

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Ciao lines: Winning obit poems

BY PAT MYERS

Perhaps more than ever, there was no shortage of material for our annual obit poem contest, **Week 1208**. Though we asked for verses about people who died in 2016, the Empress occasionally widened the memorial gates, as for this week's third-place Loser.

4th place

Ray Tomlinson (1941-2016), email pioneer
Higgledy piggledy,
Raymond "Ray" Tomlinson
Sent the first email, but
Bear in mind that
Reaching him now is an
Impossibility,
Since the domain's unknown
Where he is @.
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

3rd place

Cleveland's championship drought (1964-2016)
The Cavs came back and ended
Cleveland's championship
drought,
While Wahoo came in second as
their Wrigley luck ran out.
Their residents can celebrate, like
many other towns,
But Cleveland still is Cleveland,
and the Browns are still the
Browns.
(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

2nd place and the genuine teeny piece of the Berlin Wall:

Carrie Fisher (1956-2016)
Diagnosed as bipolar, she turned it
into humor. (Denial, she spurned
it.)
Her remains now lie still
In a huge Prozac pill!
Carrie had the last laugh, and she
urned it.
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Gillis Lundgren (1929-2016), Ikea bookcase designer
The men who bore his coffin from
its hearse
Wept loudly as they lumbered past
the pews:
They missed their buddy, naturally
— but worse,
The coffin still was missing half its
screws.
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Passed imperfect: honorable mentions

TV star Alan Young (1919-2016)
A hearse is a hearse, and death's
a curse,
But now you are one with the
universe,
So don't be terse — go on,
converse
With the ghost of Mr. Ed!
(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Prince (1958-2016)
There once was an artist who
shone
With a musical style all his own.
Now, alas, fans of Prince
Are in misery, since
He'll forever be Formerly Known.
(Jesse Frankovich)

Antonin Scalia (1936-2016)
With merry wit and repartee
You livened up the Court,
But let's just say humility
Was never quite your forte.
So if you make your way up there
And watch the Lord relent
And grant some sinner's earnest
prayer,
Please try not to dissent.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Jim Delligatti (1918-2016), creator of the Big Mac
How fitting would this obit be,
Though false, and quite improper:
"The cause of death: Big Mac
attack."
(But that would be a Whopper.)
(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Delligatti and chef Peng Chang-Kuei (1918-2016)
One invented the Big Mac, and the
other "General Tso"
One's a burger, and the other's
dipped in batter.
Though it's true the flavors differ,
still they're similar, we know,
In that that which doesn't kill us
makes us fatter. (Mark Raffman)

Marni Nixon (1930-2016), whose voice was dubbed in for many movie musicals
(sung to "Wouldn't It Be Lovely"
from "My Fair Lady")
"All I want is a credit line
Making clear that the voice was
mine.
Celestial marquee sign,
Oh, wouldn't it be Heavenly . . .
Kerr and Hepburn, Monroe and



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1212: The Tile Invitational IV

BDELOUT → **BEDLOUT**: A parasite that does its thing, rolls over and goes to sleep.

BDELOUT → **OUTBLED**: Got that extra pound of flesh, thereby winning the 2016 Ambulance Chasers Championship.

BDELOUT → **BUDLET**: One of those 8-ounce cans of beer.

Somehow the Empress forgot to run this contest last year, as she had the previous three: It's our homage to ScrabbleGrams, the word puzzle that appears daily on The Post's comics pages: Below is a list of 40 seven-letter sets taken from "The Big Book of ScrabbleGrams" by Obsessive Loser Jeff Contompas. **Give us a five-, six- or seven-letter word (or two words) by scrambling the letters of any of the sets and define it, as in the examples above.** In past contests almost all the ink has gone to made-up terms, but you may also find an existing word and supply a clever definition for it. Feel free to make your entry funnier by using your term in a funny sample sentence. *Note that we are not playing for Scrabble points; the letter values don't matter.* Please begin *each* entry with the letter set you're scrambling, as above — and spell it correctly; the É is going to search through her Giant Master List of Entries for all the entries for each set, one after the other.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1212 (all lowercase).

