

## DIVERSIONS

### THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## It's as easy as 1-b-iii: Week 1139, Losers' choice

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1139**, we let you construct your own contest from a mix-and-match menu of four formats, four subjects and four limitations — 64 potential combinations in all. One format was a song parody, and as always, we received too many excellent ones to include here. So we're sharing more of them in the online version of the Invite (at [bit.ly/invite1143](http://bit.ly/invite1143)), complete with links to the tunes. One, by Loser Mae Scanlan to "Young at Heart," has the single best line in the contest: "He is cunningly shrewd, and he's stunningly crude"; it refers to . . . you have one guess. (Second-best single line, same topic: Dave Silberstein parodied "Everyone's Gone to the Moon" to "Everyone's Drawn to the Loon.")



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### 4th place

Format: song parody; subject: a fad that is SO over; limitation: must contain a word and its anagram (here, "on" and "no"; okay, not much of an anagram . . .) (to the chorus of "MacArthur Park") **The cupcake store has closed on Third and Park — No more treacly icing flowing now, The craze for high-priced baked goods on the wane. Now I'll just have to toughen Up and eat an oat bran muffin, But perhaps I'll get my pants to fit again.** (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

### 3rd place

Format: song parody; subject: footwear; limitations: must include all 26 letters of the alphabet. (To "Food, Glorious Food") **Shoes, glorious shoes! Our trendiest tonics. For nixing the blues, just slip on some Blahniks! Life feel like a garbage can? Don't mope with the kvetchers. Ease into some Louboutins or — some — Skechers! Choose glorious Choos, Uggs, Magli or Madden. Prime Prada in twos no girl can look bad in.**

**Wine Weitzmans or mint McQueens, no way you can lose! With Shoes — Michael Kors! Shoes — Saint Laurent! Shoes — Kenneth Cole! Shoes — L Vuitton! Shoes — Burberry! Shoes . . . glorious shoes!** (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

### 2nd place and the mix-and-match game Dr. Lakra's Mutant Laboratory:

Format: riddle; subject: Trump campaign; limitation: must be short enough to tweet:

**Q. What did Trump tell Obama supporters to win them over? A. Orange is the new black.** (Steve Honley, Washington)

### And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Format: song parody; subject: Trump campaign; limitation: must contain a word and its anagram (limes/smile):

(To "Be Our Guest") **He's obsessed! He's obsessed! "Build a wall," he says. "No jost! There's disorder at the border And I know what's for the best!"**

**"They do rapes! They do crimes! They drink beer with sliced-up limes! And their culture's undesired! Don't believe me? Then you're fired!"**

**"It's a sport to deport The burrito-eating sort; If they're born here, send them back with all the rest!" Do people think he's vile? (Dems cast a knowing smile) 'Cause he's obsessed! He's obsessed! He's obsessed!** (Mark Raffman, Reston)

### SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY BRUCE VENZKE © 2015 CROSSYNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>46</b> Italian ballet master	<b>3</b> Equine check	<b>24</b> "Street Dreams" rapper	<b>43</b> Surprise hit
<b>1</b> Noted soloist	____ Cecchetti	<b>4</b> More useful	<b>44</b> Bogey beater	<b>44</b> Bogey beater
<b>8</b> Cuffs, perhaps	<b>47</b> Kazan of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"	<b>5</b> Prince Edward Island hrs.	<b>25</b> Haste product	<b>45</b> Chest frame
<b>15</b> Hedonists	<b>48</b> ____ socks	<b>6</b> Autumn apples	<b>26</b> Former TWA owner	<b>49</b> 1984 "Weird Al" Yankovic hit
<b>17</b> Accuses	<b>50</b> Native of Novi Sad	<b>7</b> Mannerism	<b>27</b> Less forward	<b>50</b> Rocket segment
<b>18</b> Fax machine	<b>51</b> Princess Fiona's button	<b>8</b> Tibetan or Thai	<b>29</b> Cape-wearing sidekick	<b>51</b> Rooford fixture
<b>19</b> Occupy, in a way	<b>52</b> Native of Novi Sad	<b>9</b> Income source	<b>30</b> Rice-____ ("The San Francisco Treat")	<b>52</b> Quechua speaker
<b>20</b> Weakens	<b>53</b> Princess Fiona's voice in "Shrek" movies	<b>10</b> Gas pump abbreviation	<b>31</b> Irish poet and dramatist	<b>53</b> Italian bell town
<b>21</b> Rapper born	<b>54</b> Morning eye-opener	<b>11</b> Barely makes	<b>33</b> "Little piggy" in a children's rhyme	<b>55</b> Highest Scrabble letter value
<b>22</b> Prefix for "billionth"	<b>56</b> Caribbean island	<b>12</b> Evening in Naples	<b>34</b> Warhol subject	<b>57</b> Addresses with dots
<b>23</b> Most sagacious	<b>60</b> Teddies and such	<b>13</b> Drainpipe feature	<b>35</b> Canine comment	<b>58</b> Borscht base
<b>24</b> Actresses Dern and Linney	<b>63</b> 101st Airborne Division's nickname	<b>14</b> Extinct fliers	<b>40</b> More chic	<b>59</b> It precedes an afterthought
<b>32</b> 1983 yuletide movie	<b>64</b> Locks retainer	<b>16</b> Small newt	<b>41</b> Post-OR location	<b>61</b> Provide with a staff
<b>36</b> Influence	<b>65</b> Auto designer	<b>22</b> Forensics TV series, familiarly	<b>42</b> Responsible	<b>62</b> Hook foe
<b>37</b> Crew item				
<b>38</b> Le ____ Marché (Paris department store)				
<b>39</b> Seasonal Igor Stravinsky ballet				
	<b>DOWN</b>			
	<b>1</b> "House" actor			
	Omar			
	<b>2</b> Flowering succulent			

