

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Snark plugs: Top Amazon reviews

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1244**, we once again asked for funny reviews of particular mundane products listed on Amazon.com. We don't know why a toenail clipper was called a toenail clip, either.

4th place

Revlon toenail clip: This is a great product! Pretty sure I set a new distance record this weekend. I even shot one into the trash can without leaving the couch! (#nailedit!) (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

3rd place

Home Premium 5-Piece Rubber Door Stopper, Brown: Unsafe product!! After bending to set one up on the floor, I straightened up and cracked my skull on the freakin' doorknob! Not recommended!! (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

2nd place and the removable-hair Trump 'Over-Reaction Figure':

Arm & Hammer Clump & Seal Multi-Cat Litter: My kids were begging me all year for pet kitties, so I finally gave in and ordered your multi-cat litter. When the package arrived Christmas Eve, I let them open their gift early. Well, you forgot to put holes in the box — the only thing left of this litter of cats was dust. My kids and I were traumatized beyond belief — after New Year's we're going to counseling. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Reynolds Wrap Aluminum Foil: It really works to block UFO thought control! The proof is in the anagram: WALL UP YOUR MIND FROM ALIENSI (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

Empress also bought: Honorable mentions

REVLON TOENAIL CLIP
They work okay but are too noisy. And it's not just me — everyone else in the restaurant seemed annoyed, too. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

This clip is so much better than barrettes or duct tape for keeping toe hair out of the way when I paint my nails! (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Warning: This model does NOT come with a USB port! (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick, Md.)

DENTEK EXTRA STRONG TRIPLE CLEAN FLOSS PICKS

Three stars: They work just fine for the first floss and were pretty okay for the double floss, but they barely held up for the triple floss on Day 3. (Nick Semanko, Washington)

Like many with a philosophical bent, I like to walk the streets and floss my teeth and think deep thoughts. The smooth action of the DenTek Floss Pick frees my mind. Plus, this pick is indestructible. I know because I see the ones I tossed months ago still on the sidewalk, faded but holding together. Like me. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Unable to review — horse would not hold still. (Dan Steinbrocker, Los Angeles)

Having only three teeth, I was cheered beyond measure by DenTek's sensitivity in meeting the needs of the tri-toothed. It truly brought a tear to my (one) eye. (Rob Huffman, Fredricksburg, Va.)

1 star: Using these picks was quite painful, and I couldn't get a single booger out of my nose. (Stephen Litterst, Newark, Del.)

Worst picks ever — one star (and that's a mercy). That little string kept breaking whenever I strummed my guitar. "Extra strong" my a**!! (Rob Huffman)

PREMIUM 5-PIECE RUBBER DOOR STOPPER, BROWN

Three stars. Product performed well, once I finally got through to customer service and they explained how it works. Instructions should be included. (Andrew Elby, Arlington)

Can't they use a different color? My second-graders refer to them as "brown wedgies" and I think that's just gross. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

I would have opened my doors to the Houston flood victims sooner,



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1248: C'mon, fess up!

"Sometimes when I'm out to dinner with my wife, I'll propose so we get free dessert." — Stephen Colbert
"When someone sends me a save-the-date card, I don't even save the card." — Stephen Colbert
"During boring meetings, I pretend everyone present is naked. And good looking. And female. And a kangaroo." — Art Grinath, winner of Style Invitational Week 633

This week's contest has twin inspirations: The more recent one is Stephen Colbert's "Midnight Confessions" feature on his CBS show, now compiled into a new book by that title published by Simon & Schuster, the source of the first two "confessions" above. But it also harks back to Style Invitational Week 633, when in 2005 the Empress asked the Loser community for "secrets" — fictional or non-. (That contest, in turn, was inspired by the pioneering website PostSecret.com, to which people submitted true confessions — and still do — on *snail mail postcards*.) **This week: Send us a brief "confession" — there will be categories for true and just-kidding** — as in the examples above by Messes Colbert and Grinath. Tell us which category. If you're sharing an anecdote, it shouldn't run much longer than 50 words, but obviously pithy li'l quips are welcome as well. There might even be room for an embarrassing photo, such as when Jeff Brechlin got Week 633 ink by sharing the picture he'd taken of a large, healthy snapping turtle next to which he'd placed a basket containing his infant daughter. (She has survived.)

