

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

A small, small whirly: Winning uses for micro-drones

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1128**, we asked for some imaginative uses for the new, inexpensive CICADA mini-drones that the Navy is developing. After reading a goodly (or badly) number of wistful dreams of swarms of upskirt cameras, the Empress isn't so sure she wants to go to any more Loser brunches.

4th place

A CICADA could be used to **deliver pink slips** to the soon-to-be unemployed, with a recorded "Remember, change is good — we wish you the best!" farewell after each notification. (Mark Asquino, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea)

3rd place

The only way to get past the shame of the American government spying on its own citizens is for it to **issue every man, woman and child a micro-drone** so they can spy on each other. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

2nd place and the itty-bitty coffee mug and mini-sushi key chain:

When someone cuts you off in traffic, send a CICADA to **fly inconspicuously alongside the offender's vehicle** and zip suddenly ahead to trip the radar detector as it passes the next speed trap. Then enjoy the schadenfreude when you see the speeding driver pulled over as you sail on by. HOW DO YOU LIKE THEM APPLES, ZOOMY McSPEEDYPANTS?? (Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Use the **micro-drone as a baby monitor**, clinging to the rail of your child's crib. Years later, your son will write a picture book about his insect friend, Jiminy CICADA, who, instead of taking him on magical adventures, reports his every escape attempt to Mom. (Lawrence McGuire)

The rotary club: honorable mentions

Congratulations CICADAs: the coolest way to be notified that you've been accepted to MIT. (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)

AIDA CICADA: Pressured into an evening at the opera or ballet? This little gem discreetly broadcasts ESPN Sports Radio into your earbud. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Are you a fussy, squeamish housekeeper? The micro-grips on a CICADA can handle even the smallest roach — and keep it steady and ash-free right at the toker's lips. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

Are you paranoid about someone stealing your PIN at the ATM and constantly check for people behind you? With CICADAs around, now you can be really, really paranoid. (Ward Kay, Vienna)

Birds and bees do it, but not necessarily right after your obnoxious neighbor washes his Mercedes. Just fill up your DropShot drone with a mayo-relish mixture and send him a special tweet. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

CICADAs are amazing technology. I mean, you could stick something in an envelope, hand it to the drone and have it in the recipient's hands — no matter where in the country they live — in a matter of days. Where else could you get service like that? (Danielle Nowlin)

Now, helicopter parents can do it literally. (Judy Blanchard)

Deploy billions of CICADAs in geosynchronous orbit over the hole in the ozone layer. Problem solved! Now, was that so hard? (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)

Equipped with needles and ink, a CICADA swarm could make a great tattoo of a CICADA swarm. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Guaranteed Seder fun when a plague of techno-locusts descends on your guests! For the grand finale, they regroup and do their part as the Red Sea. (Kevin Dopart)

Have them automatically position themselves to block the view of the larger government drone that's been following you around. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

CICADAs could deliver your adopted baby right to your door — call it heirmail. (Judy Blanchard)

I call upon the Navy to deploy hundreds of CICADAs, with micro-cameras, every day in Loch Ness



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 1132: You and what army? Military fictoids

The U.S. Navy's bluish camouflage is designed so that sailors who fall overboard will blend in. (Jeff Contompasis, 2015)

Gen. Ambrose Burnside was aided greatly in Civil War planning by his largely forgotten assistant, Col. Wendell Soulpatch. (Malcolm Fleschner, 2011)

During World War II, a secret U.S. Army survey identified 4,389 atheists in foxholes. (Bob Dalton, 2007)

It's time once again to bring forth a new set of lies for our readers (why should campaign coverage have all the fun?). We've had "unreal facts" contests about politicians, history, movies, medicine, sports, cars and just whatever. Now here's another lane on the Disinformation Superhighway, courtesy of suggester Jeff Contompasis: **This week: Give us some comically bogus trivia about the military, past or present, ours or theirs**, as in the examples above; the second and third are from previous Invite fictoid contests, one all-purpose and the other for history.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the bobblehead of the statue of Commander in Chief Lincoln that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, courtesy of Not Even a Loser Mary M. Hanlon, a cuddly pair of foamy-soft toy Pee and Poo toys in Sweden; the former is bright yellow and teardrop (uh-huh)-shaped; the latter is brown and vaguely conical. Both have eyes with sort of hand-dog expressions. (Wouldn't you?)

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grossery 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 night, July 20; results published Aug. 9 (online Aug. 6). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1132" 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 Tom Witte; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jeff Contompasis. 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](https://www.facebook.com/bit.ly/inkofday).

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress's weekly online column discusses the new contest and results. This week: Losers collaborate on an imprmptu parody of "Hallelujah" about peas in guacamole. Check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.



