DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Amazon.comedy: Inking ‘reviews’

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1373 was another installment of our contest asking for funny “reviews” of some items listed on Amazon.com. Too many people to credit saw that the men’s thong would make a nice face mask; complained that every one of the 100 balloons arrived with *no* air in them; touted The Post-it Notes’ use as multi-seamed wallpaper; and griped that 200 hair elastics wouldn’t be enough because they had more than 200 hairs. (These were written before we all stopped in our tracks for the duration. Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

4th place:

Brave Person men’s micro thong underwear: Bailey absolutely rocked this look at the dog park. Next time we’re wearing matching outfits! *(Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.)*

3rd place:

Black elastic hair ties, 200 pieces: Loved the quantity — the whole pack made a perfect sweater for my pet snake. *(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)*

2nd place and the George H.W. Bush paper-doll book:

10.25-inch cast iron skillet: It’s all right, but you’re never going to get a truly authentic French omelet without committing to metric. *(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)*

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

13-inch nonstick slotted spatula: Great for grilling — you can swat it down on flies and slide it under a burger to flip practically in one motion! *(Dave Prevar, Annapolis)*

Losers also viewed . . . Honorable mentions

Black elastic hair ties, 200 pieces:
Really appreciate the “no-metal” version. Makes it a lot easier to dry my hair in the microwave. *(Frank Mann, Washington)*

I’m greatly attracted to women’s hair, and love to move in close to admire it. With a few of these in my pocket, I can accessorize it as well. Women love it! — joefromdelaware *(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)*

Gold unicorn-horn headband:
I wore this and no one came near me at the funeral, which was perfect since I didn’t know the deceased. Buffet was great. Five stars! *(Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)*

This is great for the little ones! I told my 3-year-old that every time she lies, a unicorn loses its horn. So I put this under her bed. She was so upset she confessed to everything. Kids are so stupid. Four stars. *(Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)*

No wonder unicorns are nearly extinct, what with the Chinese using their horns for their medicine and Amazon using them for childish costumes. For shame! *(Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)*

100 latex balloons, 10 each of 10 colors
When we ran out of latex gloves at the hospital, these were very “handy”: I put one on each finger. Good thinking to provide 10 for each color! *(Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)*

Do you really want to go into a hospital right now just for some “procedure”? With a little DIY practice, you can perform your own angioplasty with these balloons. 100 tries to get it right with each package! *(Kevin Dopart, Washington)*

These are perfect to put on the horn of my Unicorn Headband to let my co-workers know how I’m feeling every day. They never seemed to notice my mood rings, but they can’t miss these! *(Dottie Gray, Alexandria)*

13-inch nonstick slotted spatula:
As a chef I’d used many spatulas, but none longer than 11 inches. Now when I’m cooking at my restaurant and get that itch in the middle of my back, I have just the thing — the slots dig deep and that 13th inch really hits the spot. And because it’s nonstick, the dead skin falls to the floor instead of the stove. *(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)*

For years I complained about my Swiss Army knife having no spatula; thanks to this and some super-glue, that’s a thing of the past. *(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)*

You know how in summer your sweaty thighs stick to plastic chairs? Well, I place one of these nonstick spatulas under each of my legs . . . and with a little twist and push I pop right out of my seat. *(Kevin Dopart)*

I’ve been frustrated all my life trying to turn my eggs with a stick. This nonstick works much better. Five stars and two thumbs nondown. *(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)*

Brave Person men’s micro-thong underwear:
I started wearing these three months ago and agree that “it’s underwear you can wear every day.” Whatever saves on laundry is fine with me! *(John O’Byrne, Dublin)*

Love them! No more borrowing Mom’s! *(Erika Ettin, Washington)*

My wife has always given me grief for walking around the house in my underwear. Now she thinks I’m *naked* until I lift up my belly! HA! — Joke’s on her! *(H. Dudley Davidson, Rockville, a First Offender)*

It’s a fabulous product, the best. I can’t see it when I wear it, but it feels amazing! Believe me, I look incredibly sexy. — J. Barron *(Steve Smith, Potomac)*

I noticed that your ad said each item is individually packed. I have three “items” down there, so do I need to wear three thongs? I’m confused. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond)*

3-by-3-inch yellow Post-it Notes, 12 pads of 100
Inferior adhesive! I can’t tell you how many times I’ve left one of these on the counter with a list of chores for all my family members, only for it to fall off and disappear before anyone had a chance to see it. One star! *(Danielle Nowlin)*

