

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Twist of fete: Parodies for birthdays & other occasions

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1113, for the Invitational's annual-or-so song parody contest, we asked for alternatives to "Happy Birthday," or songs for other "personal occasions." Because some otherwise inkworthy submissions weren't either of those things, we're doing to do an encore for Week 1117 with different parameters. As always, the online Invite contains links to video clips so you can hear the melodies as you read (or sing along).

4th place

On my next birthday:

(To the tune of "Try to Remember")
I try to remember where I put the blender
And how to work the channel changer.
This smartphone, oh dammit, I just can't program it;
Each year these things get so much stranger.
I've gone in a trice from dispensing advice
To each and every family member,
With IM and text, to being perplexed
And "Hello?" "Hello, hello, hello, hello?"
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

3rd place

For Brian Williams's no-doubt-impending retirement party:

Thanks for your memory:
How you caught that RPG
And tossed it back with glee
So that it promptly flew right back and killed the enemy
How lovely it was!

Thanks for your memory
When you and Al Gore met
And spawned the Internet,
Even though no credit you would ultimately get,
We #thankyou so much!
(Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park)

2nd place and the crawfish snow dome from New Orleans:

For my 95th birthday:

(To "Stayin' Alive")
Well, you can tell by the way I tilt my head
When you start talkin', I ain't grokkin'

Everything you've said 'cause my ears went dead
20 years ago when my eyesight fled
But it's all right, it's okay,
At least I'm still alive today.
It could be worse, I could be dead
Six feet below a flower bed.

Here upon my birthday, it's my
"I'm not in the earth" day
And I'm ninety-five, ninety-five. . .
(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

For starting your course of therapy, from your psychiatrist:

(to "Everything's Coming Up Roses")
You'll be swell! You'll be great!
If you keep every therapy date.
All your blots told me lots,
And now everything's come up Neurosis.

Fear of heights, OCD
And a multiple polarity.
Rest assured — can be cured:
DSM gives a clear diagnosis.
You've got trauma that could constipate Freud.
Your head's so filled with drama,
Oedipus thinks you're his mama!

You'll get well, this I'll vouch,
If you spend lots of time on my couch.
I'm the doc; follow me!
(Go in hock for my fee.)
And then I'll shrink your yen for drinky-poo,
'Cause now everything's come up hysterical
Munchausen;
Everything's come up dysphorically deviant;
Everything's come up regressed schizophrenia;
Everything's come up Neurosis, for you and for you!
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

Celebrations: honorable mentions

For an "involuntary employment transition":
(To "Downtown")
When you're a drone and your
division feels lonely,
You can be, you know, downsized.
Now, you must worry, find
employment and hurry
Once they let you go. Downsized.

Your fate has been decided by a
management committee,
Left upon the sidewalk where your
future isn't pretty.
Wow, did you lose!
This bites; it's not right or fair.
You can't forget all your troubles,
forget they don't care.
You've been downsized.
Now you're irate 'cause you're
downsized.
No job is safe or sure. Downsized.
Everything's waning for you.
(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

On getting into college:
Amazing grades —
A 4 point 0
And perfect SATs!
So Princeton's where I plan to go.
(My tiger mom agrees.)
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

On your sex reassignment procedure:
(to "Hey Jude"):
Hey dude, I'll bet you're glad
To look down where you've got a
part there!

Remember to lift the damn toilet
seat
Now that you're complete,
With all the right hardware.
Hey dude, don't be afraid,
Chromosome Y is now your letter;
Remember to belch and scratch
where you may
Now that stuff's okay,
And your pay is better!
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

For Edward Snowden's birthday:
(To "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey?")
You can't come home, Ed
Snowden, you can't come home.
In shadows you must roam.
And for your birthday this year
You'll get some borscht
Served in an onion dome.
I know you had your reasons,
But DOJ
Says you will have to pay.
They want to try ya,
You're a pariah,
Ed Snowden, you must stay away.
(George-Ann Rosenberg, Washington)

For Vladimir Putin's birthday:
(To "Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard")
For being so strict, my prison was
picked
For a special undertaking;
We cultivate wheat so that Vlad
can eat,
And when October comes, we'll
start on the baking!
Yes, we'll stay awake
Through frigid, frosty evenings

To make his cake!
He'll open the gates, and we'll start
to cheer:
"Blessings to Putin, the king of
polonium!"

