

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Newsical comedy: The inking current-events parodies

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1117, four weeks ago, we asked the Parody Animals amid the Loser Community to write a song about someone or something in the news, set to a familiar melody. Among the hundreds of entries were lots about Hillary Clinton's e-mails and Binyamin Netanyahu's visit, and at least three songs about Indiana's "religious freedom" law that were sung to "Oklahoma!" Many more parodies appear in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1121.

4th place
Obama is irked by Netanyahu: (To "Be Our Guest" from "Beauty and the Beast")

"He's a pest! He's a pest! With our atom talks he's messed! 'Twas a breach to give a speech At the Republicans' behest! He's got tricks up his sleeve Over there in Tel Aviv, Where he casts unfair aspersions — Don't believe me? Ask the Persians!

He negates our "two states" While our leaders he berates, For an ally he is easy to detest. How better off would we be If they'd vote out Bibi, He's a pest! He's a pest! He's a pest!" (Mark Raffman, Reston)

3rd place
Indiana enacts a law permitting discrimination on religious grounds: (To "Oklahoma!")

Indiana — we're a state that made a big mistake When a baker said, "If two guys wed, I refuse to make their wedding cake!" Indiana — where we treat most everybody well. And if you are gay, you're free to stay Even though someday you'll burn in hell.

We know that it got too intense When the nation heard Governor Pence. So when we say, "WEEEEEE just clarified the law!" We're only saying, "We made a mess, Indiana! But we saved Arkansas!" (Barbara Sarshik, McLean)

2nd place and the copy of Bill Cosby's book "Fatherhood": (To "Maria" from "West Side Story")

Benghazi! 'Twas treason took place in Benghazi! And ever since, that name has been our claim to fame, you know. Benghazi! A whitewashed disgrace in Benghazi! Two years gone by, and yet — we're not about to let it go. Benghazi! And then let's talk about her e-mail! "What's she hiding from you and from me" mail. Benghazi! . . . and also, she's female. Benghazi! (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial: (To "It Had to Be You")

Shalom, U.S.A., I've come here to say, Been reading your plan For peace with Iran And thinking, "Oy vey!" I love when I hear Those senators cheer, And prate how they hate States talking straight Out of their rear.

Those mullahs I've seen, They're evil and mean. Believing their word Is simply absurd — They'll never come clean! Best way to defend is to attack, Don't mean Tehran, I mean Barack! Stand up for the Jew, That's what I do, I'm Netanyahu.

(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

Parody poopers: honorable mentions

Hillary Clinton's e-mails: (To "I've Been Working on the Railroad") I've been wipin' out my e-mails all the livelong day; I decided to delete them so you won't know what they say. Can't you hear the whistle-blowers: "Whoa! 30,000? That's a lot!" Can't you hear the people shoutin': "Show us what you've got!" Don't you know (guffaw!)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1121: The an(n)als of civilization

No Shot, Sherlock!

June 30, 1920: Convinced that two teenage sisters have photographed actual fairies, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle asks their permission to use the photos in an article he is writing. (In a sort of proto-'Shop, they had clipped drawings from a children's magazine and took photos.)

The Riot of Spring

May 29, 1913: Crowds brawl, throw things at the premiere of Stravinsky's "Sacre du Printemps."

Cassius Belli

June 20, 1967: Muhammad Ali is convicted of draft evasion and sentenced to five years in prison.

He's Ex-Ex-Excommunicated

September 29, 1227: Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II was excommunicated for the first of four times. For every glorious day in history, there's more than enough unglory to balance it. D.C. author Michael Farquhar has come up with 365 "Bad Days in History" — one pegged to each day of the calendar, from the woes of ancient emperors to the debut of "Keeping Up With the Kardashians," and including the less than red-letter events mentioned above.

The book "Bad Days in History: A Gleelessly Grim Chronicle of Misfortune, Mayhem, and Misery for Every Day of the Year" was just released this week by National Geographic, but already Michael (who as a tyke 23 years ago was The Style Invitational's very first flunky, mailing out prizes and whatnot) is thinking about a Bad Days II, which of course would comprise another 365 unsavory or inauspicious events. And he'd like some input.

This week: Briefly describe some "bad day in history" — you may be, as Michael himself was, creative in what you classify as such — and sum it up with a humorous heading, as in the examples above from "Bad Days in History." If Mike does write the sequel and thinks your Bad Day and heading would work in it, he'll use it and credit you in the book. (If you don't have an exact date for the event you use, that's fine for this contest.)