SWEDENTOYS.COM

As if a crib doesn't have enough already: The Pee & Poo toys.

until I am finally vindicated. (Kyle Hendrickson)

Selfie-sticks are so 2014. (Ward Kay)

The director of the new Broadway production says CICADAs will replace the bluebirds arranging Cinderella's ball gown: "They're easier to train and don't leave droppings." (John McCooey, Rehoboth Beach, Del.; Amy Harris, Charlottesville)

In the future, when houseflies are extinct, we can train them to eat poop and spread disease. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Mattel can market the interactive Drone Pilot Barbie Playset — look out, Un-American-looking American Girl dolls! (Kevin Dopart)

I've been working on a plan to outfit a swarm of micro-drones with loops of fishing line. They'll be programmed to catch squirrels in my neighbor's yard and then fly around with them at 15 feet while playing music from old science fiction films. The flying saucer casings might be too much. (David Friedman, Arlington)

Now, kids, Santa WILL see you when you're sleeping and know when you're awake. (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Soon they'll make the HICKADA: It's a micro-drone that just sits in the front yard on tiny cinder blocks. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

The New England Patriots are

already at work adding drone technology into footballs for in-flight guidance to receivers. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

The Seekah 380® finds your golf ball no matter how deep the rough. The Cheetah 480 EVL® finds it and nudges it back into the fairway. (Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge)

TV can finally show the "ball's-eye view" of a pitch thrown at 95 mph and then knocked over a fence. And with the CICADA hooked on the side, a curveball will REALLY curve. (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

Video surgery! You say you're caught in a remote crevice like James Franco in "127 Hours" and hesitate to amputate your leg because you're afraid of bleeding to death? Just make one quick call and a CICADA will be on its way to your crevice, projecting a video on the rocks to show you how to safely sever your limb in 22 easy steps! (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

Try as I could, I cannot think of a way CICADAs can help the Redskins win. (Todd DeLap)

Given what everyone else wants them for, I just hope CICADAs are allowed to fly for only a few weeks once every 17 years. (Ken Gallant, Conway, Ark.)

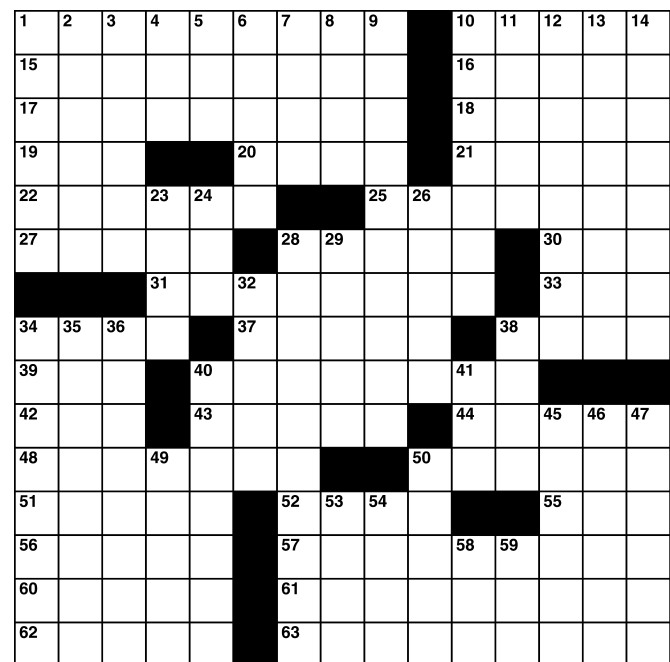
Still running — deadline Monday night, July 13: Our contest for ways to repurpose certain surplus items. See bit.ly/invite1131.

POST PUZZLER

BY BRAD WILBER © 2015 CROSSYENERGY SYNDICATE LLC

- ACROSS**
- Something practiced on the range
 - Battery units
 - Fido's focus at school
 - Summer month in Buenos Aires
 - Headed the cast of
 - Send elsewhere
 - What a sea snake's tail resembles
 - Two tablets, maybe
 - Bishop's hat
 - Laura of "The Truman Show"
 - Cupboard with wire-mesh door panels, often
 - Happening shortly
 - Rental agreement
 - Secretariat jockey
 - Turcotte
 - Embedded column
 - Clubber Lang portrayer in "Rocky III"
- DOWN**
- Sluggish traded between Chicago teams in 1992
 - Become a contestant in
 - In the matter of
 - "Either plagiarism or revolution," per Gauguin
 - "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" lead-in, usually
 - ____-jungg
 - Pro tennis retiree of 1989
 - Einstein's tonsorial trademark
 - Symbol of authority
 - Make airtight
 - Whimpers
 - Semimonthly tide
 - "Botch-____" (Rosemary Clooney hit)
 - Guinness and Baldwin
 - The Brontës' Glass Town
 - Confederacy stories, e.g.
 - Gottfried's expression of gratitude