Submit entries at this website: wapo.st/enter-invite-1248 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our new Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a pair of genuine unfinished pine Dutch-style wooden shoes; they're a bit large for the Empress, who wears a women's size 7. And they weigh more than a pound each; when you're walking down the hallway, people will *know*. Donated by Loser Pie Snelson.
Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship."
Honorable mentions get one of our 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, Oct. 16; results published Nov. 5 (online Nov. 2). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results was submitted by both Chris Doyle and Jesse Frankovich; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Kevin Dopart. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/invdev). "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](https://www.facebook.com/bit.ly/inkofday); follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.



MARK HOLT

The Empress's feet are a bit small for this week's 2nd prize.

but these hadn't arrived yet. — Rev. J. Osteen, Houston (Jesse Frankovich)

ARM & HAMMER CLUMP & SEAL MULTI-CAT LITTER
It says my home will be odor-free for seven days. I plan to have my cats longer than that, so this doesn't work for me. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Saturday nights at the honky-tonk I run can be pretty wild, and I was having to skip church Sunday mornings just to clean up. Then I tried Clump & Seal! Now that spilled blood clumps right quick — and if some juicer uses a corner as a urinal, what's to mind? Arm & Hammer gave my Sundays back to the Lord! (Lawrence McGuire)

You know those Premium Door Stoppers everyone's talking about? They're totally unnecessary if you use Arm & Hammer Clump & Seal Multi-Cat Litter! Just mold those clumps by hand into little wedges, then dry them on the kitchen table until they are rock solid. Eat your heart out, dog owners! (Bill Worner, Indianapolis)

REYNOLDS WRAP ALUMINUM FOIL, 75 SQ. FT

Five stars — best product ever! I just used some hot glue and

pressed carefully, and now my 1965 avocado stove and fridge look just like the stainless-steel stuff on those fancy home-shopping shows. I wish this came in red so I could do the car, too! (Robyn Carlson, Keyser, W.Va.)

Although the box says it can cover 75 square feet, the product is good for wrapping normal-shaped feet, too. (Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.)

Pointless! Who owns a 75-square-foot cookie sheet? (Kyle Hendrickson)

They're betting you'll think 75 square feet is a lot, but at only 0.0000525 feet thick, that's less than four thousandths of a cubic foot! What a rip-off! (Jesse Frankovich)

I try to buy the organic aluminum foil rather than this factory-made stuff, which is low in essential oils. Check out my blog on the forge-to-table movement. (David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

HIGH FIVE POOP EMOJI POOL FLOATER INFLATABLE LOUNGER

This is literally the biggest piece of crap I've ever gotten from Amazon! Five stars!! (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.; Jesse Frankovich)

Highly inaccurate — one look at this poop and you can tell it would be a sinker, not a floater. For reference on what is and is not a floater, I have attached several photos. . . (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

