

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Mewsical comedy: Parodies for, about and by animals

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1154**, inspired by cellist David Teie's music written for cats, we asked the Losers to write songs to or about cats or other animals (we also accepted "by"), set to a familiar tune. We got a slew of terrific parodies of everything from "Home on the Range" to Theme A of Tetris, along with the more typical show tunes and Beatles songs; see more of them at bit.ly/invite1158.

4th place

Sung by a cat:

To "Put On a Happy Face"

Human, it's time to get up! Work at a snappy pace! I'm getting more than fed up; you're a complete disgrace.

Think you control this slinky loner? Ha! Don't make me laugh.

Many a dog may have an owner, but cats, we have staff.

Snap to attention, peon! Open the sliding door.

No longer want to be on the side I was on before. I'll do this till you're blue in the face.

Now work at a snappy pace!

(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

3rd place

To "American Woman"

American Pharoah, it is such a shame, American Pharoah, they misspelled your name.

The English teachers, they swear and curse, Say students' spelling's gonna get much worse.

You've got more important things to see, I know you ain't thinkin' 'bout orthography.

But Pharoah, listen what I say,

American Pharoah, switch your O and A.

(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

2nd place and the Twinkle Tush joke "modesty gem" for cats:

To "Carry On Wayward Son"

Ornithologists who study the vulture

Want to fathom how they transmit their culture.

They place recorders where they're nesting,

They can hear the mama say:

"Carrion, my feathered son!

Eating roadkill — ooh, it's fun!

When your food is dead it's best,

Won't you try some more?"

(Mark Raffman, Reston)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Dr. Palmer's Blues

(To "Sixteen Going on Seventeen")

Orthodontists hadn't confronted you

Till I took deadly aim.

First I took pride in your homicide,

But now I just take the blame.

What a bungle out in the jungle to

Shoot myself in the foot.

All explanation's flossed in translation,

Seems my repute's kaput.

How I'm abused and vilified for going on that hunt;

Mobs yell it's I who should have died, and that I'm

just a very bad person.

New adventures now involve dentures,

No more the lion's roar.

Tooth extraction's quite enough action.

Big shot I'm not — just small bore.

(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

No's ark: honorable mentions

Pizza Rat

To "Yesterday"

Pizza Rat, you have gumption we all wonder at,

When you find a slice, you grab it, stat,

You've got resolve, O Pizza Rat.

(Bridge) Down the stairs you go, heading fo' the old

subway;

With your pizza slice, you'll eat nice, then eat all

day. . .

Pizza Rat, you don't care 'bout gluten or trans fat,

Let's hope you don't meet a Pizza Cat,

Please watch your back, O Pizza Rat. (Duncan

Stevens)

Benji's at the Vet's

To "Bennie and the Jets"

Hey, kids, Benji's feelin' icky.

I think you fed him something.

Well, I know that he ain't picky.

We took him to the vet's, he tied himself in knots —

The waiting room reminded him: here was where

he'd gotten those shots.

He started a panic in the other pets!

Oh, they were so freaked out.

B-b-b-b Benji at the vet's . . .

(Max Gutmann, Cupertino, Calif.)

Mice Paradise (To "Be Our Guest")

He's our nest! He's our nest!

We can happily attest

His toupee is A-OK as the location we infest!

It's so nice for us mice

In this Trump-top paradise

Where it's comfy and it's soft

(and immaculately coiffed!)

Parasites? Yes we are!

But we don't come from afar,

Meaning each of us is welcome as his guest . . .

He'll never win the White House

But he's our just-right house!

He's our nest! He's our nest! He's our nest!

(Mark Raffman)

Unholy Matrimony

To "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean"

A gnu and a fox started dating

And moved to a homestead with views

Where, needless to say, they were mating,

And that's why we're stuck with Fox-Gnus. (Mae

Scanlan, Washington)

The Centipede's Song

To "One" from "A Chorus Line"

One hundred little footsies,

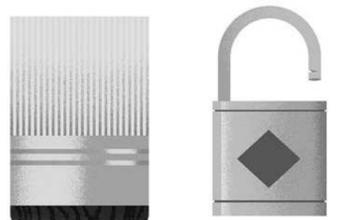
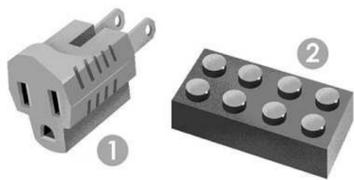
That is how I got my name.

One hundred little tootsies,

Just a myth, all the same.

Just count the pairs of the feet on my tiny bod:

You won't get 50 — the number is always odd!



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 1158: What have we here?