These were great — while they lasted. But one day, without warning, they were all gone. Now here I am four years later without any way to remind myself to buy more. *(Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)*

These notes won’t stick to anything! And that aftertaste — yuck! *(Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring; Jack McCombs, Fairfax)*

These are so timely, and the 3-inch size so useful: I’ve been sticking them above my lip to hang in front of my mouth — a perfect cough guard! *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)*

10.25” cast iron skillet:
Got this to replace my 10.20-inch skillet. What a difference! *(Jean Sorensen, Herndon)*

Worst frisbee ever. *(Sam Mertens)*

You won’t need an NDA to offer one of these as an office gift. Despite Elizabeth’s confusion, what I’ve suggested to women many times at work is “skillet.” — M. Bloomberg, New York *(Kevin Dopart)*

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1377.

Still running — deadline Monday, March 30: Our contest to add a character to a Shakespeare play. See wapo.st/invite1376.

BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1377: Make your own March Madness

Greetings from Mount Vermin, the Empress’s palace deep in the wilds of suburban Washington. We’re happy to report that we’re asymptomatic — unless you count our congenital absence of taste.

It’s hard by now to even imagine this, but just three weeks ago, plans were still on for the NCAA basketball tournaments to be in the thick of March Madness this very weekend. Instead, sports fans are finding themselves watching video of classic hoops action among men in those little shorts fluttering a few inches over their four-foot-tall legs.

The Empress exhorts you: Don’t just sit there! Sit there and **think of some sport, game, art project or other activity that you can conjure up using various items that you might find around the house.** Pictures/video of actual conjured-up things are welcome, but just telling us your idea is fine as well. We’re casting a wide net here in our plea for funny, especially original funny.

Submit up to a total of 25 entries at **wapo.st/enter-invite-1377** (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, April 6; results will appear April 26 in print, April 23 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a package of adorable little erasers in the shapes of Chinese dim sum food: little rubber steamed dumplings in little rubber bamboo steamers, plus a little rubber plate of little rubber salmon pieces. The package labels them “Chinese food” but also “Japanese puzzle eraser,” “Japan quality” and “Made in Japan.”

Other runners-up win their choice of our “For Best Results, Pour Into Top End” Loser Mug 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*. This week’s contest was suggested by Ward Kay in a Style Invitational Devotees brainstorming session. The headline “Amazon.comedy” is by Chris Doyle; Kevin Dopart wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the 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/conv1377;*** this week, what The Style Invitational did following 9/11.

We deliver: Japanese erasers in the shape of Chinese food.

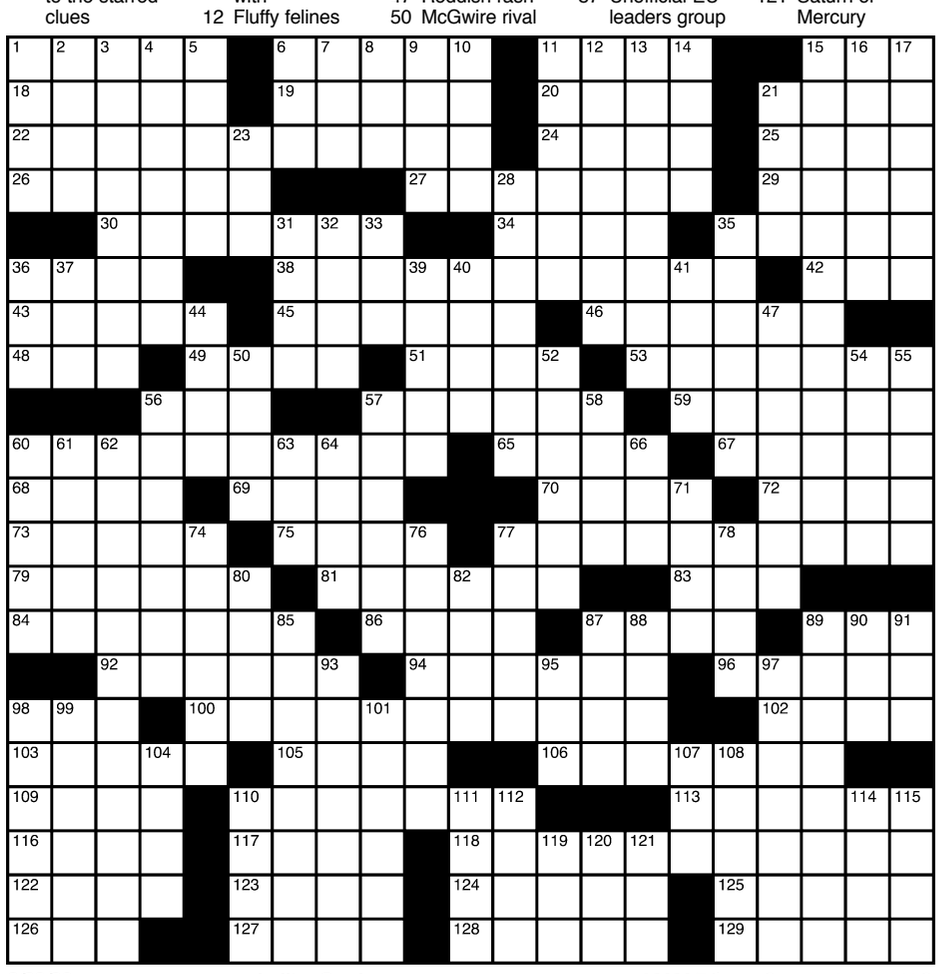
L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

