

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Snark tanka: Poems on the news

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1389 was our fourth contest for the form we call **TankaWanka**, our spin on the venerable Japanese tanka: five lines, 5-7-5-7-7 syllables, but also two lines have to rhyme and it has to be about something in the news.

Holy moly! So many of the entries were screedy: so bitter or despairing that their wit or humor was left panting on the floor. Here are the more robust ones. Loser Sam Mertens even wrote a TankaWanka about the struggle; though it's not exactly "about the news," I'm giving it ink anyway, near the end of today's results.

4th place:

Baltimore ex-mayor imprisoned for selling her self-published children's books to nonprofits

Failure to disclose —
Off to Aliceville she goes.
Healthy Holly's through.
Pressing jumpsuits, one by one,
She'll learn "Exercise is Fun."
(George Thompson, Springfield)

3rd place:

The public weighs in at the Palm Beach Commissioners' meeting

Masks are "Devil's law!"
Antifa! Sex slave! Bondage!
Claims I find puzzling.
Still let's find a compromise:
Instead of masks, have muzzling.
(Wendy Shang, Falls Church)

2nd place and the Poo-Dough 'craft' set:

Rep. Nunes loses legal battle over 'Devin Nunes' Cow' Twitter account

Lies! Defamation!
Social media spreading
cruel, false parodies.
Devin Nunes wants to sue;
The defendant answers, "Moo."
(Hannah Seidel Alexandria)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Bolton's book claims Trump applauded Xi's roundup of Uighurs

Dear President Xi,
Those "camps" that you are
building?
They make sense to me!
To unify your nation
Will take great concentration.
— D.J.T. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

HunkaJunka:

Honorable mentions
Disappointing turnout at Trump's Tulsa rally

They promised large crowds!
Tulsa would burst at the seams!
... Sixty-two hundred?
That number is shambolic,
Passed now by Trump's systolic.
(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)

Poor Tulsa turnout
Embarrassing and hurtful
To the president
Surely MSNBC
Will show only empathy
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Her name is Karen.

She'll speak to your manager,
and you'll be sorry
that you didn't know how to
say "please" to her cockapoo.
(Brett Dimaio, Cumberland, Md.)

Trump waves a Bible in front of St. John's Church after protesters were forced out of area

Mr. President,
Will you lead a reading from
Two Corinthians?
Or is that book just a prop
For your thuggish photo op?
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Chuck E. Cheese parent company files for bankruptcy

The covid virus
And all of its microbe friends
Face a harder road:
Chuck E. Cheese has helped a lot,
Bankrupt: Kids will share less snot.
(Hannah Seidel)

Trump threatens CNN because it reported unfavorable poll results

Biden up 14?
"Retract your poll, CNN,
Or I'm gonna sue!"
He can't distinguish polling
From his fave pastime, trolling.
(Duncan Stevens)

That black lives matter
Just seems so intuitive.
Treat us all the same
When you make your traffic
stops ...

Oops - nobody told the cops.
(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Books about racism fill bestseller lists
It's become trendy
To read Ibrahim X. Kendi.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New for Week 1393: Second chance (acned conches?) for anagrams

Last week the Empress ran the totally nifty results for names of businesses or products that contained anagrams: The letters in the first half of the name were scrambled to make the second half. Like DIET TIDE. Or CHARGE MUCH MEGACHURCH. Or the winner, "ALIENS/MY ANUS" INSANE ASYLUM. (If you missed last week's, check them out at wapo.st/invite1392.)

The contest also asked for descriptions of those businesses, and among the 1,500 entries were dozens of ingenious anagrams, some sent by several people, whose descriptions didn't quite do them justice. So let's see what the Loser Crowd Mind can come up with. **This week: Describe any of the anagram businesses below, or offer its slogan.**

