DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Four toon kookies: Winning captions

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1368 was yet another chance to make some sense, or at least semi-sense, out of cartoonist Bob Staake's inspired nonsense with captions for four pictures. Lots of people went for plays on "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs" for Picture A; timeshare salesmanship for C; and Emperors' New Clothes (guess whose?) for D. **Special big-deal note!** With his four blots of ink in last week's results, **(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)** reached the 500-ink mark to became the 14th member of the Style Invitational Hall of Fame, according to the standings meticulously kept by Loser Elden Carnahan at nrars.org. The FDIC lawyer/Ultimate player/improv comedian/choir singer/runner/dad of two younguns got his first couple of inks in 2012, but almost all the rest come from just the past few years; it's a rare week when his name doesn't show up at least twice in the Invite — including 14 wins and 40 runners-up. Read more about Duncan, including a sample of his favorite entries, in this week's Style Conversational at wapo.st/invite1372.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

PICTURE A

The winner of the Lose Cannon: Jan had reached an age where she just wished her periods would go away. *(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)*

At least King Kong was wearing his boxers when he backed up to Matilda's window. *(Jack McCombs, Fairfax)*

The smoke billowing from upstairs didn't upset Dora half as much as seeing that her husband had hung the curtains outside. *(Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)*

It was the third time this month that the elusive "HH" had tagged her windows. *(Stephen Dudzik, Olney)*

As she was getting on in years, Gertrude suspected that she might have gone dotty. *(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)*

Whenever Shirley wore her T-Bone Steak Perfume, all the dogs in the neighborhood pressed their noses to the window. *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

Edna spends another sleepless night in dread of the Purple-People Eater. *(Kathleen Delano, Arlington, a First Offender)*

It wasn't what she imagined it would be. But as evening fell, Cruella DeVil settled in for her first night in hell. *(Hildy Zampella, Alexandria)*

After Connie rubbed her little lamp and made a wish to get ink, she realized she should have specified: ". . . in the Style Invitational." *(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)*

PICTURE B

Oh dear, I must have mixed up the grandbaby with the recycling. Nancy will be so upset." *(Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)*

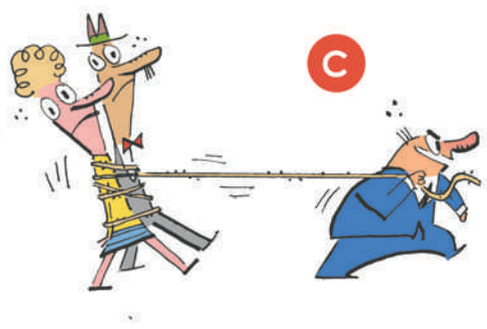
"Harold, I think our ride to hell is here." *(John Kupiec, Fairfax; Bird Waring)*

"Damn, I knew it was a mistake to put all our eggs in there." *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)*

Ralph Ellison's origin story is not widely known. *(Kevin Dopart, Washington)*

"Hmm, the basket's empty. Maybe it's a lostling." *(Bruce Niedt, Cherry Hill, N.J.)*

"Hey, I left a red ball labeled 'B' in that basket, and now it's gone." *(Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.)*



PICTURE C

Second place and the card game Fart!: The thankless job of the congressional whip is supplemented high on the Hill by the lonely voteherd. *(Jeff Contompasis)*

Third place: "She said she wanted to see other people, so I'm bringing her you guys." *(Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)*

"HOV lane, here I come!" *(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)*

"No one leaves this dealership before I go a mile to put a smile on your face!" *(Martin Bancroft)*

"Yep, this is how we handle shoplifters here on Rodeo Drive." *(Larry Yungk, Wyoming, Ohio)*

Following the impeachment, Mitt and Susan are forced to practice goose-stepping as part of their re-indoctrination. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond)*

"All right, you two, let's give those Date Lab readers a happy ending, okay?" *(Kerry Humphrey, Arlington)*

"I knew you'd get in trouble for stealing Art Garfunkel's toupee." *(Barbara Turner)*

