

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Slam lamb: Winning ‘Balliol rhymes’

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1372** we asked for modern-day “Balliol rhymes” — little first-person verses (just four lines, four beats a line) published by campus wags at Oxford’s Balliol College in 1880, mocking various muck-a-mucks.

4th place:

Coronavirus goes, well, viral, And stocks are falling in a spiral. Trump needs a guy to blame, and hence, I’m now the Virus Czar, **Mike Pence**.
(Francesca Kelly, Highland Park, Ill.)

3rd place:

Inmate #06581138Z
I miss my old familiar bed With cringing nymphs. Instead, I dread This bunk where *Cimex* lay their larvae. What a crime. I’m **Weinstein (Harvey)**.
(Alex Steelsmith, Kailua, Hawaii)

2nd place and the Bodily Fluid Cleanup Kit:

Folks often ask me, “**Mitch McConnell**, Why hold the same dumb views that Don’t?” Why not decry the bunk he’s uttered?” Well, duh! I know where my bread’s buttered.
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

I’m the slippery **Gordon Sondland**; Bought my way into Fake-Blond-Land. Spilled the beans, then got the sack — I want my million dollars back.
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Missed the mock: Honorable mentions

Chris Matthews, I, whose latest gaffe Became my “Hardball” epitaph. My Bernie crack was all in fun: I did Nazi what I had done.
(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

Barr here. When I pick up the phone, And hear, “Hey, Bill, ease up on Stone!” Do we pull levers here at Justice? Gosh, no! We’re totes impartial! Trust us!
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

I’m **Trump** the Great! Still they demean My genius with covid-19! Dunno why everybody chides; There are good life-forms on both sides.
(Nan Reiner)

I, **John Bolton**, hid too long; I timed my coward’s silence wrong. If they would let me speak what’s true, I’d say that Trump [REDACTED] too!
(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)

“Unfair!” says **Amy Klobuchar**. “My record shows that I’m a star! So how could I have met defeat From such a twerp as Mayor Pete?”
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

My name is **Mitt, or Willard Romney**; Though, once I was my party’s nom’nee, Last month I flexed my spinal bone And now I eat my lunch alone.
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

A tenured Pat, my name’s **Tom Brady**; Foes have oft yclept me shady. Should my post I abdicate, New England hearts will fast deflate.
(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

Giannis Antetokounmpo The Greek Freak, Giannis is my name And basketball’s my favorite game. Why do I play? For team? For pay? It’s for the Bucks whichever way.
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

Gun control, a border wall, Green New Deal, and a football: Four things that can’t pass in D.C. I’m **Dwayne Haskins**, your QB.
(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington)

My name is **Lady Liberty**. I welcome you, if you should be With bulging purse, and you’re from Norway. Otherwise, back out the doorway.
(Nan Reiner)

Democratic National Committee In the Democratic fashion, We’re for every creed and passion. Woke, diverse and so enlightened Through our candidates have whitened . . .
(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1376: Get thee to a funnery

Hotspur from “Henry IV, Part I”: This sickness doth infect the very lifeblood of our enterprise. *Donald Trump:* Maybe it’ll disappear by April. *Everyone says I know a lot about this stuff.*

Leontes from “A Winter’s Tale”: Mine honest friend, will you take eggs for money? *Gwyneth Paltrow:* Sure! Guess what I can do with them!

The Style Invitational: Providing Diversion to the Socially Distant since 1993. Greetings to the Loser Community from Mount Vermin, the Empress’s palace, where nobody’s (yet) shut down the mass gathering of Invite entries. So bring them on from your various personal bunkers. Do wipe down your keyboards so as not to poison my laptop. Thank you.

This week’s contest: **Add a character (or more) to a Shakespeare play and supply some resulting dialogue**, as in the examples above from Duncan Stevens, Thane of Loserdorn, who suggested the contest. They can be more than one line, but don’t write a whole scene or anything. You can find the whole oeuvre online at opencourteshakespeare.org.

Submit up to a total of 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1376 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, March 30; results will appear April 19 in print, April 16 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives (as we begin to reach back into the Style Invitational Prize Hoard) **Rocket Launcher** (“Play while you sit”), a setup in which you tap a pedal that shoots a foam projectile toward a target you hang on a door. The illustration on the box shows a joyful man in mule slippers using it while sitting on the toilet, which is why, I guess, the game includes a “Do Not Disturb” sign, though, um, do you really need to post such a warning on a closed bathroom door?

Other runners-up win their choice of our “For Best Results, Pour Into Top End” Loser Mug or our “Whole Fools” Grocery 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 “Slam lamb” is by Kevin Dopart; both Jesse Frankovich and Jon Gearhart submitted the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/invdev). “Like” the 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 reviews each new contest and set of results. Check it out at wapo.st/conc1376; this week, Shakespearean humor from various Invite contests over the years. (Hey, the “Vite just celebrated its 27th birthday, by the way. Please sing for us as you wash your hands.)



