

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Laughedovers: Recycling ideas from Week 1131

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1131 we listed some items available from RepurposedMaterialsInc.com — everything from mineral oil to Jersey barriers to a hockey rink — and asked for some imaginative ideas for using them singly or in combination. Many people suggested using the synthetic turf to accompany that non-crabmeat for an all-fake "surf and turf."

4th place

100-foot diameter military cargo parachutes: Your Mama can use one as a skirt. Well, more of a miniskirt. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

3rd place

Purple linen napkins: Sew 50 of them together to make a Baltimore Ravens uniform. Or sew two together to make a Baltimore Ravens cheerleader uniform. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

2nd place and the ceramic outhouse "sculpture":

Plastic ballot boxes: To keep illegal immigrants far away from Donald Trump, use the plastic ballot boxes to build a thick wall around him. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

10-milliliter glass vials: Want to see how clever squirrels really are? Make a glass harp — that set of glasses that makes music when you put water in the glasses and rub the edges — and set it up in front of a screen with a walnut behind it. When the squirrel learns to play "Anticipation," the screen opens and it gets the nut — and you'll get a zillion views on Instagram. You do have to be patient; it took more than 10 minutes for the ones in my yard to solve it. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Re(f)used: honorable mentions

Boardwalk boards: Surprise the wife and cover your bedroom ceiling with boardwalk boards, throw some sand and seaweed on the bed and relive some Drifters magic. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

Bowling alley wood: Great for kitchen countertops and tables — especially when paired with repurposed pinsetters that automatically serve and clear away your meals. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Bowling alley wood: Roof your house with it: Based on my experience, anything that lands on it will quickly end up in the gutter. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park; Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Carpet tiles: Perfect vehicles for very small genies. (Beverley Sharp)

Carpet tiles: Install them on a brick patio in the D.C. area and you'll quickly have a mushroom farm growing out of the carpet just a step away from your kitchen door. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

Carpet tiles: To avoid the expense of carpeting and to make a fashion statement, glue carpet tiles to all your shoes. (Jeff Shirley)

Carpet tiles: Make a home exfoliation spa! 1. Cover the kid's slide in the back yard with carpet tiles. 2. Disrobe. 3. Slide down four times: front, back, left, right, 4. Did we forget to recommend a privacy screen? (For extra exfoliation, substitute the asphalt shingles.) (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park; Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

Escalator handrails: They'll fit perfectly as handrails for Metro's stairs. (Ben Aronin; Matt Monitto)

Escalator handrails: Advertise a handrail as the world's largest piece of licorice, and charge skeptics to take a bite because really, who could tell? (Jeff Shirley)

Concrete barriers and planters: Always dreamed of living in a building as warm and welcoming as the HHS headquarters? Some of these will give you that same friendly ambiance! (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

A plastic hockey rink: How many times have you said, "Let's play plastic hockey!" and you had no rink? (Edmund Conti, Raleigh)

Jersey barriers: Okay, Christie's contained. Now we need two dozen other state barriers. (Ellen Ryan, Rockville)

Purple linen napkins: Start a blog called Build the Purple Line Now! Ask for supporters to buy your "Purple Line Flags" and display



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1135: The meter's running

Limit: 60 seconds or one transaction at the ATM, whichever is shorter.

Penalty: Your account and PIN get uploaded to hackerhangout.com.

Limit: 30 seconds to pay up in the cafeteria line.

Penalty: You have to sit for five minutes with your meal in front of you, but not eat.

Washingtonians might not be as frenetic and impatient as New Yorkers, but for a bunch of bureaucrats, we don't have much patience for those who carry on their lives at a languid, la-di-da pace — especially when they're in front of us in the line at the post office, and it doesn't seem to occur to them that at the end of the transaction, they are expected to produce some sort of payment for the shipment of the package they'd failed to wrap properly in the first place; that must explain why they have not, in the previous many minutes, done some research into which little hidey-hole of their multi-pocket handbag is holding their collection of loose coins and shrink-folded \$1 bills. Loser Mike Gips of Bethesda (by way of New York) suggests this week's contest: **Suggest actions in daily life that should require a time limit — maximum or minimum — and come up with an appropriate penalty for running over (or under),** as in the examples above. The entries don't have to be written in as short a form as these, but don't write more than a short paragraph.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place — perhaps apropos of this week's contest — receives a top-of-the-line inflatable head-hatchet, complete with attached headband and decorated in a cartoonly splashing-blood motif. Donated by Loser Nan Reiner. The Empress primly donned this hatchet in a restaurant at a Loser brunch; late arrivals had no trouble finding the Style Invitational table.

