grata? We promise we'll try really hard not to kill you.
Our [garbled]. Sincerely, WMATA.
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

2nd place and the puzzle of the digestive system

To Ms. X in the corner office: Though your training did mention Unwanted attention And warned not to take it too far, A foxy exec's Got me thinking of sex So I hope you don't think it bizarre That I brought you some flowers And loitered for hours In the hall where your door was ajar; I guess I'm just wired To get myself fired By the smokin' hot head of HR.
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

To Yoko from John: We could make beautiful music together. Well, I could anyhow. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

Please B-minus: honorable mentions

Greece to Germany:



By Kevin Dopart, Washington

To House Speaker Boehner from President Obama:

Although you dis me, pout and whine I think you're really neato, So here's a gift, sweet valentine: My big fat heart-shaped veto.
(Kathleen DeBold, Burtonsville)

Other men may like them Full and firm — that's where they're at

But you're the one I want to hold: I love you 'cause you're flat. — To my special football, from

Tom Brady (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

From Wilt Chamberlain to any of 20,000 women:

Dear (your name here): It was (positive adjective). You'll always be (another positive adjective) to me. (Rob Huffman)

To Josephine from Napoleon: Come with me and share my doom And I will give you Elba room.
(Edmund Conti, Raleigh)

This valentine gift is from **Wal-Mart** to you — A valued employee we're proud to call ours.

A health plan? A union? A raise? No can do! Just a card that says, "Love, hearts and flowers." (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

From University of Virginia sorority members, after being banned from a weekend of frat parties:

Dear Frat Row boys of UVA: We're forced to throw these cards away. Our mother chapter busybodies Say it isn't right that hotties Such as us go drink your booze; They think we lack the brains to choose, And if we did this weekend's keggers, Most of us would end up preggers Or, perhaps, meet worse results — But really now, we're all adults! You're sweet, reserved, refined, polite



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1112: Some SHARP words

Dishpair: What you get when you're served liver and jello on the same plate.
Sharecopper: A tenant miner.
Himpersonation: The chick's in the male.

The Empress is almost unbearably tickled to announce the induction of its 10th member of the Style Invitational Hall of Fame: Last week, along with the skunk hat she won as a second prize, Beverley Sharp dabbled at her 500th blot of Invite ink since her first honorable mention in Week 604, a decade ago. Beverley, a former French teacher and social worker who moved to Montgomery, Ala., after a number of years in Washington (her married name is Amberg, but she uses her own surname for the Invite), sends us a long list of entries every single week, even when she's on a cruise, traveling in Europe, tooling around on the Mars Rover, etc., and she's aced just about every kind of contest we can throw at her, most notably her zingy but never crude song parodies and other poems, such as today's belated valentines.

And certainly neologisms as well, which is why fellow Hall of Famer Chris Doyle suggested **this week's contest: Coin a word or short term that includes all the letters S, H, A, R and P**, in any order (they don't have to be clumped together) and describe it, as in Chris's examples above. Feel free to use the word in a funny sentence; that might be what gets you ink over someone else who thought of the same word. Yes, Beverley gets to enter.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets an actually pretty wholesome how-to book called "Knit Your Own Kama Sutra," containing instructions for knitting cute little man and woman dolls and accessories like bathrobes and cowboy hats; the dolls are about as anatomically correct as Barbie and Ken. However, there are a few photos of the knitted beings posed in some rather tightknit ways, so if you end up winning this and you're not 18 (or if you just don't want it), you get a tote bag or mug.

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 Foser 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 or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, March 2; results published March 22 (online March 19). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1112" 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. The headline for this week's results and the honorable-mentions subhead are both by Jeff Shirley. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday.

THE 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.