Am Aghast MAGA Hats

Anal Gas Lasagna

Asset Decline Delicatessen

Atrophied Aphrodite

Auctioned Education

"Be Sharp, Bro" Barbershop

Blaring Lard Bar and Grill

"Can't Act on Us" Accountants

Cheapo Arty Apothecary

Credit Naggars Greeting Cards

Crooner Coroner

Cruelty Cutlery

Danger Garden

Dead-or-Not Deodorant

Do-Not-Dare Deodorant

Decimal Medical

Emu Brains Submarine

Evil Stone Novelties

Face Cafe

Grub Masher Hamburgers

Happiest Epitaphs

Her Foul Amen Funeral Home

Hip One iPhone

"I Bleed Humor" Home Builder

I'm-a-Stud Stadium

Ill Strides Distillers

Insatiable Banalities

Irate Face Cafeteria

Larcenist Clarinets

Liberal Braille

Master Puker Supermarket

Monster Mentors

My Amusing Gymnasium

Nice Chefs Ruin French Cuisine

One Ratty Attorney

Order Guts Drugstore

"Paint Bull Crap for Me"

Republican Platform

Pedant Term Department

Plasmoid Diplomas

Pudgier Raccoon Organic

Produce

Real Idiot Editorial

Rich Mattresses Christmas

Trees

"Slime Our Arrogance"

Marriage Counselor

Smart Shape Hamster Spa

Supersonic Percussion

Sweaty Anal Tort Attorneys at

Law

Tartan User Restaurant

Tech Lover Chevrolet

Thousand Handouts

Very Idle Delivery

Western Wonk News Network

Submit up to 25 entries total at wapo.st/enter-invite-1393 (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday, July 27;** results will appear Aug. 16 in print, Aug. 13 online.

How to format your entries so that the Empress will be filled with love for you: Please start each entry with the anagram as it's spelled below (not with a number or some little dingbat), followed by your description on the same line. That way the E can sort all the Cruelty Cutlery jokes from the Happiest Epitaphs.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives two packaged bottles of **Flower of Story eau de toilette spray**. From what we gather from Google the Omniscent, Flower of Story (presumably a translation bungle from the Chinese elsewhere on the box) comes in various fragrances such as Happy Flowers and Sea Breeze. This one is Flying Pig. We didn't open it, so you'll have to let us know what it smells like after you "win" it. Donated by Loser Barbara Turner.

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 new lusted-after Loser magnets, "No 'Bility" or "Punderachiever." 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 "Snark Tanka" is by Tom Witte; Beverly Sharp wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the 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.

● **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/conv1393.

Book clubs are meeting,
"Anti-racist" drums beating —
But will the sound be fleeting?
(Mark Raffman)

In these [word here] times . . .

"Unusual," "difficult,"
"Challenging," "crazy,"
"Extraordinary," "tough"
. . . Adjectives? I've had enough.
(Mark Raffman)

I aim for humor
About things in today's news
But time after time
I write a screed or lament —
There's too much bad stuff; I'm
spent. (Sam Mertens)

Online symptom checkers are often inaccurate, study says

I list my symptoms:
Incessant head-scratching and
Feverish typing.
The online diagnosis:
"Needs ink — in larger doses."
(George Thompson)

Still running — deadline Monday night, July 20: Our contest for captions of Bob Staake cartoons. See wapo.st/invite1392.