We'll be feeding Vladimir down in
the gulag.
(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

And Last: On the occasion of your 10th straight non-inking Style Invitational submission:
(To "Smile")
Smile though your heart keeps
sinking,
Smile though you've not been
inking.
When what you send's up to speed,
you'll succeed.
So just dial up your Loser
technique,
Style ink will come the next week.
You'll see your name inside parens,
my friends.
Make 20 entries funny;
Take five and strive for punny.
E-mail a few
Clever jokes about poo.
Try the way Loser minds are
thinking,
Using their wiles while inking.
Then folks will celebrate your guile
in Sunday's Style.
(Chris Doyle, of 1,664 blots of ink)

More honorable mentions in the online
Invite at bit.ly/invite1117.

Still running — deadline Monday, March 30: Our contest to make a new word from the letters in a place name. See bit.ly/invite1116.

"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 or, if you
were born in the 19th century,
fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is
Monday, April 6, 2015; results
published April 26 (online April
23). You may submit up to 25
entries per contest. Include
"Week 1117" 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 Kevin
Dopart. Join the lively Style
Invitational Devotees group on
Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/invdev).
"Like" the Style Invitational Ink
of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday.

New contest for Week 1117: You got another sing coming

In Week 1113, the Empress
cued up a song parody contest,
this one asking for songs
"celebrating someone's birthday
or other personal occasion
(rather than, say, a holiday), set
to a familiar tune."

As today's results show, she
got plenty of ingeniously clever
parodies about birthdays and a
variety of creative "personal
occasions" — far more than we
have room to share. But she also
received some very fine, funny
songs that even the Benevolent E
couldn't accept as fitting the
contest — they were about events
in the news, or sometimes
summed up people's life stories.

But the Empress famously
hates to throw anything away:
This week: Write a song about

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.

POST PUZZLER

No. 260

BY ANDREW J. RIES EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

ACROSS	DOWN
1 "Willin'" rockers	1 Burdened
11 New Mexico athlete	2 "Borat" phrase of approval
15 New Mexico boom town?	
16 Far from casual	
17 Where courses are taken	
18 Mix	
19 Cardiology test, briefly	
20 Bouncers check them	
21 Bracelet makeup, maybe	
23 Certain political convert, for short	
26 Descriptive of stews	
27 Motto that clean people really embrace?	
31 Unloaded?	
34 Often-pressed pair	
35 Green	
36 Onetime ruler	
37 Easily duped sort	
38 Big cheese in Greece	
39 Knee part cited in many sports injuries, for short	
40 Cause thirst in	
41 Famous fictional fanner	
42 Lightness during darkness?	
45 O'Brien's role opposite Reagan's Gipp	
46 Inconvenient convenience store charge?	
50 Digs and pads	
51 All-Star second baseman Kinsler	
53 Not elective: Abbr.	
54 Louis C.K. bit	
55 Management school founded by Ray Kroc, familiarly	
59 World capital with 2014 protests	
60 Porpora composition	
61 Handbook guidelines: Abbr.	
62 It's picked while sitting	
3 Uniform preceder	14 Line at an OTB?
4 "Heavy on the details" initialism	22 Civil engineer for whom a St. Louis bridge is named
5 He played Gaston's title character in 1925	24 Elijah Blue Allman's mother
6 Siege that employs many shells?	25 First word of the Lord's Prayer
7 Fusion, for example	26 Literally, "main island"
8 Boy with a bow	28 Few and far between
9 Flap	29 "Obvi," a few generations ago
10 Super Bowl halftime performer between Prince and Bruce Springsteen	30 Influence
11 Actress/inventor Hedy	31 Unattached, say
12 Wooing attempts	32 Tear-jerker released during awards season, maybe
13 Carter-era scandal, in headlines	33 Swelled out
	37 Hocking spot