Answer to last week

G	A	S	O	L	I	N	E	S	R	I	G	G	S
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P	E	D	O	A	K	L	E	A	F	N	R	A	
R	A	G	S	T	I	M	P	A	D	U	A	N	
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### HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | OCT. 4:** This year could be very important as far as your public image and career are concerned. You will be noticed more than you realize. You also could be in a situation where you want to be more open than you have been in the past. Remember the importance of being authentic, too. If you are single, you meet people with ease. Take your time getting to know someone. If you are attached, the two of you move to a new level of understanding. As busy as you are, be sure not to leave your significant other out of the mix. You easily get stressed out around Cancer.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) You can't ignore the tension around you, but you might not be sure about the best way to eliminate it. Let it go and use your high energy constructively. Get some exercise, and get away from highly tense interactions.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) You might want to straighten out a misunderstanding before it becomes much more. Share some of your thoughts about a particular friendship and the people involved. A child or loved one simply can't get enough of you.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20) Make sure your checking account is balanced before you leap into action. Spending money goes through your fingers so easily and a bit too naturally. A risk might seem worth the investment, but be sure that you can afford the loss, should it happen.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22) You feel in tune with others, even if they are having a disagreement. Your empathetic qualities work like a sponge,

seemingly absorbing others' feelings. A call from a distance, or even a passing thought, could trigger a fantasy about a loved one.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) Try to play it low-key today. That is not to say that you will be lonely or that everyone will ignore you; you simply will be happier not committing to anything and just doing your thing. You'll want to reassess a situation involving a close loved one.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You might have plans, but keeping them could be difficult, as an unexpected group of friends seems to seek you out. Don't underestimate how much you inspire others. Someone you love could become jealous of all the attention you are getting.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Take a stand and understand that others might not agree. In fact, they probably won't. You tend to trigger a lot of gossip. Stay involved in the discussion. Reach out to others, and show interest in what they have to share.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Keep stretching past self-imposed limits, even though you might need a friend to help you with this process. Sometimes we can't see our mental filter, but others can. You will feel very fortunate when you clear out some of your unnecessary judgments.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Make this a special day with the one you love. You can be spontaneous and just take off. Cancel plans, if need be. The quality of your interactions will reconnect the two of you on a deeper level. Don't let an older friend interfere with the quality of your day.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You might be so determined to make a point that you forget who you are with and that you do not need to push so hard. A loved one won't need convincing of the wisdom of your ways. Follow your sixth sense with a child. You'll be glad you did.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Push as hard as you need to. You have a lot to get through, and quite quickly at that. Once you clear up a problem, you will feel free. You don't need to push. You can join a pal for a movie or invite someone over for an early dinner.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) Take your cues from a loved one. Get away from the daily grind and don't think about work. Tap into your imagination and make plans. Go for something spontaneous. A child could throw a tantrum if you give someone else too much attention!

