DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Time and punishment: Report from Week 1135

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1135 we asked for things that should have a maximum or minimum time limit, along with an appropriate penalty for violators. Many of you evidently found such penalties as electric shock, stabbing and poisoning appropriate for offenses such as placing too many items in the express line, taking too long to pee, etc. We know y'all don't like to be kept waiting, but sheez.

4th place

Limit: Ten seconds to stop talking during a movie.
Penalty: Your popcorn is confiscated (unless you're watching "Aloha," in which case it's okay, since you're probably alone in the theater). (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

3rd place

Eviction Notice: "Your nine-month lease on my womb has expired. Please vacate the premises within 24-hours. Failure to comply may result in forcible removal." (Mark Raffman, Reston)

2nd place and the inflatable head-hatchet:

Limit: **After "teasing" a story, a broadcast news team has to report the story within five minutes of the commercial break.** Penalty: On the next newscast, they are shown in HD close-up without makeup. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Limit: **Five minutes waiting for "Important Windows updates" to load.**
Penalty: $10-per-minute credit at the Apple store. (Larry Carnahan, Arlington)

The quick and the dud: honorable mentions

Limit: **Three seconds to vacate the landing at the base of the down escalator.** Penalty: You remember that big boulder that rolls down the tunnel in "The Raiders of the Lost Ark"? (Jack McCombs, Fairfax)

Limit: **30 seconds to fit your carry-on into the overhead compartment.** Penalty: Your bag gets your seat, and YOU go in the overhead compartment. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.; Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Limit: **Immediately.** If you're a member of an ethnic minority that has not yet been slurred by Donald Trump, he must remedy the situation within 30 days. (Vic Krysko, Surat Thani, Thailand) [Of all the ideas on this page, this is the most likely to happen.]

Limit: **Four minutes between Metro rush hour trains to avoid sardining passengers.** Penalty: Metro board meetings held in a single port-a-john until the standard is consistently met. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Limit: **10 minutes to take a shower while someone else is waiting.** Penalty: You have to take your next shower in front of millions of strangers, broadcast live over the Internet. Unless you are Kim Kardashian — then the penalty is to take a shower with nobody watching. (Tom Witte)

Limit: **Two minutes for wife to "powder nose" at restaurant while dining with boring couple.** Penalty: Husband allowed to "read paper" for an unbothered one-hour the very next Sunday morning. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Limit: **30 seconds to respond to a text or tweet from your BFF.** Penalty: Lose BFF status, be blackballed from all social events and be labeled on Facebook as "Skank of the Year." — Kayla, Class of 2018 Go Lions!!! (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Limit: **30 seconds to pay up in the cafeteria line.**
Penalty: You take a tour of the cafeteria kitchen and see what's actually in your lunch. (Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Limit: **10 minutes to remove clothes from laundromat washer or dryer.** Penalty: A mixture of chocolate milk and crushed Cheetos is dispensed onto the load. (Nancy Della Rovere, Silver Spring, a First Offender)

Husbands taking less than 30 seconds to have marital relations should have to rename their professional football teams. —Mrs. T. Snyder (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

INVITE

New contest for Week 1138: Show us your touché

***On Keith Richards:* "He still rocks, but mostly in a chair."** — Tom Witte

***On Bill Gates:* "He has something John D. Rockefeller and Howard Hughes never had: the ability to be the richest man in the world and boring at the same time."** — Russell Beland

***On Elizabeth Taylor:* "The camera used to love her. Now she's suing for alienation of affection."** — Chuck Smith

***On Bill Clinton:* "Pants down, he has been the greatest president of the late 1990s."** — Russ Horner

Back in 1997, the Czar of The Style Invitational cited comments by Dorothy Parker and Gore Vidal as examples of insults "that were withering, but executed with panache," and invited the Loser Community to serve up a few more.