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — yes! a copy of "Bad Days in History," signed by the Farq himself.

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 or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 4; results published May 20 (online May 17). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1121" 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 is by William Kennard. 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.

I'm above the law? Your silly rules are not for me; I'll keep you apprised That all is sanitized — There is nothing left to see. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Pete Rose asks to be reinstated to Major League Baseball Put me back in the ballgame, Put my bust in the hall

Never took P-E-Ds in my life, Never once took a swing at my wife, Yet I still am banished from baseball, It's time to open the door For it's twenty-seven-to-1 I will bet no more! (Rob Cohen, Potomac)

Sen. Ted Cruz runs for president:

Hey Cruz, don't lose the fight, Take the right wing and make it righter, Just carry the White House into your heart, Then you can start to make it whiter.

Hey Cruz, you are the one, When the issues that count are reckoned, Who knows that the First Amendment pales — Really it fails — next to the Second.

From Iowa right up to Maine, hey Cruz, campaign, Don't move to the left, no compromising!

For well you know that we all lose if women choose Or you say it's true the sea is rising! Just tell them: Nah nah nah nah nah nah. . . (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Food giants Kraft and Heinz merge: (To "New York, New York")

Start spreadin' the Cheez that comes from a can, Then squirt some ketchup onto it, Kraft Heinz, Kraft Heinz! White Miracle Whip can be a rich tan With Worcestershire mixed into it, Kraft Heinz, Kraft Heinz!

I'm gonna wake up from a fat-and-salt-torpor sleep, To find my arteries clogged, blood pressure steep! That Velveeta glow makes Tater Tots say, Combine our brands, be part of it, The new Kraft-Heinz! If it could make you fit, we'll overprocess it. That's what we do, Kraft-Heinz, Kraft-Heinz! (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Many more honorable mentions — complete with links to the tunes of the songs — in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1121

Still running — deadline Monday, April 27: our perennial compare/contrast contest. See bit.ly/invite1120.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY RANDOLPH ROSS

- ACROSS**
- 1 Single filers
 - 16 "Company" man
 - 17 Reno in the 1990s
 - 18 Clears
 - 19 Letters that follow CD
 - 20 Felonious families
 - 23 Modernize mechanically
 - 28 Not easily erased
 - 29 Self starter?
 - 30 Chophouse choice
 - 31 Bar ____
 - 32 Paste ingredient
 - 34 Campaigned
 - 35 Cyan suffix
 - 36 Sweat producer
 - 37 DOJ division
 - 38 POTUS, to the Pentagon
 - 39 Without any consideration
- DOWN**
- 1 Govt. agency that has your number
 - 2 Giant Giant
 - 3 Book end?
 - 4 "Les Miz" role

- 5 Make a call without paying, in slang
- 6 Monopoly income
- 7 Bills that are frequently passed
- 8 "Gangnam Style" singer
- 9 Maris, to "The Mick"
- 10 Unreactive
- 11 Trixie's sitcom husband
- 12 Big hitters?
- 13 Anthem contraction
- 14 Coastline feature
- 15 Tee selections, initially
- 20 Documentarian's device
- 21 Put on a protective coat, as with metal
- 22 Sliced thin
- 23 Punch line punctuation
- 24 Trash contents
- 25 Raided
- 26 K-I-S-S-I-N-G location
- 27 1,000%
- 29 Where to see Mount Fuji
- 32 Leaves in a bag
- 33 Chest item
- 36 Conflict over international commerce
- 40 Hard rock
- 42 Unflappable
- 44 Provider of cold comfort
- 46 City west of Daytona Beach
- 47 Adorned by the chef
- 49 Crumbly earth
- 50 Erie Canal mule
- 51 Grammar best seller "Woe ____"
- 52 Not dis
- 53 USPS delivery
- 54 Pivotal
- 55 Wrong
- 56 Some Samsung sales
- 57 "Comprende?"