PICTURE D

Fourth place: The Last Pillar of Democracy was the final exhibit at the Newseum. *(Stephen Dudzik; Ellen Ryan, Rockville)*

"So what if it's been stolen? Let's just get another banana — who'll know the difference?" *(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)*

The Trump Library displays the partially finished "Two Corinthians." *(J. Larry Schott, West Plains, Mo.)*

"We thought it best to remove the 'Spirit of Justice,' as its presence might be perceived as critical of certain people." *(Steve Smith, Potomac)*

Ancient Greek spreadsheets only had one column. *(J. Larry Schott)*

Art lovers were stunned at the brilliance of "Exhibit Closed for Cleaning." *(Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)*

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1372.

Still running — deadline Monday, Feb 24: our contest to make new words from given ScrabbleGrams racks. See wapo.st/invite1371.

New contest for Week 1372: Trash talking, 1880-style

They say of me, the Awesome Trump,
The Constitution's what I'll dump.
I'm sure there'll be no lasting harm in
Storing it beside the Charmin.

This week's contest was suggested by Longtime Loser Matt Monitto, who told the Empress about a form of doggerel called Balliol rhyme, named for the Oxford college where seven campus cutups in 1880 published "The Masque of B-ll--l," a set of 40 trash-talking quatrains about various academics and politicians, including the head of the school, Benjamin Jowett:

First come I. My name is J-W-TT.
There's no knowledge but I know it.
I am Master of this College,
What I don't know isn't knowledge.

Balliol authorities seemed not to find this amusing, even with the coy little hyphens. We, however, see 2020 potential. **This week: Write a quatrain or — heck — two of Balliol rhyme about some person. The rough rules:**

Each verse is four short lines, rhyming AA/BB, with four accented syllables in each line, as in Matt's example above as well as the original. They're in first person, in the voice of the person being mocked. Most use the name of the person in Line 1, but others use other lines — and you may omit the name entirely and instead put it in a title. We probably won't use the hyphens.

Submit up to a total of 25 entries at ***wapo.st/enter-invite-1372*** (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, March 2; results will appear March 22 in print, March 19 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a genuine **Bodily Fluid Clean-Up Kit,** a box including a disposable apron, mask, gloves and booties, along with a scoop and scraper, absorbent stuff, and various wipes and bags. I'm not going to say that all this is *required* when you write some really bad-taste entries that you need to get rid of immediately, but could it hurt? Donated by Registered Nurse Loser Marleen May.

Other runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mugs or our "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Too-Weak Notice" or "Certificate of (de) Merit." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at *wapo.st/InvRules*. The headline "4 Toon Kookies" is by Jon Gearhart. 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 reviews each new contest and set of results. Check it out at ***wapo.st/conv1372.***