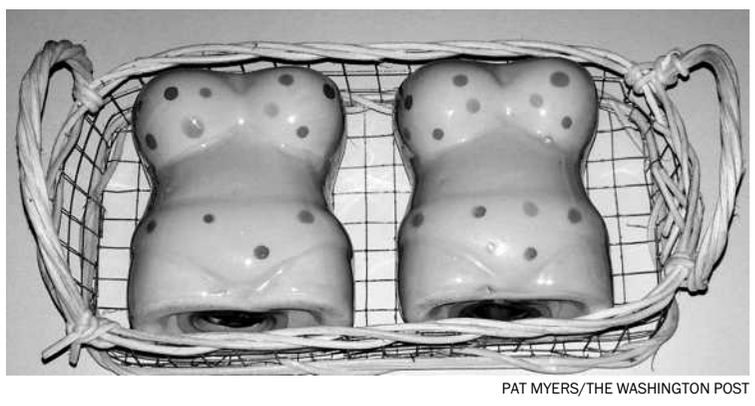
The Empress came upon the results last week while compiling a list of "22 years of Trump jokes" for her Style Conversational column. The Donald, noted Chuck Snowdon in Week 240, "is such a magician, only he could turn two gold-digging bimbos into cultural icons."

Parker and Vidal missed the Age of Twitter, but the Losers clearly can fill their gap: This week: **Offer an elegantly snide (and original) insult of anyone living or dead,** as in the examples above from Week 240. (See the rest of those results in this week's Style Conversational , at bit.ly/conv1138.)

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — perhaps to be provided to your sparklingly witty guests at your next dinner party — a petite pair of ceramic salt and pepper shakers in a dainty little basket. Lest you fear that they might seem a bit fusty, let it be clear that the shakers depict headless, legless bikinied torsos, with shaker-holes where the neck should be. Donated by the sparklingly witty, never fusty Nan Reiner, who found them in a Boca Raton thrift shop.

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 Tuesday, Sept. 8; results published Sept. 27 (online Sept 24). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1138" 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 was submitted independently by Jeff Contompasis, Jeff Shirley and William Kennard; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Beverley Sharp. 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.



PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

Just be sure you're wearing a condiment: This week's 2nd-prize salt and pepper shakers, donated by Loser Nan Reiner (not pictured).

Limit: **14 years to learn how to pull your pants up.** Penalty: You have to wear Pampers instead of boxers. (Larry Gray)

"Listen, Saint Pokey, **I've been dead an hour already.** If you can't get me through those gates in 10 minutes, I'm gonna take my soul somewhere else! (Mark Raffman)

Limit: **30 seconds to make a draft choice in fantasy football.** Penalty: All your remaining picks must be from the Redskins. (Bill Lieberman, Ellicott City)

Limit: **Zero seconds for the first driver in line to be looking at the traffic light when it turns green** (determined by a green-light camera). Penalty: $40. Except in D.C., where it's $150. (Brad Chatillion, Germantown, a First Offender)

Limit: **Five seconds to swipe the parking garage key card you use every single day.** Penalty: Park in that spot with pillars on both sides. (Eric Dobson, Arlington, a First Offender)

Limit: **One hour for a worship service.** Penalty: Voice from Above booms: "Your 60 minutes are up! I am not listening anymore!" (Mark Raffman)

Limit: **60 seconds to respond to a text.** Penalty: I'll call you. No, seriously, I will. I'll do it. Do NOT test me on this, young lady! (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

Limit: **Dog or cat has one minute to go in or out of door in front of which it sits.** Penalty: Owner must repeat this process until cat or dog actually moves. (Margaret L. Welsh, Oakton)

Limit: **10 seconds to discuss directions to the beach with a tollbooth operator.**
Penalty: To acknowledge that you reside in the Stone Age, you must dress in animal skins. (Frank Mann, Washington)

Limit: **60 minutes to take your turn in online Scrabble.**
Penalty: After the first hour, the player's S's become U's. After the second hour, T's become V's. After the third hour, blanks become C's. After the third hour, the tiles revert to IIIUUUU. (Mike Gips)