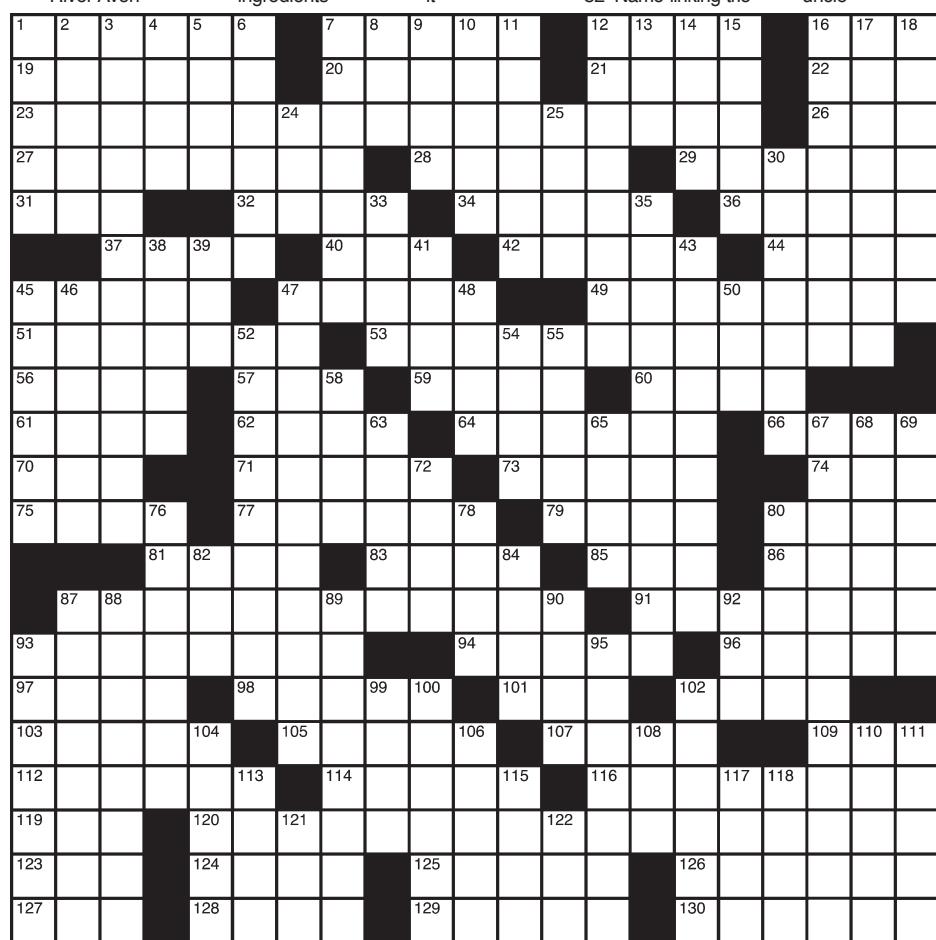
L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"FAST x FURIOUS IV" By YAAKOV BENDAVID and YONI GLATT

ACROSS
1 Bring up, as a subject
7 Longtime Syrian ruling family name
12 Rat on
16 Passover mo., usually
19 Vaquero's home
20 Ethiopia's Sessie
21 Puritan's conclusion?
22 Sulu portrayer John
23 Fast
26 Vehicle in a queue
27 Computer connection method
28 "Die Lorelei" poet
29 Wound
31 Doctor Octopus, to Spidey
32 Load
34 "The Flying Dutchman" soprano
36 Norse pantheon
37 Development site
40 "Groundhog Day" insurance salesman
42 Specifics, informally
44 Rope fiber
45 Carne __: steak dish
47 Paying passengers
49 Food
51 Based on deduction as opposed to experience
53 Furious
56 Gentle attention-getters
57 Series-ending abbr.
59 Radiate
60 "Nor to their idle doth sight appear": Milton
61 Part of Q.E.D.
62 Groups that get busy in Sept.
64 Charm
66 Fairy tale figures
70 T, on the NYSE
71 Rootless sort
73 Hit the dirt on a diamond
74 "So exciting—not"
75 Half of an alternative to 7-Down
77 Former White House family

116 Showman named Phineas
119 Letters on a note
120 Furious
123 Balaam's mount
124 Cajun mainstay
125 Blake of ragtime
126 Herbal brew
127 Understand
128 Hold back
129 ___no question
130 Nasty looks
13 Treated like it didn't exist, as gravity
12 Tony Gwynn's uniform number
13 Frequent winner
14 Polite question opener
15 Kagan on the bench
16 Some finger-pointing
17 One in an ancient Jewish sect
18 Rehnquist's successor
24 "Total Recall" director
25 Klein of fashion
30 Son and brother of George
33 Tennis' Novak Djokovic, for one
35 Fast
38 Source of praise in verse
39 Red Guard leader
41 Editor's "Lose it"
43 Headed the cast of
45 The Binghamton Rumble Ponies, e.g.
46 Ancient Greek military power
47 Furious
48 A little
50 Andrews or Vandenberg: Abbr.
52 "Tsk tsk" sayers
54 Hitching stat
55 "Cosmicomics" author Calvino
58 Vena
63 Big rollers
65 ___shaft
67 Fast
68 Buffy player Sarah Michelle
69 Ally of "The Breakfast Club"
72 Stadium access
76 Like a supermarket before a major storm, perhaps
78 Musical fifths
80 Saint at a gate
82 Name-linking trio
84 LEGO buys
87 Kind of situation to avoid
88 "What's the point?!"
89 "Way to go, bro!"
90 Gentle gait
92 ___-puf: old laundry product
93 Open galleries
95 Pet shelter visitor, maybe
99 Draped dress
100 Bondi Beach city
102 Forensic evidence bits
104 "Now, about ..."
106 Seamless flow
108 Large power
110 More cuddly
111 Jewish community orgs.
113 It helps a team pull together
115 Snatches
117 Blessing follower
118 Went by car
121 Actress Graynor
122 Muchacho's uncle