Answer to last week, No. 259

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HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | MARCH 29: This year you let your fiery spirit emerge. Others might see you as someone who is unpredictable and impulsive. Though you can be those things, you act on your spontaneity from a centered space. Some of you will decide to go back to school for a higher or different degree. If you are single, it is prime time for romance. The person you meet this year might be Mr. or Ms. Right. If you are attached, you will enter one of the many romantic periods that you two experience together. Traveling together also will be rewarding.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Others find you to be impulsive, but you do think before you act. Enjoy the luxury of not worrying about your choices, at least for a day. Plan on spending time with a loved one. Fit in a brisk walk.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
You see a situation differently from how those in your life see it. You see the futility of trying to persuade others that your perspective is correct. Let it go for now.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Make your Sunday round of calls. As you catch up on others' news, you will receive several invitations. A friend might turn up out of the blue.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You might be in the process of weighing a major purchase or repair. Know that you also have

the option of doing nothing. Reach out to a parent or older person who will give you excellent advice.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You certainly will feel the difference between yesterday and today. Greet high energy, good news and a special person with a big grin. How you handle your plans is up to you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You have gone out of your way for others a lot lately. You must slow down and take some time for you. Since you like to get things done, work on a minor or easy project.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Get together with your buddies. A matter involving a certain friend keeps weighing on you. Make extra time for this person.

Seeking distance from degrading mom

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I'm having trouble telling my mother that I applied to attend a university halfway across the country. I told my father, and he wasn't very supportive at first but eventually came around. I had to make him promise not to tell my mother until it's confirmed that I am accepted. I did not want her rubbing my face in it if I was rejected, or trying to sabotage my attempts at improving myself and my life.

I have never had a good relationship with this woman. It's not like I never tried, but my mother has issues that she takes out on me and my sisters instead of getting help. I'm just so tired of all the abuse. Accepted to college or not, I'm leaving this house.

My question: Is it wrong of me to want to keep this news from her? Is it wrong that I feel the need to move so far away from her to be happy, to have my own life that will cater to me instead of her? Why can't my mother be happy for me?

Prospective Grad

Going far away for college is one good and effective way to

begin separating from a degrading, challenging parent. Your instincts are good. However — and this is a big one — you will find that your relationship issues tend to follow you wherever you go. You will still need to do the hard personal work of dealing with a mother who seems to undermine you at every turn. Leaving home is a start.

Dear Amy: The letter from "Wife/Caregiver in Limbo" hit me like a ton of bricks. My wife of 29 years has advanced dementia. We got the bad news last April and my wife has been in assisted living since then.

I have been seeing a fabulous woman occasionally since last August. She knows my wife and the situation. My wife is still relatively cognizant, but I see signs all the time that she is failing. She is only 59 years old.

I have to admit there was much guilt about this new relationship at first. As time has gone on, though, that guilt is going away. Even my mother-in-law has told me I have to get on with my life.

I just wanted you to know that there are more of us who appreciate your answer to her question. My credo, like Barry

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Accept an invitation for a late brunch or movie. You'll enjoy catching up on news, and the person you are visiting often makes you laugh. Let go of recent hassles.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You may be eyeing a substantial transformation, but you might not be ready to discuss it. Nevertheless, a loved one seems to be picking up on your inner thoughts. Why not have this long-overdue chat?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Make this a special day with a loved one. You will feel great just sharing news with each other. Go off and do something you both love. If you can, spend time around water or at the beach.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Others seek you out. Keeping established plans for the day might be difficult. Tonight, let a loved one be your cheerleader.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You need some downtime, as recent events may have you feeling exhausted. Above all, don't push yourself.

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Petersen's, has been "Don't judge until you walk a mile in my shoes." This is such a heartbreaking ordeal to go through. I would not wish this on my worst enemy.

Sad Husband

It is hard to imagine anything more heartbreaking than enduring this long goodbye. Whatever your romantic situation, I hope you will continue to express your love to your wife in every way you can, for as long as you can.

Dear Amy: Your response to "A Meddling Aunt" (about the new girlfriend trying to block a guy from going to a longtime friend's wedding) was the first time a reply made me laugh: "Hugo" should go to the wedding if he wants to. Maybe he'll meet a nice girl there."

It's something my mother would have said. Thanks for the first "LOL" of the day.

Fan

It's also something MY mother would have said. Thank you.

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