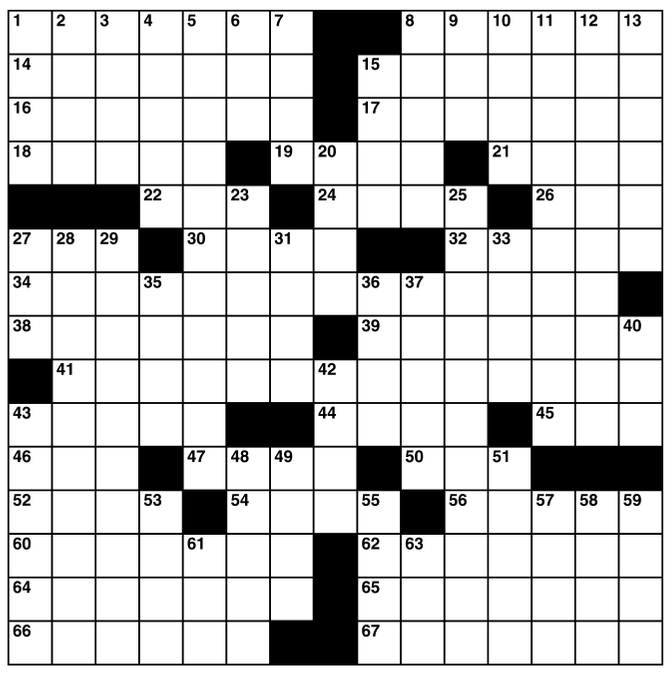
Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 31: Our contest to spice up the titles of boring books. See bit.ly/invite1137.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY DOUG PETERSON © 2015 CROSSYNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

ACROSS
1 Unkempt
8 Italian brandy
14 Ciudad Bolívar's river
15 Gets going
16 Baccarat player's excuse, perhaps
17 Crack, in a way
18 It may be filtered
19 Falco with multiple Emmys
21 Rural unit
22 HBO alternative
24 Liquids in wells
26 Guffaw syllable
27 O'Neill's "The Hairy ____"
30 Digs for squirrels
32 Banshee's cries
34 Start-up's need
38 Authorize
39 Like Hebrew and Arabic
41 1959 western set in Skull Creek, Montana
43 Activist's passion
44 Second opening?
45 Couture monogram
46 Arlington ____, Ill.
47 David Copperfield's first wife
50 ____ roll
52 Canton's home
54 Space cadet
56 Freak
60 Not at all collected
62 "It's only a scratch"
64 How most models are built
65 Upholsterer's tools
66 Involve
67 Crimean War fighter

DOWN
1 Brand acquired by Pepsi in 2000
2 Make final preparations?
3 Hip-hop artist Flo ____
4 Switched off
5 Risking a fine from the 6-Down
6 Its seal features an eagle clutching lightning bolts (abbr.)
7 Joining device
8 Ajax, for example
9 Dungeons & Dragons flier
10 Saintly ambience
11 Frasier's field
12 Homecoming events
13 Rayed bloomers
15 Situation favoring the server
20 Reversi piece
23 "The Chew" co-host Hall
25 Accessories for a butterfly expert
27 Official USPS abbr.
28 Contest that involves épées and pistols
29 Buff
31 Finely honed
33 "Look ____ this way ..."
35 Has the same goals?
36 Atlas section
37 Food that usually has ridges
40 Framable frame
42 Midge cousin
43 Prep school JFK attended
48 "Entertainment Tonight" host Nancy
49 The Zipper, e.g.
51 Medal-count category
53 Arctic predator
55 Its symbol consists of its first and third letters
57 Natalie's "Black Swan" co-star
58 With, to Brigitte
59 Hotel room feature
61 ____ tai
63 Summer house?



Answer to last week

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

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | AUG. 30: This year you will recreate your inner circle in a way that is more satisfying for you. Several new dynamic friends will enter your life. If you are single, this year will be very special. Mr. or Ms. Right is likely to walk right through your front door. If you are attached, the two of you need to juggle both your needs in a more effective way. The two of you are likely to enter a new phase of your relationship.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*
There seems to be an awkwardness between you and a loved one. As a result, you may decide to cocoon at home for the day. Figure out how you want to address the problem.