### Sixty-foursaken: honorable mentions

An observation about the Trump campaign that's short enough for a tweet:

**If Trump gets the nomination, which of those pathetic, ugly losers should he ask to be his running mate?** (Frank Mann, Washington)

A riddle about a fad that is so over, and could be a tweet:

**Q. How are collectible Beanie Babies like kamikaze pilots?**

**A. Both have low rates of return.** (Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)

Parody about footwear, and contains all 26 letters of the alphabet: (To "Girls Just Want to Have Fun")

**Extreme strain on your legs and feet;**

**The shoes you use abuse you till each calf moos, "Retreat!"**

**You trip and fall so much you're covered in bumps,**

**But still you're gonna wear pumps.**

**Dumb girls just wanna wear pumps.**

**Each quick turn, ankles swell and ache.**

**Big bunions and hammertoes, what more can you take?**

**You're just a hobbling ditz on two bloody stumps,**

**But still you're gonna wear pumps,**

**Dumb girls just wanna wear pumps.** (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

A tweetable observation about a fad that is so over:

**Isn't twerking just like spinning a hula hoop, only without the hula hoop?** (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

A tweetable observation about the new thin Oreos:

**Thin Oreos? I guess "Obese Oreos" didn't test well?** (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

A Trump parody with an anagram pair (guns/snug):

To "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean":

**The Donald is winning, say pollsters;**

**His weird popularity grows. Right-wingers, guns snug in their holsters,**

**Proclaim him the cure for their woes.**

**Take back this quack, Oh, bring back some sanity to the scene,**

**Or we might see A President Trump in '16.** (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

See more honorable mentions in the online Invite at [bit.ly/invite1143](http://bit.ly/invite1143).

**Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 5: Our contest for tweets from a "hybrid" person. See [bit.ly/invite1142](http://bit.ly/invite1142).**

## New contest for Week 1143: Ask Backwards

**A VW gas pedal \* Bei Bei's daily schedule \* A platypus, a sourpuss, and pus \* Somewhere over the rainbow \* An icicle, a testicle and a listicle \* Duck, Duck, Moose \* 15 GB \* 2028 C.E. \* A swarm of fruit flies \* Shaquille O'Rabinowitz \* The Gossamer-Man Triathlon \* #LoserPower \* Poutine on the Ritz \* L'Oreal and Hardy \* 19 Idols and Counting**

Ask away! It's one of our most enduring contests, dating back to Week 21 in 1993, and repeated more than 30 times since: **Above are 15 answers, separated by asterisks. You supply the questions.** Write the answer first, followed by your question. If you have several entries for a single category, please precede each one with the answer, so the Empress won't miss it when she wields her imperial Search button.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a bobblehead, too! It's a genuine Washington Nationals bobble of Calvin Coolidge, the team's newest presidential mascot. Loser Nan Reiner snagged it for us at Nats Park just last week, and then took it home and embellished it with a little sign that says, "You Lose." Which is eminently fitting on two levels: Not only is "Congratulations — you lose" the Empress's traditional compliment to ink-getters, but it also harks back to a famous Coolidge anecdote, which the unstoppable force that is Nan explained in a limerick:

"Silent Calvin" did not care to schmooze. Spoke, at most, words in ones or in twos. When a gal bet that he Might bestow on her three, She was met with this answer: "You lose."

**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](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, Oct 12 (what, you wanted off for Columbus Day?); results published Nov. 1 (online Oct. 29). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1143" 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](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline for this week's results is by Danielle Nowlin; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Nan Reiner. The last three Ask Backwards answers are Chris Doyle's. 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](http://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](http://wapo.st/styleconv).



**Well, he's no Lincoln — but a Cal bobblehead makes a pretty good second prize, especially when accessorized by Loser Nan Reiner with Invite-appropriate signage.**

PHOTO BY NAN REINER

## Which shoes is he stepping into?

### Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

was in her 20s when I married her mother, and, as such, she never lived with us. Jenny never calls me her stepfather but introduces me as her "mother's husband."

Jenny is now married to "David," and they have a daughter, "Ariel." Am I David's father-in-law, step-father-in-law or what? Am I Ariel's grandfather, step-grandfather or what?

I hate to presume something, since Jenny doesn't acknowledge me as her stepfather.

*Confused in Georgia*

**Dear Amy:** I married later in life. My wife has a daughter, "Jenny," from a previous marriage. Jenny

are a stepfather, a father-in-law and a grandfather. But these roles take some growing into. I hope you don't take this too personally; this is actually a common occurrence (and question) when people remarry later in life and the children are grown and out of the house.

Your stepdaughter likely doesn't think of you as a stepfather because you had no hand in raising her. She may have only recently met you. This might not be a deliberate slight — but more a reflection of the way she sees the relationship at this point.

If this terminology interferes with your relationship (it

sounds like it does), I hope you will be brave enough to say to her: "You don't seem to see me as your stepdad, and I get that — but I hope you think of me as one of Ariel's grandfathers. Your mom and I hope to be a big part of her life." She might not respond to you, but when you express yourself openly, honestly, and without hurt or hostility — and don't demand a response from her — you will prompt her to think about it.

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

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