(Though seldom on a Friday night), And while your bingeing, barfing skill

Is all the rage of Charlottesville, You'll have to drink alone, while we Go slum at Washington & Lee.
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

From Elaine Orr Thayer to e e cummings: GET LOST, YOU JERK!
(Roy Ashley, Washington)

To the Trivago Guy in the commercial:

In spite of scruffy hair and clothes, A day's growth on your beard — I was crushin' on you, Guy, Although your look was weird. And then I saw your newest spot, You really upped your groom! How 'bout you log onto that site And go get us a room? (George-Ann Rosenberg, Washington)

To Dulcinea del Toboso: Dreams like mine are grandioso. You're my valentine now,



FAMILY PHOTO

She made it into Pooperston: Hall of Famer Beverley Sharp models her prize skunk hat.

aren'tcha? — Don Quixote de La Mancha. (Chris Doyle)

From Hillary to Bill: I've stuck with you through thick and thin From trailer trash through Miss Lewin'. Detractors jeered; I paid no notice. The reason's clear — I wanna be POTUS. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Bob McDonnell to Maureen: Let them say what they want about us: You're still beautiful under a bus. (Kevin Dopart)

Catherine the Great to Mr. Ed: Shhh — don't speak! (Mark Raffman)

To Commuters from Metro: Red Line, Green Line, Orange Line, valentine! Come take a ride through my tunnel of love. Blue Line, Silver Line, Yellow Line, Be Mine! [ALERT: Major delays due to ongoing rhyming issue. Next verse will arrive in 20 minutes] (Kathleen DeBold)

From Adam to Eve: I love only you (that's no fib!), And I'm mad for the cut of your jib. Though that thing with the snake Was a major mistake (And I wish you would give back my rib). (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1112.

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our contest to use a pun on a song title to name a business. See bit.ly/invite1111.

POST PUZZLER

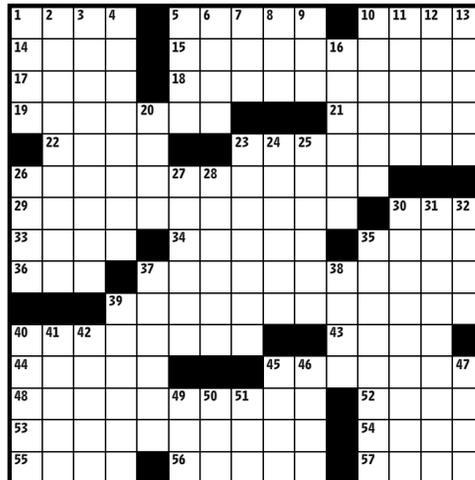
No. 255

BY PATRICK BERRY EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

ACROSS
1 Neighbor of Niger
5 Geode mineral
10 Water cooler?
14 Askance glance
15 Literary character whose name means "spoon" in rhyming slang
17 Ship with 50 oars
18 Whoopee cushions?
19 Most intense, as sadness
21 Cutting tool for sheet metal
22 Came out with
23 Probe
26 Studio that created Peter Potamus and Atom Ant
29 Not now, but not never
30 Give an edge to, in a way
33 Appearance
34 It's thrown in anger
35 ___ particular (Cuban B&B)

DOWN
1 Decked out
2 "You might try this"

3 Body of water once known as the Archipelago
4 See as a surprise
5 The needy's need
6 Hero's opposite
7 "The only way to run away without leaving home," according to Twyla Tharp
8 AC/DC's sophomore album
9 Cereal plant part
10 Setting of the 2001 war drama "No Man's Land"
11 Varnish ingredient
12 Unskillful
13 Canvas coat
16 Go out of service?
20 Historic cheese market site
23 Fare well
24 San Luis ___ (Cal Poly city)
25 Like many members of the Mau Mau Uprising
26 They perform poorly
27 Take the top off
28 Each
30 Substance applied to Elmer Fudd's scalp in the Bugs Bunny cartoon "Rabbit of Seville"
31 Niche-interest info
32 Putnam Competition subject
35 Braincases
37 "Supernatural" co-star Ackles
38 Bender
39 Unhealthy-looking
40 Toughie
41 Speak one's mind
42 Manicurist played by Jan Miner in old Palmolive ads
45 All-inclusive
46 Encyclical writer
47 Pair of tabloids
49 Party girl, say
50 Miss ___
51 Golden ratio symbol



