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DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Word Series MVPs: Winning chains

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1299 we posted a list of words that were recently added to Merriam-Webster's Scrabble dictionary and asked the Losers to take any two of the words and create a word chain to link them, by meaning, similar sounds or both. Hildy Zampella's elegantly pithy "LISTICLE > testicle > NUTJOB" made the Empress wish she hadn't stated a minimum of six words in the chain.

Baffled by some of the connections? You can click on explanatory links in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1303.

4th place

OK> Oklahoma > Cherokee > Indian nickel > Ni > Knights Who Say Ni > Monty Python > king cobra > Stephen King > "Carrie" > John le Carré > Smiley > frowny (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

3rd place

Bestie > old chum > shark bait > American Bar Association > "I like beer" > Dos Equis > XX > "Twenty Ways to Please Your Man" > **listicle** (Mark Raffman, Reston)

2nd place and the real snapping-turtle skull:

Sho (old Tibetan currency) > "Show me the money!" > Tom Cruise > "Risky Business" > Paul Manafort > singing > Aretha > urethra > golden shower > **ew**! (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Zen > Buddhist > Christian >
Fletcher Christian > Mutiny on the
Bounty > paper towels > Hurricane
Maria > "Wind in the Willows" > Mr.
Toad's Wild Ride > Stormy Daniels
> substorm (Kevin Dopart,
Washington)

Second strings: Honorable mentions

Captcha > "I'm not a robot" > Marco Rubio > bottled water > Aquafina > **aquafaba** (Jesse Frankovich)

Captcha > "not a robot" > Turing Test > Alan Turing > "The Imitation Game" > Rich Little > Notorious B.I.G > Notorious RBG > RBF > frowny (Pam Sweeney, Burlington,

Sheeple > must have \$1,099 iPhone XS > I phone exes > "I Want You Back" > Jackson Five > Michael Jackson > "Thriller" > zomboid (Luke Baker, Columbia)

Hivemind > the Borg > Bjorn Borg > Björn Again > John 3:3 > Papa John's > **papasan** > Comfy Chair > Monty Python > "The Full Monty" > **twerk** (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Farro (a grain) > wheat > Wil Wheaton > Star Trek > Patrick Stewart > Saint Patrick > St. Louis > Arch > Archibald Cox > Watergate > Deep Throat > "Deep Throat" > nutjob (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

Puggle (pug-beagle) > boxer > Oscar De La Hoya > Georgetown Prep > Brett Kavanaugh> boys will be boys > Green Mountain Boys > Vermont > Ben & Jerry's > Cherry Garcia > the Grateful Dead > Phish > rootkit (computer hacking tools) (Chris Doyle)

Puggle > snuggle > foreplay > fourply > Cottonelle > president's foot > **cankles** (fat ankles) (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

Listicle > Popsicle > "Pop Goes the Weasel" > slimeball > spit > vice presidency > Pence > sterling > starling > cuckoo > truther (Ellen Ryan, Rockville)

Bizjet > airplane > "Don't call me Shirley" > Shirley Temple > Good Ship Lollipop > Pudding Pops > Bill Cosby > 3 to 10 > "3:10 to Yuma" > Jeff Flake > snowflake > Snow White > Grumpy > **frowny** (Kevin

Sriracha > Tabasco > Louisiana > New Orleans > Mardi Gras > "Girls Gone Wild" > spring break > Springsteen > "Born in the USA" > born again > Mike Pence > lap dog > puggle (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Vape > inhale > Bill Clinton >
Hillary Clinton > server > Serena
Williams > Robin Williams >
standup > Viagra > yowza (Tom
Witte, Montgomery Village)

Mulloway (a kind of fish) > jewfish > gefilte fish > carp > carpe diem > seize the day > search and seizure > Julius Caesar > Veni Vidi Vici > Gaul > Macron > macaron (Mark



New contest for Week 1303: Neologisms to di-for

Skinchilla: The least warm fur stole ever.

Bling shift: The time between the end of your day job and closing time at the club.

Crone fruit: Pitted prunes.

Here's a brand-new contest idea from Hall of Fame Loser Jeff Contompasis. Jeff was seeing a commercial for the show "Trading Spaces" but, as someone who has occasional incidents of dyslexia, kept reading the logo as "Spading Traces." And so, as a True Loser, he suggested a contest with digraphs — blends of two letters, either vowels or consonants, that make one simultaneous sound. This week: Replace a digraph in an existing word or phrase with another digraph to make a new term, as in Jeff's own examples above, and describe the result. It'll probably be funnier if the original term is recognizable, and a funny sentence showing how the word might be used is always welcome. While there are various technical definitions of "digraph," ours will be of two adjacent letters, and include silent letters.

Submit entries at the website **wapo.st/enter-invite-1303** (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy.

Second place receives our Deluxe Culinary Gift Pack courtesy of Loser Connie Schott of West Plains, Mo.: There's an apron emblazoned with the "Squirrel Pot Pie" logo of the Ozark Heritage Festival, from right in West Plains, and — nope, sorry, no squirrel pot pie, but the next best thing: two big sticks of Roadkill, which is like a Slim Jim but instead of beef and chicken, its ingredients include "venison, elk, wild boar (meat from feral swine) . . . pheasant, rabbit . . ." Perhaps it's a diet like this that accounts for the disproportionate presence of three denizens of West Plains (population 12,000) among the Loser Community, accounting for 240 blots of Style Invitational ink, including 10 wins. I'm thinking it's the elk.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship" (or perhaps a new design). Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "We've Seen Better" or "IDiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Nov. 5; results published Nov. 25 (online Wednesday, Nov. 21). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; Dave Prevar and Tom Witte each submitted this week's honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" 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.