My Trump-love’s now platonicker. I’ll win my Senate primary If all the elves come out for me.
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

My name is **Rod Blagojevich**. I admit it: I was nojevich I’d never get a pardon. Odd, But one spoiled child just spared a Rod! (John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)

I’m **Marie Kondo**, and I’m fond o’ Reduction. Why four beats per line, If two work fine?
(Frank Osen)

I am **Jeff**, a man of wealth, A specimen of strength and health. I spread my grace from coast to coast (Disclaimer: Jeffrey owns The Washington Post) (Rob Cohen, Potomac)

I am **the Empress**, of this Earth, The self-styled judge of what has worth. ‘Tis I who finds the pearls of wit Amongst the steaming piles of bad poetry.
(Combining entries from Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass., and Perry Beider, Silver Spring)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1376.

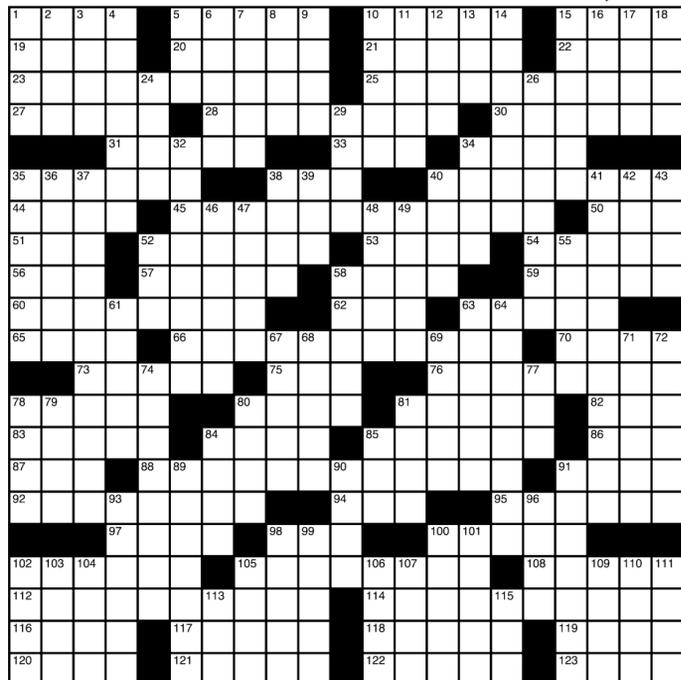
Still running — deadline Monday, March 23: — Bank headlines from our Mess With Our Heads contest. See wapo.st/invite1375.

— Plus videos for our homage to “Epic Rap Battles of History.” See wapo.st/invite1374.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- “COMPONENTS LACKING” By GAIL GRABOWSKI**
- ACROSS**
1 Thin coating
5 Square things
10 Hi-tech training site
15 City on the Aare
19 Palm native to South American swampland
20 Precept
21 Family name in Civil War fiction
22 Golfer Aoki
23 Roadway closed for repairs?
25 Sturdy piece of lumber?
27 “Not interested” feeling
28 Maintain control (over)
30 Oater orphans
31 Online biz
33 Quirky
34 Prop for Mr. Monopoly
35 Hot Wheels maker
38 “Nixon in China” tenor role
40 Showed up for
44 Omits an attachment, say
45 TV show about Amtrak services?
50 “Dumbo” actress Green
51 Stephen of “Counterpart”
52 Had a stable baby
53 Insignia automaker
54 Presentation prop
56 — 5000: annual list of the fastest-growing privately held companies
57 “Stranger Things” actor
58 Despicable sort
59 Surface
60 Pay attention
62 Cold War st.
63 Pequod co-owner
65 HR dept. data
66 Cornfield maze, e.g.
70 Agitated state
73 Apply to
75 Mdse. category
76 “Right this way”
78 Boiling words
80 PepsiCo-owned chip brand
81 Command to start playing
82 Choose
83 Plane part
84 Carson’s successor
- 85 “I won’t miss it”
86 Put a nick in
87 Chemistry suffix
88 Free-for-all debate?
91 Mother of Ares
92 Rutted route
94 “You’re a fine ___ to talk”
95 Triathlon segments
97 Address bar letters
98 Played for a sap
100 Guitar-making hardwood
102 V8 veggie
105 Preempts the following show, perhaps
108 Ford named for a legendary flier, briefly
112 Unarmed spy?
114 Sidewalk vendor’s supply letters
116 They’re often scrambled
117 Big dos
118 Sure rival
119 It’s near the humerus
- 120 Recipe smidge
121 Key wood
122 Bismirch
123 Often-pickled veggie
- DOWN**
1 Lose steam
2 Quicken’s boxed Q, for one
3 Scotts Turf Builder target
4 French social dances
5 NFL pass, complete or not
6 Gibbs of country
7 Ninja Turtles’ human pal
8 Requirement
9 Kin of -in
10 Prepared for a selfie
11 Bit of guitar music notation
12 Heap kudon on
13 Prince Valiant’s son
14 Statistician’s concern
- 15 Giant in the development of neurological disease therapies
16 Actor Morales
17 Hard to come by
18 Affirmative actions
24 Webmaster’s creation
26 Animal-based fertilizer
29 Hula
32 “He Was Despised,” in Handel’s “Messiah”
34 PC corner key
35 Is worthy of
36 Concert venues
37 Incidental music at a race?
38 Personal bearing
39 “So?”
40 Improved in a barrel
41 Make sketches of Barbie dolls?
42 Pre-event periods
43 Glen relative
- 46 Porch furniture material
47 Sci-fi visitor
48 Stick in a cage
49 Genre of Vasarely’s “Zebra”
52 Twitter follower, often
55 Recess rebuttal
58 Bygone despots
61 Advanced French class assignment
63 Positive particle
64 Signed up
67 Kral of jazz
68 Richard ___, first black “SNL” host
69 IRS convenience
71 Convey
72 Colorful swimmers
74 Sewer worker in a ‘50s sitcom
77 Sgts. superiors
78 Like most Magritte cupcakes
79 Salon service with a pedi
80 Give for a while
- 81 ___ office
84 Go for a rebound
85 “Sister Act” extra
89 Thick soup
90 Jupiter and Mars
91 Fragrant coating for grilling
93 Clobber
96 Preventative power
98 Spicy Asian cuisine
99 Pacing, perhaps
100 Gaming pioneer
101 Bolshevik leader
102 Duped?
103 Bit of plankton
104 Short standards?
105 Move, for short
106 Six-part undergrad exam
107 Blade brand
109 Not occupied
110 Surrealist
111 “Phoey!”
113 Yak it up
115 “Silent Spring” subj.