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*
You might feel as if you are on the verge of getting your way regarding a major issue in your life. You are driven in the direction of success. Don't stop, no matter what happens.

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*
You will take a stand in the midst of confusion. However, your thoughts are rapidly changing about the matter. Be aware of the trends around you.

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*
Tap into your imagination when cooking up plans for the day. You will be happiest doing something new, inspiring and fun.

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*
You'll want a close loved one to say yes to an offer; however, you might not hear what you want to. Try to walk in this person's shoes.

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*
The full moon has put emphasis on your relationships and on how much you are willing to give. Don't make any decisions just yet.

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*
A low-key attitude might not be easy, but it will be most effective. Be more loving in how you handle a dear friend who seems to be struggling.

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*
Your ingenuity and wit will delight friends and loved ones. A suitor or a new friend finds you to be magnetic and difficult to say no to. Honor a change of pace.

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*
Do you know when to walk away from a touchy situation? Honor your needs before trying to help others. You might need some distance from this matter.

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*
Make calls, share news and be more social than you normally are. Don't take news as fact. There could be a lot of gossip and misinformation mixed in. Do what you feel is needed to calm someone down.

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*
You will be all smiles on the outside, but a personal matter is likely draining your self-confidence on the inside. This internal struggle needs to change. Working through it will help. Don't allow someone else to intercede.

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*
Recent events will make you a star, no matter which way you turn or what you say. Still, be cautious; this won't last forever. Someone you care about keeps showing up and making demands. Know when to say "enough is enough."

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Looking mom's gift horse in the mouth

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: For my first wedding anniversary, my mom got us a crystal paperweight in the shape of a heart. When I opened the package, I was confused. I even said to my husband, "This is so not me, and I'd be shocked if my mom didn't know that." I knew the gift was expensive and discovered that it cost over $150.

My mom is a keepsake person; we are not. In the past, my mom has seemed to understand this and has given gifts accordingly — usually something consumable such as a good bottle of wine.

On the phone I thanked my mom for the gift and said it was lovely (because it was) and that we appreciated the gift (which we did). She explained that there was another paperweight in red we could exchange it for if we liked it better and encouraged me to look online for it. I took this as a sign that she was flexible about the gift.

Online I found a crystal ornament of the same brand and sent her a link with the message, "I kinda love this!" The only keepsakes that are part of our family tradition are Christmas ornaments, and I thought if her gift to us were an ornament, I'd admire it during the holidays on the tree and genuinely love it.

She e-mailed me this morning saying that an ornament "Isn't even close to what I had in mind to commemorate your first wedding anniversary" and that I could exchange it for the red paperweight if I liked that better, or if I didn't want either paperweight, to send it back and she wouldn't replace it. She said, "My feelings are already a bit bruised either way."

It seems I've already done the damage. Do I just keep the paperweight?

Guilty Daughter

Yes. You keep the paperweight. Your reaction and effort to get what you want seem to have touched a nerve.

But this is not about what you want. It's about what your mother wants to give to you. It's not necessarily rational, but it's a mom thing. She wanted you to have something specific that meant something to her. She has been honest and gently reproachful. Apologize with a hug and move on.

Dear Amy: I am a member of a group of people who get together to play cards. I have observed a person who plays cards with us (but is not a member of the group) cheating.

The subject of cheating came up once, and I tried discreetly (obviously too discreetly) to let this person know I observed the cheating. It had no impact. It appears this person is a friend of a member of the group.

I realize there is nothing I can do about the situation except learn to deal with it so that it no longer upsets me. Any advice?

Card Sharp

Wait a minute. You need not be a powerless observer here. You are an equal member of this group and have every right to call someone else on cheating. I suggest you take this person aside and tell him what you've noticed. The person will probably deny his actions and you can respond, "Perhaps this is a misunderstanding; if so, I apologize, but if I see this again I'm going to have to notify the rest of the group."

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.

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