Direct from the Ozarks, only part of this week's second prize.Raffman)

Wayback > WABAC machine > Mr. Peabody > Sherman > tanks > you're welcome > Willkommen > "Cabaret" > cabernet > France > macaron (Jeff Contompasis,

Conlang (an invented language) > High Valyrian > "GoT" > Got Milk? > spilled milk > no use crying > "No Woman, No Cry" > reggae > Rasta > ganja > wacky tobacky > vape (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

Farro > wheat > Wheaties >
Special K > 401(k) > ESOP > Aesop
> "The Tortoise and the Hare" >
"Yertle the Turtle" > Mitch
McConnell > Elaine Chao > chow
chow > puggle (Chris Doyle)

Zen > koan > Cohen > "the fixer" > "The Fixer" > Malamud > malamute > sled > Kane > mutiny > Bounty > paper towels > Puerto Rico > facepalm (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Pizzazz > ZZ Top > James Beard > Julia Child > Meryl Streep > Abba >

Waterloo > **beatdown** (William Pifer-Foote, Carmichael, Calif.)

Chyron > crawl > creep > rake > leaves > "Free Fallin' "> Tom Petty > Heartbreakers > jawbreakers > Jolly Rancher > Jolly Roger > Pirate > stolen treasure > bitcoin (Hildy Zampella, Alexandria)

Emoji > emotion > jealousy > Othello > checkers > exchequer > Brexit > EU > **ew** (Jim Blue, Gaithersburg)

Aquafaba (water in which beans were boiled) > chickpeas > chicks pee > "the dossier" > Christopher Steele > Bethlehem Steel > "Away in a Manger" > Mangia bene > arancini (Italian rice balls) (Mark Raffman)

Sriracha > red beans > sriracha > red beans > sriracha, sriracha > red beans > sriracha, sriracha, sriracha, sriracha > red beans > yowza (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

Farro > pharaoh > Moses > Bush > Katrina > the Big Easy > Your Mama > cankles (Jesse Frankovich)

Truther > whatever > whatever > whatever > whatever > **nutjob** (Mark Raffman)

Schneid (losing streak) > losers > Style Invitational > Empress > impress > flattery > flatter the E > "The best E!" > bestie (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite: **wapo.st/invite1303.**

Still running – deadline Monday night, Oct. 29: Our perennial Ask Backwards contest. See wapo.st/invite1302.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Oct. 28: This year, you tend to go from intellectual reasoning to emotional intensity when facing a problem. Observe which trait is more effective. If you are single, you meet a variety of people to whom you can relate on different levels. An intense bond evolves this year. If you are attached, the two of you often introduce yourselves to a new interest or hobby. Do not ignore your emotional depth or that of your partner. Cancer supports and understands your sensitivity.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You have the energy and
determination to follow through on
what is important. However, you
cannot predict the unpredictable.
You might find a swift change to be
refreshing and full of possibilities.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Be more forthcoming and direct about what you are thinking regarding a financial matter. Resist copping an attitude if dealing with a difficult person. You might negate any possibility of coming to a compromise.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You are full of energy and ideas.
Plans and get-togethers get a shot of vitality just from your participation. You could hear something that shocks you. Do your best to absorb what has happened. You will see the event in a different light, given some time.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Examine what is going on in your mind. You could be replaying a recent happening in your head. Get to the bottom of an inner dialogue. Your fiery side emerges. Make plans to join a loved one for a movie or some other distraction.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You might want to take a timeout.
You need breaks and a change of pace from time to time, and only you know what that looks like. A parent or an older friend surprises you with their reaction. You might not want to say anything.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Reach out to someone you care a lot about. This person often reminds you that you are supported. Understand what is needed to make them feel good without having to go overboard.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Consider extending an invitation to someone to join you at a concert, art show or some other activity you both enjoy. The unexpected occurs with your finances. A partner might spend money on an item that you might not agree with.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Defer to a close associate who has become unpredictable as of late.
You can't seem to determine what the reason for this is, but just remain as steady as possible and call on your sense of humor.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Defer to others and make the most of the moment. A close friend or loved one expresses delight at having the pleasure of your company. Try a new cuisine or activity together, and you'll both be pleased. Remember, taking risks helps you live well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Reaching out to a close loved one could be frustrating at first. For now, pursue a favorite pastime. Catch up on a favorite TV series if you can. Later in the day, this person is likely to be more open and receptive to your feedback.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Distractions appear early in the day. Throw yourself into the moment. Make the most of a special bond with a friend. As the day progresses, a streak of practicality appears. Consider making time for a project, but do not lose sight of this special moment.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Spend some time at home. Read the Sunday paper and dedicate some time to close family. Let the day unfold, and watch as a sense of closeness emerges. You could hear news that confuses you. Just remember what you have been told.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



10/21/18