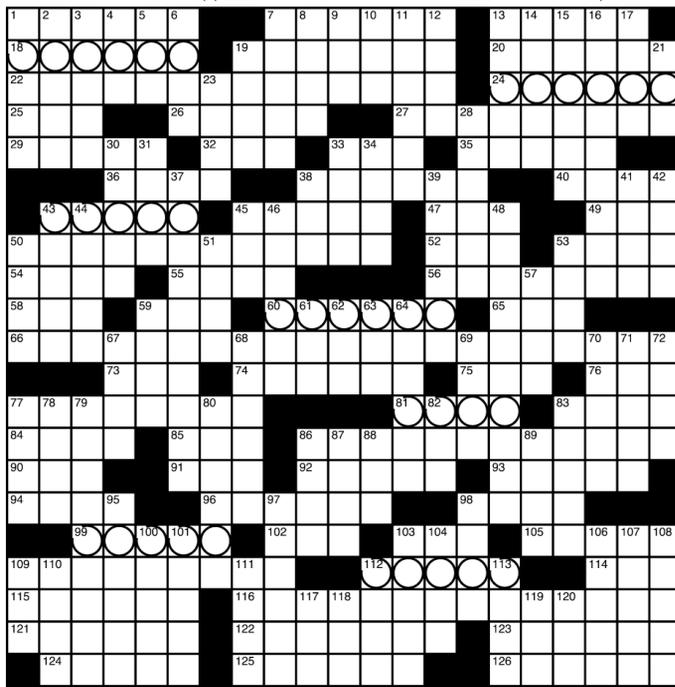
More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1248.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 9: our contest to reinterpret movie titles. See wapo.st/invite1247.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

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|---|----------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| *TOP THIS! By PAUL COULTER | 93 Rwandan people | 3 Weeper of myth | 28 Hook's mate | 61 Ate | 89 Water collection pit |
| ACROSS | 94 Oil acronym | 4 Excluding | 30 Knuckleheads | 62 "Another Green World" musician | 95 "No Country for ..." |
| 1 Seabird related to the booby | 96 Some polytheists | 5 Blowup: Abbr. | 31 Amigo's assent | 63 Oilers, on NHL scoreboards | 97 Adorned |
| 7 Bold & Crispy Fries maker | 98 "Coriolanus" setting | 6 Chinese menu | 33 Garr of "Mr. Mom" | 64 Seems suspicious | 98 One of nine Clue cards |
| 13 Rural "reckon" | 99 "Drab" color | 7 Catchall category | 34 Impertinent sort | 67 Nerd | 100 Bridge |
| 18 "Know one's ...": master a subject | 102 Deli bread | 8 P's on frat jackets | 37 Dispenser made obsolete by the shaker | 68 Horse-drawn vehicle | 101 Windows XP successor |
| 19 It's intoxicating | 103 Saigon soup | 9 Dig in, so to speak | 38 Cry from Homer | 69 Parisian lover's word | 103 Cider maker |
| 20 Willow twigs | 105 High-quality | 10 Lake Mich. | 39 Winner's cry state | 70 Fretted instruments | 104 Recipe verb |
| 22 It's not a teeny wienie | 114 Reverse pic | 11 He played | 41 Cat pal of Otis | 71 Hawaiian island | 106 Many a Sundance film |
| 24 Gusto | 115 Serious plays | 12 Pond growth | 42 Caught in the act | 72 Hunt for | 107 Stands for |
| 25 Place to put down stakes?: Abbr. | 116 Dessert with syrup | 13 TV's Hercules | 43 Absorb | 77 Carpeting calculation | 108 Discharge |
| 26 Learned ones | 121 Take back to the lab | 14 Pretentious sort | 44 Its capital is Oranjestad | 78 Juicy fruit | 109 USN officer |
| 27 Cookout | 122 Stretched to the limit | 15 Offshore equipment | 45 "Spy vs. Spy" magazine | 79 Sain't ... | 110 City near Provo |
| 29 Marsh growths | 123 Gets in shape | 16 Feudal lords | 46 Mimosa family tree | 80 French Riviera resort | 111 Pasta choice |
| 32 For, to | 124 Bright circle? | 17 Language that gave us "plaid" | 48 Eligible for | 81 Martinique, par exemple | 112 Baseball's Hershiser |
| 33 Chain that does searches | 125 Worthy principles | 19 "The one who makes it, takes it" breakfast brand | 50 Eighty-six | 82 Complete Aussie greeting | 113 Retired filers resort |
| 35 "The Kiss" sculptor | 126 Least ingenuous | 21 Nasdaq unit: Abbr. | 51 At the back of the pack | 83 Mathematician | 114 Raleigh dir. letters |
| 36 Seine feeder | DOWN | 23 Pickup place? | 53 Aunt with a "Cope Book" | 84 Descartes | 115 Civil War address |
| 38 Chain that sells Grand Slam breakfasts | 1 Enjoy | | 57 Drops off "Better Call Saul" | 88 Election winners | 116 Modern address |
| 40 Masterpieces | 2 Make ___ of: write down | | | | 117 Stubborn sailor's response |
| 43 Lively Cuban dance | | | | | |
| 45 New Zealand native | | | | | |
| 47 The Beatles' ___ Mine | | | | | |
| 49 One-eighty | | | | | |
| 50 Crunchy snack favorite | | | | | |
| 52 Confident solver's choice | | | | | |
| 53 Gardner of mystery | | | | | |
| 54 Major work | | | | | |
| 55 "Et voilà!" | | | | | |
| 56 Three-time NFL rushing yards leader | | | | | |
| 58 Hero | | | | | |
| 59 Some sodas | | | | | |
| 60 Big ___ | | | | | |
| 65 "Big Blue" | | | | | |
| 66 Trattoria selection | | | | | |
| 73 Unagi or anago | | | | | |
| 74 Antenna housing | | | | | |
| 75 Parisian pronoun | | | | | |
| 76 Federation in OPEC | | | | | |
| 77 Please | | | | | |
| 81 Green shade | | | | | |
| 83 Magazine founder | | | | | |
| 84 Stink | | | | | |
| 85 "Exodus" hero | | | | | |
| 86 Beef on the patio | | | | | |
| 90 Canal locale | | | | | |
| 91 Seoul soldier | | | | | |
| 92 Closely packed | | | | | |