AHINRSV	AMNNOSW	BGIORTY	CEFKLOT
AHIPRSW	AMRRSTY	BIKLNOT	CEIORTW
AIIMNNV	AOOPPRS	BNNRSUU	CEIORVY
AILLNNO	AOORRTY	CCIIRTU	CEIOSTY
AILOPTV	BBEHINS	CDELMSU	CEIRRTU
AIMMOSS	BBEORRY	CEEGLNT	CHILSTU
AINNTUY	BCEJSTU	CEEIJOR	CHIMSSS
ALLOPRY	BDELOTU	CEEISTU	CHINTYZ
ALLOTYY	BEEHRWY	CEELRTU	CHKNOOS
ALOQRSU	BEIOSTY	CEENNOV	CIILNUV

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets — direct from a Vietnam vacation by Losers Mark and Claudia Raffman — **a bag of coffee beans that are a costly delicacy because they have been digested and pooped out by "weasels"** (actually civets), evidently adding some incomparable flavor. But first the Empress is going to let Washington Post Staff Poop-Obsessive Gene Weingarten try a little bit of it, for a possible column.

Other runners-up win the yearned-for "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" Loser mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our new lusted-after Loser magnets, "No Childishness Left Behind" or "Magnum Dopus." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Feb. 6; results published Feb. 26 (online Feb. 23). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Nan Reiner; the honorable-mentions subhead was suggested by both Nan and Kevin Dopart. 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; 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.

Wood,
Couldn't sing; it was I who could.
To reap the raves I should —
Oh, wouldn't it be Heavenly!"
(Nan Reiner)

Fidel Castro (1926-2016)
"I'll make it to a hundred" was his
boast,
"I'll outlive all my enemies by far."
And yet, at only 90, Castro's toast.
Nice try, Fidel — but sorry, no
cigar. (Brian Allgar, Paris)

Robert Leo Hulseman, creator of the red Solo cup
In retrospect the undertaker
Made a big mistake
By letting fans of Solo cups
Arrange that bier pong wake.
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Margaret Vinci Heldt (1918-2016), creator of the beehive hairdo
You have to figure beehive gals
Kept plenty hidden in their hair.
(A pack of Kents? A Jell-O mold?
A handy set of Farberware?)
They'd never even tell their pals
Precisely what was stashed in there.
But Margaret's clients — her, they

told.
And now, alas, she'll never share.
(Melissa Balmain)

Greta Zimmer Friedman (1924-2016), the woman in the V-J Day "kissing photo" by Alfred Eisenstadt
A nurse named Greta Zimmer's
walking down the street when lol
She's seized and smooched in
public by some gob she doesn't
know
And Eisenstadt immortalized this
pair that happy day:
Iconic then — but now that pic
would be Exhibit A.
(Elliott Shevin, Oak Park, Mich.)

The Pokémon Go craze (2016-2016)
O Pokémon Go
For a minute you were "it"
Now Pokémon Gone.
(Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)

More obit poems in the online *Invite* at bit.ly/invite1212.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 30: our contest for disparaging tweets about historical or literary heroes. See bit.ly/invite1211.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY ALAN ARBESFELD © 2017 CROSSYENERGY SYNDICATE LLC

ACROSS	34 "The House of Blue Leaves" playwright	62 Run	13 Fords that didn't last	40 "... your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on ___?" (Hamlet)
1 Break-even scenario	35 Bit of action	63 Those, in Toledo	18 Orphan boy of old comics	41 Underachievers are not up to it
5 New Zealand native	39 Beehive covers	DOWN	19 Verdi aria	43 Wings it
10 Carpet feature	42 Groundbreaking tool	1 WWII service acronym	24 Like some endorsements	44 Big name in small trains
14 Wasatch Mountains ski resort	43 Movie DVD special feature, perhaps	2 Jessica of "Sin City"	25 Smart-sounding herbal brew	45 Shred
15 Be among the cast of	47 Kind of box	3 Tasers, say	26 A blast	46 Marquis of note
16 Children's author Blyton	48 Like some	4 Former NPR host Liane	27 Object of extraction	47 Shopaholic's destination
17 Extremely anxious	49 Bunch of, casually	5 Start to practice?	28 Victor at Vicksburg	48 Marquis of note
20 Schoolyard comeback	50 Bud	6 Jim Carrey persona	29 Way out	49 Fraternity characters
21 Naval center?	52 Concern of some shooters	7 Native Nebraskan	33 Protects	50 Bill
22 ___ Janeiro	55 Police department watchdog unit	8 Crawling (with)	36 Spanish Civil War period, with "the"	51 Disgusted, with "up"
23 Category	58 It has a head and body	9 Quaint lodging	37 Long, long time	
25 Onetime partner of Ebert	59 Skip the ceremony, perhaps	10 Disappears forever	38 Identify, slangily	
26 Delegates to a famous Philadelphia convention	60 First name in 1950s TV comedy	11 Implement		
30 Part of a morning service	61 Some Nikon products, for short	12 German art songs		
31 Fascinate				
32 1987 Costner role				