Answer to last week, No. 254

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

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | FEB. 22: This year will be divided into two distinct parts. The first part: Through most of summer, you will be busy with work, projects, a new interest and day-to-day matters. Take good care of yourself during this time. The second part: You will be more people-oriented. If you are single, you might meet Mr. or Ms. Right. If you are attached, the two of you will enjoy a new closeness this fall. Plan on doing something you have always wanted to do but have put off.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Get an early start, as the best part of your day will be the morning. Your energy is high, but you just might choose to veg and read the paper.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
You might not think you will be up for much activity when you wake up. Just go with the flow, and you will be able to recharge your batteries. Allow yourself to let go and enjoy.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Schedule a brunch with some friends in the morning. By late afternoon, you might wish to socialize less and relax on your own. Embrace this downtime.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You'll have the time and the desire to bring friends together and throw a spontaneous get-together. A happening like this

will help everyone get away from it all for a little while.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Consider taking off for a day trip or meeting a friend halfway. Getting out of town might mellow your mood, help you relax and allow you to appreciate what you normally don't.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Your way of expressing your needs might not mesh well with a loved one right now. Be sensitive to this person. You will be given your platform soon enough.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You might feel as if you need to spread yourself thin to make others happy, which will leave no time for yourself. Relax, and you will see that a partner comes through for you in a meaningful way.

Handle his rudeness 'Jeopardy'-style

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I recently invited an acquaintance, "Al," to a TV sports viewing party. He invited his friend "Ed" to join us. Al and Ed have known each other their entire lives, but I had never met Ed before. They are both 70 years old.

After the game ended, we three were talking when Ed suddenly said to me, "So, what are we going to do now, make love?" Then, a few minutes later he said, "When I'm driving my car, you can pay off a bet." I had not made any sports bets with him. He was alluding to a sexual act. Al did not hear the crass comments. I ignored Ed's offensive behavior.

Both Al and I are decent, kind and considerate people. I was dressed conservatively in sports attire. We were kind and welcoming to Ed. All of my friends are well-mannered and courteous.

Ed's offensive remarks were negative and insulting. He did not drink alcohol, and no drugs were present, so what gives? I told Al about this, and he did not know why Ed acted offensively.

What could I have said to Ed to fend off both remarks? Also, I do

not trust Ed, and he knows where I live. What can I do proactively to protect myself?

Proper and Puzzled Gal

There are any number of ways to respond to a rude remark in the moment, but I think the best is "Jeopardy"-style: posing your response as a question.

You say, "Excuse me? What did you just say to me?" After you call the offender out in this way, he will either moonwalk his remark back or double down and make things worse. Either way, you can say, "I don't like it. Not at all." Then you stand up and leave his presence. Not giving the person further access to you prevents him from offending again.

Some brain disorders do cause inappropriate outbursts — could "Ed" be suffering from the beginning stages of dementia? However, it is not your job to diagnose or excuse this person's behavior.

I don't think you need to "proactively" protect yourself. If he shows up at your house or tries to contact you, you don't communicate with him. If you feel threatened, call the police. Obviously, inviting him to next year's Super Bowl party is out of the question.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
You have a way of letting others know exactly what you want. Unfortunately, someone might not be listening. Later today, a dear friend is likely to reach out to you. Be gracious.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
A good friend who makes you laugh might come to you with an invitation. Make the most of this offer, but also make sure you first spend time with a loved one who needs you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Deal with a personal matter head-on. You may want to spend some quiet time at home, so much so that you might not even want to leave your bed.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Recognize that you can't do more than what it is possible. A conversation will carry you to this realization, and perhaps then you'll see that you need to take better care of yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You might be considering a purchase you have been eyeing for a while. Once you have a firm handle on your budget, there will be no need to hold yourself back.

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Dear Amy: I had a neighbor whose dog barked continuously when the neighbor was gone, much like the situation reported by "Puppy Parent." If the dog suffers from separation anxiety, having a dog walker come by will not help during the times the dog is alone. My neighbor's dog barked all day long, until it exhausted itself. When it recovered, the barking would resume.

I finally had to get the condo association involved. The neighbor hired a trainer with a specialty in separation anxiety. I don't know what the trainer did, but after a few weeks the transformation was complete. The dog seems happy and delightful now.

Happy Neighbor

I agree that hiring a specialized trainer is a great idea. I'm happy for you that this worked out — but mostly I'm happy for the dog.

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.

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