“INNER CITIES” By GARY LARSON

ACROSS
1 Plot again
6 Brand created by a periodontist in the 1950s
11 Zap
15 Kite user’s verb
18 Yawning
19 Iris aperture
20 Being broadcast
21 Toledo’s lake
22 *Alternative to a pizza oven
24 Word derived from the underworld god Orcus
25 Quarterback’s option
26 “Romanian Rhapsodies” composer
27 Birds that tell time?
29 Tolkien race
30 What Brits cross to get here
34 Forsaken
35 Orange __
36 Like some airports: Abbr.
38 *Office group leader
42 Those with clout
43 Reef dweller
45 Line of clothing
46 Harsh
48 Blow away
49 Latin being
51 Part of a court game name
53 Elimination
56 General on a menu
57 Rat
59 Antique shop transaction
60 *Online gaming attraction
65 Designer Cassini
67 Street in Mason’s office
68 Sews up
69 Dynamic start?
70 Norse patron
72 Encouraging words
73 Rotund man in a bright suit
75 Metalworking union
77 *Mathematical abstraction with evenly spaced integers
79 Farriers’ tools
81 Like some mistakes
83 Ode title starter
84 Shooting marble
86 Passion
87 Daring exploit
89 Luthor, to Superman
92 Not for kids
94 Sign up
96 Wrangles
98 Former General Motors division
100 *Only occupant of Vostok I
102 Varieties
103 Teaspoon equivalents, roughly
105 Goddess with cow’s horns
106 Track wagers
109 Conception
110 Not full
113 Judging groups
116 Ring at the chapel
117 YA fiction reader
118 Startup funds ... and a hint to what’s hidden in the answers to the starred clues
122 Manitoba tribe
123 Fails to be
124 Beach, in Baja
125 Futuristic toon dog
126 Monopoly token
127 D-Day craft
128 Gunpowder ingredient
129 Feed, as a fire

DOWN
1 “Streamers” playwright
2 Pulitzer-winning novelist Jennifer
3 “The Egg and I” woman
4 In an imitative way
5 Parts of a pound
6 Special __
7 Same old same old
8 GI’s address
9 “The Mod Squad” role
10 __ cheese
11 Began to deal with
12 Fluffy felines
13 Like gales vis-à-vis breezes
14 Gift-wrapping times, perhaps
15 *Lead singer of a group whose first two Top 40 hits reached #1
16 Champ dethroned by Clay in 1964
17 Approvals
21 Duel tool
23 Political initials since 1884
28 V8 relative
31 Elevator name
32 Hawaiian goose
33 Court figs.
35 Program for future docs
36 Draft pick
37 When repeated, a cautioning word
39 Wherewithal
40 Timbuktu’s land
41 Incessantly
44 Cancún cash
47 Reddish rash
50 McGwire rival
52 Apple storage place
54 __ wrench
55 Limited-term usage contract
56 More irritable
57 Eric of “Pulp Fiction”
58 Position of control
60 Travel docs
61 Defeatist’s words
62 *Breakfast order usually made with ham, onion and green pepper
63 “Ben-Hur” author Wallace
64 Valuable rocks
66 Idle talk
71 “Cone of shame” docs
74 Quiets
76 90 degrees
77 Wafer brand
78 Goes bad
80 In __: as found
82 Twinge
85 Strange quality
87 Unofficial EU leaders group
88 Peak seen from Messina
89 15-Down singing style
90 TV planet
91 Start to save?
93 Political opposition
95 Cause of yelling, often
97 One working on a bench?
98 Snag
99 Writer Welty
101 2014 World Series champs
104 __ ale
107 Tax pro
108 Calamares or caracoles
110 Elec., e.g.
111 Locker room shower, at times?
112 Where to find a hero
114 Bit of mischief
115 Wild plum
119 Wolf down
120 Salon coloring
121 Saturn or Mercury