Answer to last week

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

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Jan. 29: This year you break past self-imposed restrictions and feel much better. You have taken your time transforming these views, and it is paying off. You also adjust your financial perspective. If you are single, you could meet someone whom you find to be very exciting, and vice versa. This person is likely to be quite different from those you have dated previously. If you are attached, the two of you opt to be more adventurous. Pisces is often too emotional for you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Use the early morning for any matter that is important to you. By midday, you will become more introspective than you have been in a while. As a result, you might discover that you have a different perspective about a certain matter.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Friends surround you. Know that you need to stick to your original plans. A certain amount of spontaneity will happen naturally. A friend depends on you to come through for them.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
It appears that an older friend or family member needs your attention. A loved one with whom you usually spend your time could feel deprived of your presence.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Keep reaching out to someone you care about. This person might be unusually tired or withdrawn. A conversation will help them reassess their opinions about a certain situation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Others seem to fall into line with ease. Your perspective could

change radically if you decide to relax and go with the moment. Laughter surrounds you once a loved one emerges; they have been withdrawn for a while.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You are capable of making great choices. Nevertheless, a close loved one could decide to run with the ball and make plans for both of you. Even if you would prefer to do something else, go along with whatever they choose. The results will be better.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You have a lot to accomplish. How you proceed and what you decide to do need to remain in your hands, as only you know how much you can handle. You unintentionally might cut someone off mid-conversation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
You might want to head in a certain direction without having to explain every action and decision. Nevertheless, a loved one needs that type of time and consideration.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You might want to do certain activities, but a demanding

domestic situation and a need to have an important conversation could push you in a different direction. Stay open to suggestions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You seem to be in the process of breaking certain patterns, and others are wondering why. Know that you are being quietly observed. Perhaps you have been feeling blue and don't want to open up about it. Process your emotions by yourself, if need be.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Your smile elicits a strong response from others, especially in the morning. The plans you make could cost you more than you originally had thought. Be sensitive to what is occurring, and make it okay to decline an invitation.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You are likely to become unusually resourceful and full of life. Your ability to touch others becomes visible to many people around you. A discussion with a friend or loved one, even while watching or playing a game, will open up your perspective.

Joke' about cookies agitates the baker

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I am a member of a 50-piece wind ensemble. We have a break for cookies

and coffee on practice nights once a week. I have made homemade cookies for our break for more than 25 years.

In May, we have an outdoor concert. I have brought cookies each year for after our performance. This year, one of the newer band members asked me if I had rat poison in them!

I was shocked and asked him to repeat what he said to make sure I heard correctly! His response: "It was just a joke." I don't understand this type of humor. I have continued to make cookies for the band, but I think about his comment each week.

Shall I continue to make cookies for our breaks in 2017? *Shocked on the West Coast*

Shocked on the West Coast: People sometimes make awkward and unkind comments, because another person's generosity makes them uncomfortable. This person immediately tried to reassure you that he was making a "joke." This comment

was not funny, so it can't be called a joke, but I hope you will forgive his graceless reaction to you.

I raise a toast to all of the generous bakers who bring in treats to share with others. It is a very kind, sweet and generous impulse, and sharing these treats helps to bring others together. Don't let this person's sarcasm ruin this sweetness for you — or the rest of your ensemble.

Dear Amy: "Concerned Sister" wrote that her sister-in-law wants to use her surname for the third child (the other two children have the husband's surname). You say, "Rarely, families choose to divide the spouses' surnames between children; and this can cause paperwork hassles and some issues when traveling as a family. . . ."

Twenty-one years ago, my wife and I flipped a coin that determined that our oldest daughter took her last name. Seventeen years ago, our next daughter took my last name. We expected bureaucratic hassles and snide comments. My mother asked me whether the girls were going to be confused about who their father was.

I can say, with great surprise, that we had no problems. Everybody who mattered knew who was related to whom at every step of the way, including during foreign travel. I cannot recall a single issue we had that lasted longer than 10 seconds of pleasant conversation, nor any extra form that we needed to fill out.

I do appreciate your first piece of advice: This is the parents' issue, not an issue for the in-laws, cousins and grandparents.

John D. Faucher

John D. Faucher: I have encountered minor challenges as a parent traveling with a minor child with a different surname (one border guard queried her to determine if I was really her mother — completely understandable). But I agree that this is absolutely manageable.

Amy's column appears seven days a week at washingtonpost.com/advice. Write to askamy@amydickinson.com or Amy Dickinson, Tribune Content Agency, 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, Tex. 75001. You can also follow her @askingamy.

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