7/19/20

xwordeditor@aol.com

©2020 Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY MADALYN ASLAN

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | July 19: Graceful and self-aware, you need to prepare for some heavy competition in your career this year. Direct energy constructively and keep trying. You succeed in the end. If single, you yearn to wander and explore, and I see one relationship going on for too long for you. If attached, you tend to put your partner on a pedestal and are highly emotional about the future. Pisces relaxes you and calms you down.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Real estate transactions, relationships with parents, and other decisions concerning home life absorb your attention. Conclude planning purchases and sales and rentals of property during this time to assure maximum profits. A child or new friend inspires you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Correspondence, current events and planning sessions absorb your attention. Expect a great deal of restlessness and multitasking. Several interesting short journeys around the neighborhood brighten your day.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Thoughts mostly revolve around your earning power. Shop for an item you have long coveted in the days before the pandemic. Old financial obligations or debts are becoming more manageable. You are entering a more promising security cycle.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Today you are pulled in different directions. Seek balance. Your charm and beauty impress the right people, and help is offered. Pursue social opportunities. Artistic aptitudes are heightened. This influence provides the extra motivation you need to excel.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Take note of your dreams on this lazy Sunday morning. A meaningful message is encoded in the symbols. You will enjoy times of quiet reverie today. There are thoughts and feelings you might prefer to keep to yourself for the time being.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
A reunion with a longtime friend is probable. Friends offer valuable new ideas during the course of casual conversations. Enjoy chance meetings with those from your past. You might reconsider the

pursuit of a dream once abandoned.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Communication skills are an asset to your professional situation, and you might be working on a project even on a Sunday. You might travel or multitask in connection with your work. A friend provides valuable career tips.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
A day of self-discovery commences. There is an urge to explore and reclaim freedom. New technologies offer efficient help with projects. Your emotional balance is healthy, and you are feeling good.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Fate is at work in your life. Some things are just not meant to be. Appreciate synchronicities, and you'll be guided to what is best. Go with the flow. Heed omens from

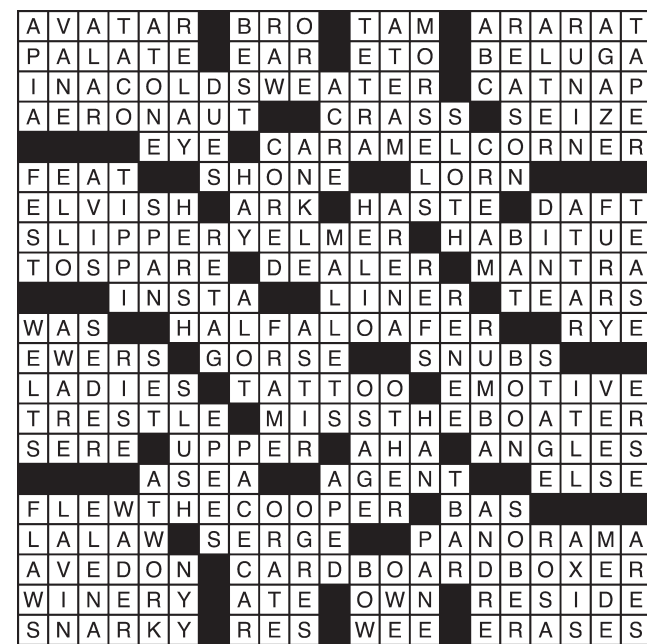
animal guides if possible.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan 19)
Companions offer suggestions. Revel in the attraction of opposites. Reality is slightly clouded today. If in doubt, wait for the facts to be revealed before making choices. A sense of the miraculous prevails.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Communication with the very young or the elderly is excellent today. You will be thinking of how best to manage your time and resources. Needed materials and supplies become available. Dynamic individuals impress you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Your artistic talents are in top form. Practice playing an instrument or create a drawing. Your sense of style and people skills are also excellent. Network. Nurture a promising new relationship.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



7/12/20