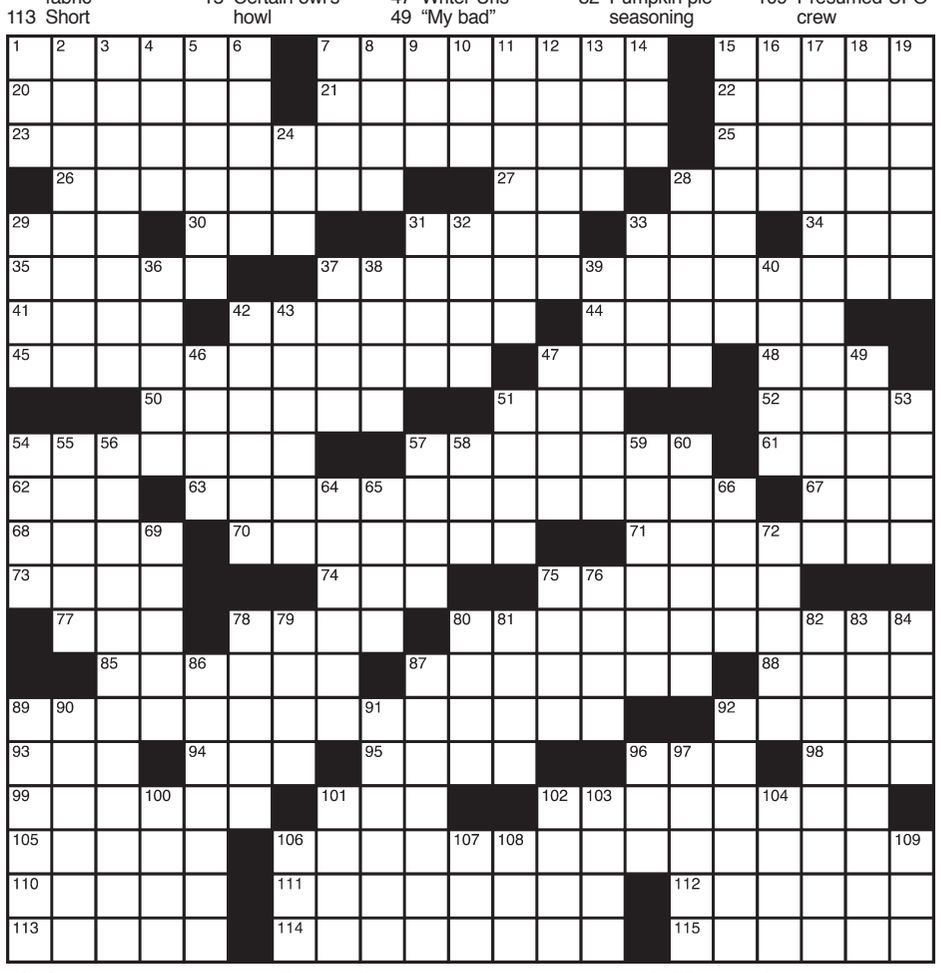
L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWS

"HERD MENTALITY" By JOHN-CLARK LEVIN

ACROSS
1 Small Mercedes sedan
7 Golf match equalizer
15 Less risky
20 Lighthearted
21 Cheerio relative
22 Yearn for
23 Ants in the British colonies?
25 Drove at Indy
26 Tentative agreement
27 Baton Rouge-to-Jackson dir.
28 "Great" Russian czar
29 Sun Devils' sch.
30 Updike's "Rabbit Redux," e.g.: Abbr.
31 Tennis immortal
33 Dull opening?
34 Gp. with a three-finger salute
35 Listing
37 Fish attending Mass?
41 Baroque painter Guido
42 Elvis sings it in "Blue Hawaii"
44 Sarcastic "So sad"
45 Lions marching event?
47 Cataract surgery replacement
48 Green-lights
50 Edmond __: the Count of Monte Cristo
51 Large body of eau
52 Fiscal execs
54 Pope's jurisdiction
57 Reason for a star
61 Juno, to Socrates
62 Punk subgenre
63 Whales' sorely lacking veggie supply?
67 Goof
68 Pringles alternative
70 Nestlé candy with a white covering
71 "Shoulda listened to me!"
73 Cool, in '90s slang
74 LAPD unit?
75 Madame's Spanish counterpart
77 Pale __
78 Dilute
80 Wolves from Lower Manhattan?
85 Things to avoid
87 Rangers' domains
88 Wild plum
89 Bats living in an old Chrysler?
92 Whoopi's role in "The Color Purple"
93 VCR button
94 Degree in math
95 Tinged
96 Texter's qualifier
98 NBC show since 1975
99 Gives the slip
101 Be on duty at, as a battle station
102 Aids in DNA sequencing research
105 Fathered
106 Crows sailing from Ethiopia to Egypt?
110 Orson Scott Card protagonist __ Wiggin
111 Documented
112 Swimwear fabric
113 Short
114 Closed ecosystems
115 Net worth component