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Oct. 8: This year, you express a preference to relate more deeply to others on a one-on-one level. If you are single, you quickly will be able to tell whether someone is serious about you. You could meet the right person this year. If you are attached, the two of you sometimes have difficulty saying what you want. Try to get over these periods, as it is important to communicate your needs. Gemini can give you a lesson in getting past your shyness.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You might be withdrawn or tired. Someone at a distance could be difficult or depressed and hold you up. You'll feel obligated to help this person work through their mood. Once you free yourself up, go and enjoy yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Your smile seems to save the moment, if not the day. You might prefer to have a conversation rather than a quarrel. Know that a solution can be found, especially one relating to a personal issue.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You could feel off when you wake up. You are very likely to roll over and give in to more sleep. Resting up and relaxing will prove to be a wise decision. Late today, you might get a sneak peek of what the next few days offer.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You might push for a change of pace or decide to do something very different. You will enjoy yourself no matter what you do. Don't allow a conversation to become heated. Give the other party space, and respect their opinions.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Understand that your sense of direction might be necessary to complete plans. Check in with an older relative or friend. A responsibility calls, and you cannot avoid responding. A child might feel neglected.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Reach out to others. Refuse to stand on ceremony with someone. Once you distance yourself from the situation, you'll gain a new perspective on where the other party is coming from.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You might find it difficult to get going or join a group of friends.

Even if you need to change your plans, make this day about spending time with a loved one without having disruptions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
You need to make an effort to touch base with key family members and loved ones. Gather everyone together for an early dinner or movie. You might feel a bit financially strapped, or as if you would like to have others contribute to the cost. Just ask.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You could feel down or a little uptight. As a result, you might prefer to go off by yourself, spend some time at the gym or get into a favorite pastime. A friend will make a point of seeking you out; make plans to visit this person soon.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You could feel as if you are forgetting your priorities, as you might be so entertained by a child or new friend. Someone at a distance seeks you out, and this person might be irked that they have not heard from you. Be smart and apologize.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You could be in a situation where you want to see more of a loved one who usually is not available or around. Make time for this person, even if it means changing your plans or disappointing someone else.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
A phone call gives you a lot to consider. A loved one might be difficult at best. This person might want to go out and do something adventurous. Go with the flow and embrace the moment.

Answers to last week's puzzle.