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 night, Aug. 10; results published Aug. 30 (online Aug. 27). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1135" 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 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.



SELFIE BY NAN REINER

250-time Loser Nan Reiner with this week's second prize.

them on trees and utility poles in their neighborhoods. Then buy another truckload, paint a red slash on each napkin, and start a blog called No Purple Line in My Back Yard! (Joseph Mat Schech, Colesville)

Purple linen napkins: Finally I can make curtains to match my Chivas Regal bag duvet cover! (Barbara Turner, Tex.)

Purple linen napkins: A new line of "Mankinis by Prince." (Mike Gips, Bethesda; Jeff Contopoulos, Ashburn)

Plastic pallets: The Republican National Committee should stock up now — disposable platforms will be essential after the primaries. (Kevin Dopart)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 3: Our "air quotes" wordplay contest. See bit.ly/invite1134.

Elephants may still be vulnerable to

poachers and loss of habitat, but with enough of these, you can cross constipation off their list of worries. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Particle board: States with awful health-care systems can use them to build cheap coffins; they can even call the boards "death panels." (Kevin Dopart)

Ski lift cable: Research proves that children who have ski lift cable running directly from bed to bus stop have fewer absences and tardies. (Rob Huffman)

10-mL vials: Fill them with Coke, then advertise "97 percent less high-fructose corn syrup compared to our regular can of Coke!" (Joseph Mat Schech)

8-foot-diameter tires: Cruise lines need new life rings for their American passengers, especially on the final days of the cruise. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Combination of items: Use the carpet tiles on the walls to upgrade the soundproofing of your rumpus room. Use the climbing rope, rubber sheets and mineral oil to upgrade your rumpus. (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Odor-eater fabric: Instead of parchment when publishing "The Best of The Style Invitational: Premium Collector's Edition" . . . (Kevin Dopart)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 3: Our "air quotes" wordplay contest. See bit.ly/invite1134.

Elephants may still be vulnerable to

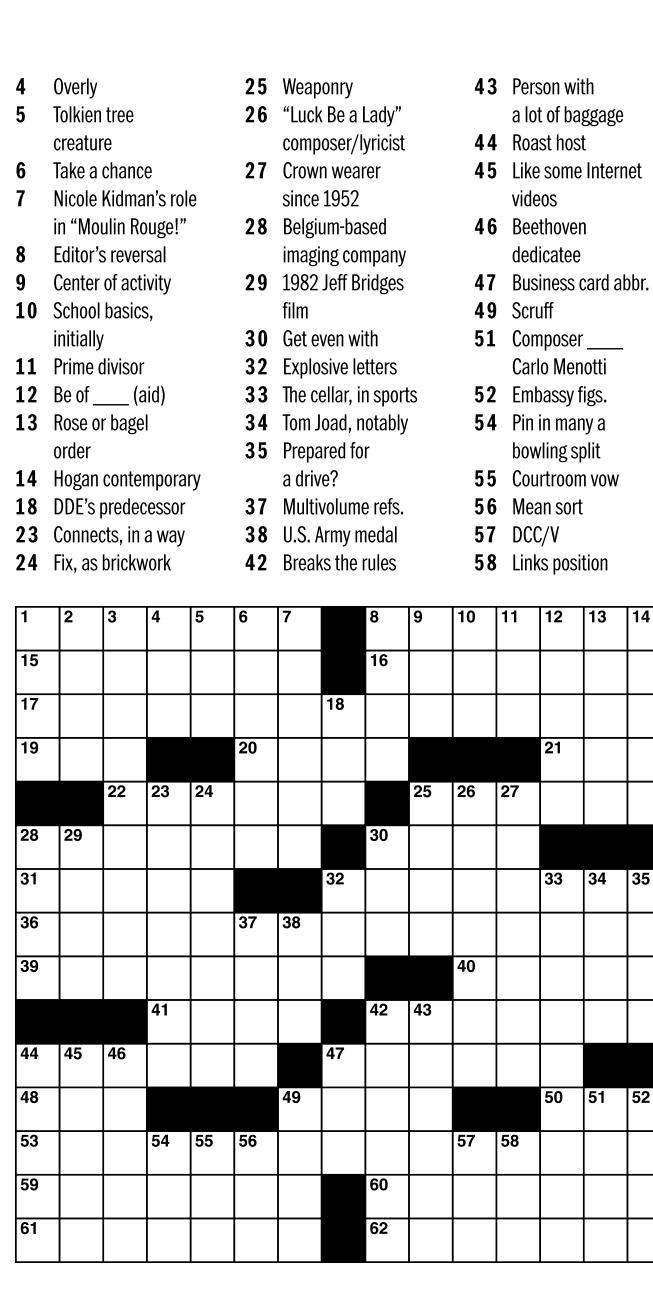
BY ALAN ARBESFIELD © 2015 CROSSSYNTHESIS LLC