Answer to last week

M	A	R	L	R	E	A	R	S	G	A	T	E							
O	B	O	E	I	M	P	E	L	E	D	O	M							
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F	E	E	L	I	N	G	S		U	P	E	R	I	O	R				
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M	A	N	S	A	R	D		D	R	I	L	A	N	D					
A	V	I	S								E	H	U	D					
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CROSSYNEGY

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | APRIL 26: This year you may do the unexpected and surprise others, but you might not be sure why. Your impulsiveness will be difficult to understand. You also will find that you tend to overthink things. You value your domestic life, and you often work off tension with a home project. If you are single, you know what you want. After mid-August, you might meet someone who will fulfill many of your needs. If you are attached, the two of you enjoy a lot of fun, spontaneous times as a couple.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Your imagination seems limitless, especially when making plans for the day. Communication flourishes with a neighbor or sibling. Enjoy the snap, crackle and pop of the moment.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Understand what is happening within your immediate circle. You might want to have a little less action going on. A conversation may be the source of sudden insights.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Reach out to friends, especially if you have extra free time. You may be delightfully thrilled by what someone has come up with. Join in on the fun.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Before you say yes, make sure you can afford the cost of the adventure that has been proposed. You look up to

someone who is full of surprises.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You may be surprised by how quickly a long-term desire becomes a reality. Count on an interesting twist to your day. Do not take a hostile comment personally.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You might need some time to yourself. Do what you need, and you will feel much better. A relationship could be changing. Don't panic — it doesn't mean that it's over.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Choose your words with care, and make sure you are okay with an impending conversation. You know that the other party has reason not to be happy with you, although you might not want to admit it. Being charming might help ease the tension.

Phone? E-mail? Text? What to do?

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: My wife and I are tech-friendly boomers. We communicate with older and younger generations of family and friends.

The seniors want mostly lengthy phone calls and cards on significant dates; most do not have computers or any interest in acquiring them.

Those our age seem to be cafeteria-style: some prefer a combination of phone, e-mail, text; some also do cards, and some Facebook, some not. Younger folks don't do much phone, but do lots of text, lots of Facebook and use new messaging platforms that we have yet to adopt.

We find that some members of all generations get peeved when the communication attempts are not in the form they prefer and they are not the least bit shy about telling us what works for them. But it's hard to keep track of each individual's communication preferences. The most annoying seems to be those who text and expect an immediate response. They don't seem to realize that not everyone has mobile phones attached to them at home.

I guess it must be too much to expect that folks would just be

appreciative and grateful of any and all efforts to reach out to them, regardless of the form of communication.

Advice and feedback, please. Tech Confused

Your letter describes very accurately the communications crossroad where we seem to be currently paused, blinkers on, unsure of which way to turn. Surely it is somewhat like what life was like in the early 1900s.

None of us can force others to adopt communication devices or styles simply for our own convenience; we can only face the uncomfortable or inconvenient consequences when our own choices result in someone else being unresponsive. This discomfort has pushed many a grandparent onto Facebook (while grandkids seem to have fled for other social media platforms).

I believe that we should do our best to respect the comfort of the generation preceding us. That means that you talk to your folks by phone and that your own kids will occasionally be frustrated because you aren't available to respond instantly to every text. Your response to this frustration can be, "Oh, well, you're young and smart. I'm sure you can figure out another way to get in touch."

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Your intensity may push some people away, but right now, others can't seem to get enough of you. Join friends or go off with a loved one to a fun happening. You will relish the change of pace.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Do as much as you can to break free from your routine. If you are single, someone you meet may be significant. Tonight, read between the lines.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You might be testing someone else's loyalty without even realizing it. You may be taken aback by everything that comes up. Once you relax, you will be delighted by what emerges.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Others seek you out. You probably will want to do several different things. You will have to make a choice, but perhaps the company is the most important factor. Enjoy the good times.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Whatever you do seems perfect, as you naturally throw yourself into the activity. If someone is a bit sharp, try to listen to him or her without getting angry. Tonight, get some zzz's.

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Dear Amy: I appreciated your response to "Sad," whose boyfriend's "racist and rude" family continuously disrespects her.

"Screaming and walking" away from this relationship is definitely the answer. I hung in there in a relationship like this, and it never improved. She should learn from my mistake and run while she can.

Been There

Many readers offered this advice. I hope "Sad" pays attention.

Dear Amy: I disagree with your answer to "Frazzled" that people should no longer expect peace and quiet in a library. In an increasingly noisy world, libraries should be a refuge.

Library Lover

Libraries are changing; ironically, one way to find quiet might be to join the revolution and use ear buds.

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

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