3/22/20 xwordeditor@aol.com ©2020 Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Answers to last week’s puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | March: This year, you are confident and full of pride. You will capture the prize. Working together brings many talents to the task. Don’t let your ego get in the way of progress. Massive success follows if you can. If single, this period indicates a time of imaginative thinking and creative projects. If attached, your partner will require an honest look at yourself. Together you will see what you achieved spiritually in your relationship. Don’t ignore an opportunity for true progress in your journey as a couple. Cancer can drag you down.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You want to relax and catch up with old friends. Consider a new look for yourself and stay open to suggestions. It’s a stay-at-home day if possible.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
You have more time today to regroup. You’ve needed this for a while. Best to keep activities involving friends to a minimum. Make a list of important goals and construct a realistic way to manifest them. You feel good.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You are antsy at work and search for different ways to make money. A long-lost family member gets in touch and thinks what you have to say is hysterically funny. You use your great sense of humor to make the day more entertaining.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
A vivid dream threatens to put you into a funk. Resist the impulse to brood. Instead go for a long cleansing walk. An elderly family member needs your help, which puts your life into perspective.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
If you aren’t traveling in reality, you are in your mind. Take the day to learn something new, which excites you. A child needs your attention. Family matters become more intense as the day winds to a close. Talk, but don’t commit.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Spend today with your sweetie or a loved one. Enough with the to-do lists. Get out and explore somewhere new. The day calls for a bit of a splurge especially if it involves a new experience.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You have much from the week to finish. Use today to produce masterful results, and you will feel proud of yourself. No need to

stress; it will all get done. Make sure to eat healthily and don’t indulge in sweets as a reward.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Love takes a surprising turn. A loved one’s partner changes their mind, which alters your own life dramatically. You have options and you want to spend the day pondering them. It does not feel like a party day.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Emotional energies are important today with new love, greater intimacy and strong intuition all possible. Pay particular attention to relationships. Do not miss an opportunity to truly feel alive.

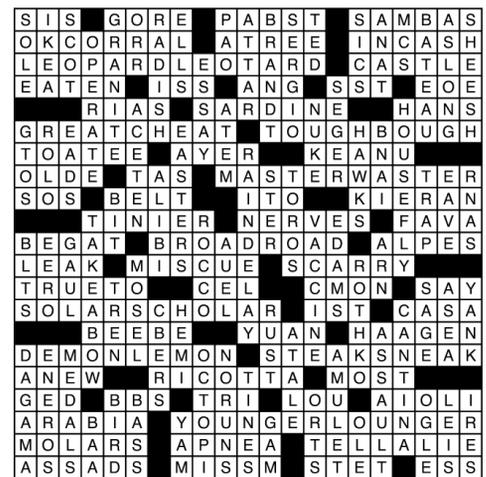
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Spend today relaxing and getting

all in order. You may want to go over your finances and prepare yourself for the upcoming week. Family wants your attention, which you are able to give when you are finished.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Give love and intimacy a chance to enrich your life. You might coax an especially shy child out of their shell. Outings will have to be done on a tight budget but are no less enjoyable.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
A venture turns out better than expected. You have definitely found a companion who shares your enthusiasm. Today feels like a day of wonder and joy. Journey outside of home and explore somewhere new.

Answers to last week’s puzzle.



3/15/20