DOWN
1 "black-ish" airer
2 Symbol of monastic life
3 Alfredo __, "Ratatouille" character named for a pasta
4 Alaskan island invaded by Japan in WWII
5 Least likely to mingle
6 Connotation
7 Brinker on skates
8 Start to correct?
9 Gun lobby org.
10 __ Taco
11 Scott classic
12 "Race Matters" author West
13 Lyon lover's word
14 Ask invasively
15 Certain owl's howl
16 "How now? __?": Hamlet
17 News source for millions
18 "Be it __ humble ... ": song lyric
19 Phone button
24 Law firm abbr.
28 Baja bar tender?
29 __ The Magazine
31 Just barely
32 Oxford, but not Cambridge
33 Mousetrap brand
36 1970s Plumber
37 Exercise target
38 Shouts of discovery
39 Madrid-based airline
40 Moonshine
42 Reuters apps alternative
43 Tardy with
46 Down __: Maine nickname
47 Writer Uris
49 "My bad"
51 ER scans
53 "Love Song" singer Bareilles
54 Beatles album with a bang
55 The Wizard of Oz's hometown
56 Rewards for regulars
57 Lukas of "Witness"
58 Debatable "gift"
59 Small piano
60 General __
64 Refinement
65 Aspiring MBA's major
66 Fishing boat
69 Boiling sign
72 What a subscription renewal prevents
75 WWII weapon
76 Crafts website
78 Hypes
79 Frozen planet in "The Empire Strikes Back"
80 Tree trunk
81 J.Lo's fiancé
82 Pumpkin pie seasoning
83 Vending machine feature
84 Underwater projection
86 Not even moist
87 Based
89 Car radio button
90 Adam of Maroon 5
91 Mexican horseman
92 Rising stars
96 QB's pass to a CB, say
97 L.A. Philharmonic Conductor Emeritus
100 Tick-ing bomb?
101 City bond, briefly
102 "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power" author
103 Results
104 Spanish cordial
106 Rabble
107 "The Name of the Rose" author
108 __-com
109 Presumed UFO crew



2/23/20 xwordeditor@aol.com ©2020 Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Feb. 23: This year, you open up to myriad opportunities. They keep coming, forcing you to stop and make some key life decisions. If single, several potential sweeties knock on your door. See who and what works for you. If attached, you and your significant other make a decision that heralds a change of pace — if nothing else. Caring increases between the two of you. Pisces helps heal you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You suddenly reverse gears and feel as if you need to relax and take a step back. Honor your needs. You have had so much activity around you that slowing down will be a pleasure for you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Stay in contact with your needs and refuse to be pushed. How you handle a personal matter could change. Investigate and you might find that what you thought was happening is actually a whole different story.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You often feel pressured to act in a certain manner and handle problems directly. Look within instead of acting. You might not feel comfortable with what another party asks for. Say so.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You have a way of dealing with problems that confuses others. You feel your way through problems. Though you might believe you appear logical, your instincts play a major role in your decisions at present.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
How you see a loved one could be a lot different from in your past. One-on-one relating takes a lot of your time. How you deal with another party might change substantially once you make a key decision.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Your ability to move a project forward could force you to rethink a problem and get to the bottom of what is happening. A key person, loved one or relative invites you to join them. The only answer is yes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You might consider slowing down and completing a project that has been on the back burner. How you deal with a child, as well as a situation surrounding a loved one, might radically change.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
You might want to consider your options with greater care. Once you open up and share what is happening, you could be stunned by another person's perspective.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Settle in and get to the bottom of a problem on the home front. For some, it might be as simple as raking the lawn. For others, making the decision to move might be the issue. You know what you ultimately want.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Your sensitivity to a conversation and certain people runs high. Try not to be too callous with this matter to cover up your feelings. Be as authentic as you can.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You have the ability to move past a problem. You make your own decisions and are not easily pushed in one direction or another. Use caution with any decision involving finances.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
When you move past self-imposed restrictions, you could be delighted with the results. Your sense of humor emerges. A loved one or dear friend plays a role in a decision.

Answers to last week's puzzle.

H	A	V	E	N	S		A	S	H	E		C	R	O		C	A	R	E	D
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2/16/20