3/29/20 xwordeditor@aol.com ©2020 Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Answers to last week’s puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | March 29: You get along with others and can fit in just about anywhere. But this year you face some potential confrontation. A legal matter dominates. You comprehend the nuances of the situation, but it’s difficult to go with the flow. If single, you maintain your emotional balance and make friends out of your suitors. If attached, it could mean the beginning of something new or the end of something that’s no longer viable in your relationship. You both are relieved. Sagittarius wants to try something new.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You feel from a deep place. It’s a good day for journaling or working on any writing project. Be aware that your thinking could be unduly influenced by matters from the past. A female relative plays a role now.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Use your intuition to get a sense of your day. Be kind and understanding. The spotlight is on relationships. Don’t make waves. Instead, let things develop. You might face some difficulties related to joint resources.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Get out and meet new people; have new experiences; do something you’ve never done before. Express your opinions dynamically. Refuse to deal with people who have closed minds.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
The focus today is on partnerships, both personal and professional. You might need to be careful about how you deal with disagreements. Any conflict will be more emotional than usual.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Spread your good news and ease up on routines. You’re very protective of the home front. You might be busy fixing things around your house, even installing a home-security system. Be aware that you might become abrupt, especially with family members.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You work well with a social group today, especially if the members are of like minds. Friends play an important role. Focus on your wishes and dreams, and make sure they are still compatible with your interests.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You feel a need to withdraw today. Unconscious thoughts and feelings that could relate to your past might arise. Accept what comes your way now. It’s all part of a cycle. But don’t start anything new until tomorrow.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
An adjustment in your domestic life may be necessary now. You could face emotional outbursts or someone making unfair demands. Be understanding and avoid confrontation.

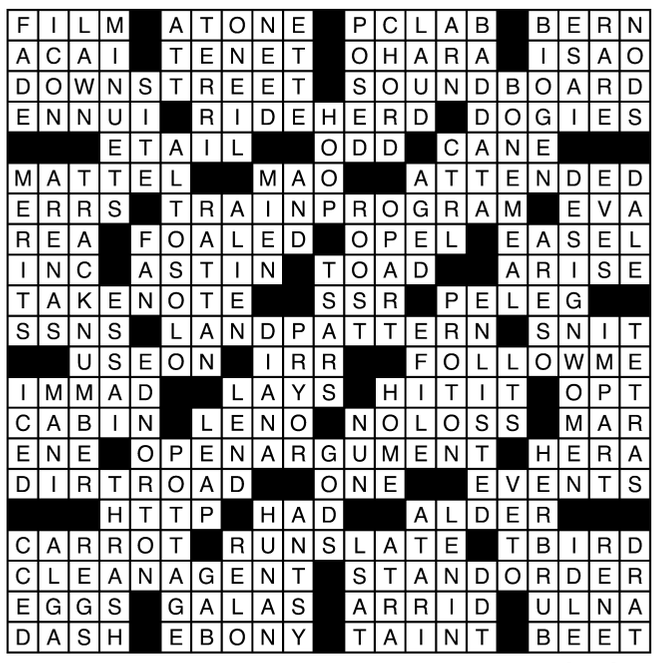
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
It’s a good day to use common sense and take a down-to-earth perspective on whatever you’re doing. Your senses are highly developed. You’re opinionated and highly sensual. You also long for the good life with its material blessings.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You’re busy keeping your mind occupied with new information. You study the details, especially those that relate to the future. Take what you know, and share it with others. Siblings and other relatives play important roles.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Work on a home-repair project and beautify your surroundings. You could be dealing with parents now. You feel a close tie to your roots. Tend to loved ones. Do something special with your children. You are in for some pleasant surprises.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You are feeling somewhat moody today. It’s best to keep certain thoughts and feelings to yourself. You could have second thoughts on a friendship. You’re the one others go to for help. Don’t deny your own needs.

Answers to last week’s puzzle.



3/22/20