ACROSS	41	At a Nats home game, say	4	Overtly	25	Weaponry	43	Person with a lot of baggage
1 Lists	42	Hit the top	5	Tolkien tree creature	26	"Luck Be a Lady" composer/lyricist	44	Roast host
8 Covers up	44	Happenings	6	Take a chance	27	Crown wearer since 1952	45	Like some Internet videos
15 Tallinn locale	47	It may be taken hostile to	7	Nicole Kidman's role in "Moulin Rouge!"	28	Belgium-based imaging company	46	Beethoven dedicatee
16 Becomes suddenly	48	or beaten	8	Editor's reversal	29	1982 Jeff Bridges film	47	Business card abbr.
17 Schmooses	49	Cool quantity?	9	Center of activity	30	Get even with	49	Scruff
19 Bojangles specialty	50	Financial aid factor	10	School basics, initially	31	Explosive letters	51	Composer _____ Carlo Menotti
20 Commercial ending with Star or Sun	53	JFK alternative	11	Prime divisor	32	The cellar, in sports	52	Embassy figs.
21 London spot?	59	Rave reviews	12	Be of _____ (aid)	33	Tom Joad, notably	54	Pin in many a bowling split
22 Verizon competitor	60	Got less intense	13	Rose or bagel order	34	Prepared for a drive?	55	Courtroom vow
25 Marzipan ingredient	61	Target of some urban hailing	14	Hogan contemporary	35	Multivolume refs.	56	Mean sort
28 Olympic team member	62	Title girl in a 1968 Turtles hit	15	DDE's predecessor	36	U.S. Army medal	57	DCC/V
30 "Star Trek: The Next Generation" role	63	Organs associated with anger	16	Connects, in a way	37	Breaks the rules	58	Links position
31 Put together	64	Fix, as brickwork	17	Brothers song	38			
32 Schedule opening	65		18		39			
36 "Gee whiz!"	66		19		40			
39 Least likely to sit still	67		20		41			
40 Dozer in an Everly Brothers song	68		21		42			
	69		22		43			
	70		23		44			
	71		24		45			
	72		25		46			
	73		26		47			
	74		27		48			
	75		28		49			
	76		30		50			
	77		31		51			
	78		32		52			
	79		33		53			
	80		34		54			
	81		35		55			

Answer to last week



SUNDAY CHALLENGE



HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You have a strong feeling that a lot is about to change, but you might not have as much say as you would like. Focus on your priorities.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Your intuition is right-on as far as a family member and a domestic situation go. Think rationally and make decisions accordingly.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Make calls in the morning, and catch up on your friends' news. Make plans to meet a special someone or go off and indulge in a summer sport you enjoy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Your sense of humor emerges when conversing with someone who is in a controlling mood. You know that this won't go anywhere, so just take a step back.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) A friend might really appreciate your support. Some of your ideas could help this person get away from a controlling situation. Get more exercise and keep yourself in shape.

© 2015 by King Features Syndicate Inc.

Conflicted about financial support

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I have a 12-year-old daughter. Her biological father passed away when she was 2 years old. I remarried when she was 5. He and I separated when she was 10. We're now divorced. He loves my daughter very much and has considered her his own child.

He never formally adopted her, but he has seen her regularly, because of my cooperation. I never wanted to "punish" either of them by not allowing them to see each other. He calls and asks to take her to dinner or to do fun things during the day. This is great, but he does not help me financially.

A huge part of me thinks he shouldn't have to. But I sometimes feel resentful that I am the one paying for school activities, birthdays and necessities, and he still gets to spend time with her whenever he wants without helping me. I've always wanted to be kind, and I can provide on my own, but this has become a nagging thought.