Above are various objects depicted by Style Invitational Quick-on-the-Draw Man Bob Staake. You know what they are — but if you are a True Loser . . . **This week: Tell us what one or more of these objects really are.** As usual, you can offer as many as 25 ideas among the various items. Be sure to identify the object by number.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a pair of magnets that make our official Loser magnets seem prissy: One is labeled "Friend Request" and is a cartoon of a dog sniffing another dog's butt; the other says, "What happens at the dog park stays at the dog park" and shows two dogs behaving indiscreetly. Donated by Dave Prevar 2 zillion years ago.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug, the older-model "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" mug, or a vintage Loser T-shirt, which we have in various models, mostly regifted. Honorable mentions get one of our Loser magnets, "Magnet Dum Laude" or "Falling Jest Short." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Email entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, Jan. 25; results published Feb. 14 (online Feb. 11). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1158" in your email 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 Chris Doyle; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jesse Frankovich. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. Follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

☞ **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.

One thousand steps a moment,
Think of all the steps I take!
All the records I could break — on Fit . . . bit!
One unprepossessing creature
With a lot of just one feature:
Legs are it! (Barbara Sarshik, McLean)

Mouse's Night Out

To "Tonight" from "West Side Story"

Tonight, tonight, I'll roam for cheese tonight,

I'll scurry 'round your pantry to dine

Tonight, tonight, some provolone tonight

And those prints in the Edam are mine!

Today, you found some of my droppings

Beside your favorite toppings,

And you recoiled in fright . . . I see a scrap

Of cheese, and I don't see it's a trap . . .

To-ni- (Rob Cohen, Potomac)

Dog Foodie

Back when I was just a pup

(talkin' 'bout my Ken-L-Ration) ...

From a can I'd love to sup ...

t'was my favorite protein source ...

Who knew it was made of horse? (Mark Raffman)

Whose "Kitty"?

To "Soft Kitty," a running joke on "Big Bang Theory"

Soft kitty, warm kitty, "Big Bang" stole our song.

Lazy network, shady network, wrong, wrong, wrong!

— Ellen N. Chase and Margaret Perry (they're

suining) (Mary Kappus, Washington)

Lots more honorable mentions in the online [Invite at bit.ly/invite1158](http://bit.ly/invite1158).

Stil on: Deadline Monday night: clues for our reverse crossword. See bit.ly/invite1157.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY BRUCE VENZKE © 2016 CROSSYNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

ACROSS
1 Transcendent condition
8 Embroidered piece
15 "War and Peace" figure
16 Blatant pretense
17 Arctic sight
18 Flounder relative
19 Caramel candies
20 Doo-wop syllable
22 "All My Children" star
23 Metal containers?
24 Buzz producer
26 Reach great heights
27 La Toya, to Michael
28 Mediterranean capital
30 Accepted, as a financial loss
31 Liberated
33 Like Francis of Assisi
35 Bandage brand

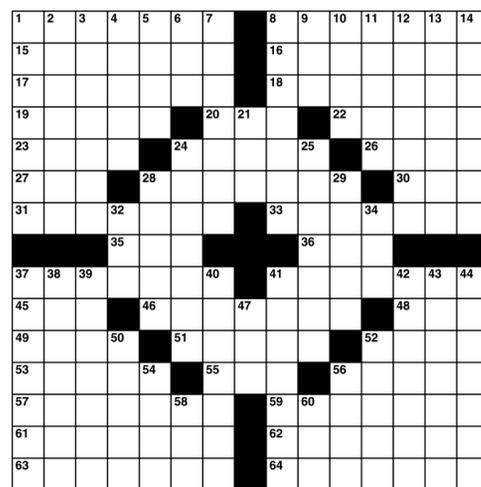
DOWN
1 Fascinate
2 Unit of heat
3 Passé to the max
4 Crunchy fast food
5 Garage sale proviso
6 "That's all _____ wrote!"
7 Gridiron figure
8 Dopes
9 Cousin of "Eureka!"

36 Insurer's designation (abbr.)
37 Becomes firm
41 Desert option
45 Penny prez
46 Means
48 Minister's nickname
49 Save for later, so to speak
51 Editor's deletions, say
52 Loblolly, e.g.
53 Certain shoes for dancing
55 Geom. figure
56 Prepare to surf, perhaps
57 Terrific, informally
59 Ancient pueblo dwellers
61 Completely surround
62 Primitive guys

63 Waffles
64 Making a mad dash

10 Suburban hangout
11 Toyota model
12 Researcher's garb
13 Brief, say
14 Hit the hay
21 Israeli arms expert Gal
24 Tissue brand
25 Delphic mediums
28 Curving
29 Former Cavalier coach Paul
32 Pet rocks, once
34 Integer, for short
37 Emerges from a shell
38 Dwight Eisenhower's hometown