- Category for Boston and Slyx
- Cause to disappear
- Mad Libs and others
- ____ the loneliest number ..."
- Shield carriers, usually
- Play area accessed by ladder
- Bay of Naples resort town
- California destination for wine enthusiasts
- Glottal or dermal preceder
- Grenoble's river
- Facial feature of many comic book heroes
- Fragrant compound
- Skedaddle
- Whom Dashiell Hammett compared to a "blond satan"
- Prophetic
- Isl. of Napoleon's final exile
- World Cup qualifying zone
- "Decisions, decisions ..."
- Org. with annual SummerSlams and Royal Rumbles
- Event for zigzagging racers
- Nail salon abrasive
- Breaks one's silence
- Hasty kisses
- Shell out
- Drachma replacement
- Profess
- Equine has-been
- Stepford creator Levin



Answer to last week

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

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | JULY 12: This year you might want to spend more time alone than in years past. You tend to overanalyze things; perhaps taking up yoga or some other type of exercise would help you relax. Many of you will do do volunteer work. If you are single, use care with someone you meet. This person might be emotionally unavailable. You'll want to know this before you get heavily involved. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from running off together for a romantic dinner or a weekend getaway.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You might feel overwhelmed by what is happening around you. Your intuition will not be as reliable as usual. You may be pressuring a family member more than you realize.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Stay in touch with a family member whom you care a lot about. You may be surprised by a friend's news, which might force a change of plans.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You'll be in a whirlwind of summer activity and fun. A friend might do a reversal that you didn't anticipate. Be careful about overindulging someone.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Pull yourself out of the intense social pace of summer. You need

time to yourself. Indulge a special person who has been going through some changes.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Once more your popularity may interfere with set plans. Be ready to be a little less available, and let others know that you will have to catch up later. A child or a new friend may be particularly cantankerous.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Deal with a key person in your life. This individual might not be realistic, but you won't be able to force him or her to see your vision. A dear friend will be full of surprises.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Maintain a sense of humor, especially if a loved one turns your world upside down. You will be

able to regroup quickly.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Have a conversation with a partner that you have been putting off. You have been concerned about an impending change. You might not be as receptive as you would like to be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Defer to a loved one who seems to be full of ideas and simply can't get enough of you. You are likely to have a fun time. Be careful with spending.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You have many options for the day. Some of you might decide to curl up with a good book. Others will want to get out and join friends. Whatever you do, put yourself 100 percent into it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Someone who has known you for a long time might want more time with you. Allow yourself to be free, and express your thoughts and ideas through your actions.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You might need a lazy afternoon to recharge your batteries. You also might find that a family member needs your time and attention.

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Tension lingers after family's tragedy

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

year-old son was found dead. He drank heavily and had gotten in a fight with his live-in girlfriend. His death was violent.

The authorities ruled it as a suicide but my friend thinks that the girl murdered him. Every time we get together our visit starts out well and then she starts talking about how that girl needs to pay for what she did. She starts telling me the story again (I have heard it a hundred times), and it always ends with us both crying. This makes me very uncomfortable.

I love her to death and I cannot imagine the pain she is going through, but I get to where I don't want to be around her. Our husbands are good friends and I keep making excuses not to be around them. How can I help her to find closure and peace? I have suggested counseling and she says it wouldn't help. Please help me.

Devastated Friend

This is truly tragic, illustrating how a traumatic death continues to resonate in widening circles over time. I'm assuming that the police investigated this death and

have ruled out any involvement on the girlfriend's part.

Forget about closure. When a parent loses a child to suicide, there is no such thing as closure. The most a parent can hope for is the ability to cope day-to-day, so that the loss gets easier to bear over time.

Your friend definitely needs professional help. She may be avoiding it in part because she needs to cling to her own ideas of how her son died. Suicide is the hardest kind of death to bear; the unanswered questions rattle around and are never resolved. Family members of a suicide death are at an increased risk of depression and suicide themselves.

To preserve your friendship, you should be honest with her. When her ruminating starts, interrupt the cycle by putting a hand on her arm and offer her a hug. "I'm so sorry. I feel powerless. Please get help." Offer to take your friend to a survivor group of parents whose children have died. Check out the Web site of the Compassionate Friends for the location for a local bereavement group (compassionatefriends.org). Grief is isolating. Please don't give up on her.

Dear Amy: I met my partner online. We've been living together for two years. When we got serious, she removed her

dating profile but lately I see her hiding her computer screen from me and typing furtively. This raised suspicions. I have discovered that she has a new and active profile with the same well-known dating site where we met.

This is a new profile and shows her as active within a day of my checking. I would like to know how to go about confronting her without causing a huge blowup.

Wondering

You can hope for a peaceful resolution to this, but perhaps a big blowup is inevitable. Don't rule it out — or be afraid of it.

Obviously you have something important to discuss, and this incident will cause you both to face it. Share your honest reaction with her and ask her to describe what she was thinking when she chose to start shopping herself online.

Try to prepare yourself for denials and recriminations — and also for bad news. Unless you can come to a rational understanding, this should be a deal-breaker for you.

Amy's column appears seven days a week at www.washingtonpost.com/advice. Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribpub.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611. © 2015 by the Chicago Tribune