39 Go around
40 Theatergoers' treats
41 Opposites do this, it's said
42 Paper-folding art
43 Inhabitant
44 Vespers time
47 Arles agreement
50 Gets an eyeful
52 Tough query
54 _____ Islands of Indonesia
56 Obsidian rock producer
58 Solemn promise
60 Aberdeen negative



Answer to last week

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

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | JAN. 17: This year you need to relax more and give in to your imagination. Stop always trying to be so logical. Give voice to a very creative facet of your personality. Many people want to be around you. If you are single, others will say that they want friendship, when actually they want more. You will have your hands full sorting through many mixed messages from admirers. If you are attached, the two of you often disagree about long-term goals and whom you choose as your friends. However, relating to each other easily makes up for hassles elsewhere. Taurus always knows how to get you to lighten up.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You could find that someone doesn't agree with you. The argument that ensues could add an element of confusion. What you'll see is that you are not on the same page as this person.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

You finally feel up to snuff. A loved one might not feel the same way and will let you know in no uncertain terms. You can avoid an argument simply by finding a way to distract this person, but know that this problem needs solving.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You could feel encumbered by a situation. As a result, you might opt to lie low and not get involved in today's activities. You also will need to clear out a chore or get a handle on a project. A relative continues to be demanding.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Go where the crowds are. You will enjoy the busy pace. If friends are going to a favorite spot, join them. Avoid being alone. You might not realize what a difference friends

make to your mood.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Responsibility heads your way. Although you might have planned a carefree day, you have other concerns on your mind. Make time for a loved one. You will want to visit an older relative or invite some family members over.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You could find a loved one to be an absolute dream to deal with compared to a neighbor or sibling who seems to be on the warpath. Unless you like controversy, head where others are in a good mood. You don't need to deal with someone's anger right now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

You might have considered making a big purchase. You could decide to act on this venture today; however, you would be well-advised to wait one more week. More information could come up, or this item's price could be lowered.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

You could become irate at the drop of a hat if you are not careful. Don't direct your anger toward the wrong person. A discussion might be appropriate to have right now. A child or new friend could be full of enticing ideas.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You might relax by indulging in a favorite pastime. Say "no" to an invitation, and do what you want to do. No one will be upset when they see the difference in your mood. You don't need to know the details of a family matter right now.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You might want to gain a better understanding of a goal that involves a friend. Someone could be pushing you very hard to go along with his or her way of thinking. You know how to say "no" if need be. Tap into your creativity.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You might wonder what would be best to do under the circumstances. You are likely to see the anger of an older relative emerge, and it easily could be directed at you. You will choose how to respond.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Your creativity inspires you, but others might not understand your decisions or the direction you seem to be heading in. You are blazing a new path. Listen to your instincts, and brainstorm with a friend or two as all these ideas come forward.

Artist copes with getting artless advice

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I'm an artist hoping to get a career in art, specifically as an illustrator.

Three years ago I graduated with an art degree and have since been working to make that happen: doing a lot of research, building a portfolio and exploring all my options.

I work part time to keep myself fed, but otherwise I'm always drawing, painting and networking.

From what I've learned, it takes years before most artists can quit their day jobs. I'm prepared for this; I'm in no way lazy, but I know it will take me a long time. I keep my head down and keep trying.

My family and friends are very supportive, which is wonderful, but there's one big problem. They don't understand why it's taking me so long to get an art job, thus they're always offering me art advice, though they aren't

artists themselves. Advice on what to paint, how much to sell for, who to work for and so on. Sometimes the advice is a little ridiculous, if not insulting: "Just go work for Disney" or "Nobody wants to buy those kinds of paintings. Paint portraits; those will sell." Or, "Do it for the exposure if you have to."

They don't trust that I know what I'm doing, and they don't recognize how hard I'm working. It gets to the point I don't want to talk about my art at all. I want to enjoy my family get-togethers again. How can I let on (politely) that I'm not interested in their bombardment of ill-informed advice?

Struggling Artist

Struggling Artist: Everybody's an expert, and the less people know about your particular field, the more "expert" their advice becomes.

What you are going through is akin to people telling a

certain struggling writer (yours truly), "You should write a book and get Oprah to endorse it!" This sort of statement might actually be a vote of confidence from the person offering it; unfortunately, instead it highlights the fact that none of these spectacular goals have been met. It's a quick way to feel like a loser.

Don't stop talking about your work (if you're asked) — or avoid or ignore this unsolicited advice — but look for effective ways to cope with it. "You should work for Disney," could be met with — "That might be very cool. Do you know anyone there I can call?"

Remember always that this is really your fan club; they're just disguised as a Greek chorus of know-it-alls.

Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribune.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

© 2016 by the Chicago Tribune