

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

2020: Metaphors for a bleep year

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1398 the Empress asked for novel ways to describe the year 2020 and got a deluge — some 2,000 entries — of “how bad is it?” jokes. If you’re entering our still-running contest for “X is so Y” jokes in haiku form (wapo.st/invite1401; deadline Sept. 21), sorry if one of these scooped your own idea.

4th place:

2020 has been so offensively bad, it’s had to change its name to Washington Calendar Year. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

3rd place:

If 2020 were a camping trip, the poison ivy would have chiggers on it. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

2nd place and the mask with the cartoonish grin:

If 2020 were a Christmas tree, Charlie Brown would look at it and say, “Let’s get the big shiny pink one instead.” (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

2020 is like a Zoom work conference where everyone says goodbye but then nobody is able to Leave Meeting. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Year misses: Honorable mentions

2020 is like a crash between two semis on the Beltway in rush hour where they both lose their loads and one is full of baking soda and the other is full of vinegar. (Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)

If 2020 were a novel, it would be “1984” with all the funny parts taken out. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

If 2020 were indicted on fraud charges, Donald Trump would say, “I never actually lived in 2020.” (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

2020 as a Cole Porter song: “It’s depressing, it’s disgusting, it’s detestable, it’s deplorable, it’s demonic, it’s de-reary, it’s de-worst, it’s de-lousy.” (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

2020 is like binge-watching the “Buffering” message. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

2020 is like an itch on your nose you can’t reach because you’re not supposed to touch your face and also you’ve been handcuffed. (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)

If 2020 were a song, it would be Florence Foster Jenkins covering “WAP” backed by Alvin and the Chipmunks. (John Johnston, St. Inigoes, Md.)

If 2020 were a nickel bag, it would be a bag with a nickel in it. (J.D. Berry, Springfield)

2020 is like having your wife run off with your best friend who you just found out is running a drug cartel that is funneling money into an offshore account under your name that is about to be busted in a sting operation on your birthday. (Rob Cohen, Potomac)

2020 is like bribing a college-admissions officer and ending up at Trump U. (Duncan Stevens)

2020 is so bad, Jerry Falwell Jr. had to stop watching. (Frank Osen)

If 2020 apologized to us for all this, it would say “Well, I’m sorry you feel that way.” (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)

If 2020 were a stray dog, they’d turn it away at the no-kill shelter. (Susanne Pierce Dyer, Suisun City, Calif.)

As a song, 2020 would be “Seasons in the Sun” played on a spit-filled kazoo. (Joanne Free, Clifton)

If 2020 were an infomercial, you’d lose track of how many times they said, “But wait! There’s more!” (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

Even Stanley Kubrick would have thrown out the script for 2020. (Bill Bouyer, Ocoee, Fla.)

If 2020 signed up for The Post’s Date Lab, there would be “No further contact.” (Madelyn Rosenberg, Arlington, a First Offender)

If 2020 were a sandwich spread, it would be toe jam. (Teri Chism, Winchester, Va.)

If 2020 were a day at the beach, it would be June 6, 1944. (Frank Mann)

If 2020 were a cartoon character, it would be Wile E. Coyote — and



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Karenting: When a mom with a cranky baby demands to see the stork’s manager.

WMATADOR: You, as you twist and wave your hands, trying to keep six feet away from everyone else on the train.

Mailodorous: How it smells when the Postal Service starts slowing down delivery before an election.

Having donned her imperial tiara in Week 536, lo these almost 17 years ago, the Empress is as surprised as anyone that she’s never had to have it surgically removed. Indeed, she did a little scepter-shudder to see “Week 1400” appear in The Style Invitational’s headline two weeks ago. We were busy with horse names that week, so let’s catch up now to add 1 to a contest from 2016, first suggested by Mark Raffman, later by Jeff Contompassis, and this time by Duncan Stevens, complete with the examples above: **Make up a word whose Scrabble letter values add up to exactly 14 (no blanks!)** and define it. Your word *cannot* be eligible for English-language Scrabble; to check, just type in your word at scrabble.merriam.com to make sure it’s not valid. As with all our neologism contests, you’re welcome to use your word in a funny sentence to make your entry funnier, and not welcome to use your word in an unfunny sentence.

Scrabble letter values:
 A, E, I, O, U, L, N, S, T, R: 1 point;
 D, G: 2 points;
 B, C, M, P: 3 points;
 F, H, V, W, Y: 4 points;
 K: 5 points;
 J, X: 8 points;
 Q, Z: 10 points

You don’t have to worry about how many of each tile are really available in a Scrabble set; it also doesn’t matter if your word is so long that it would fall on a multiple-letter tile on a Scrabble board. Just count the points.

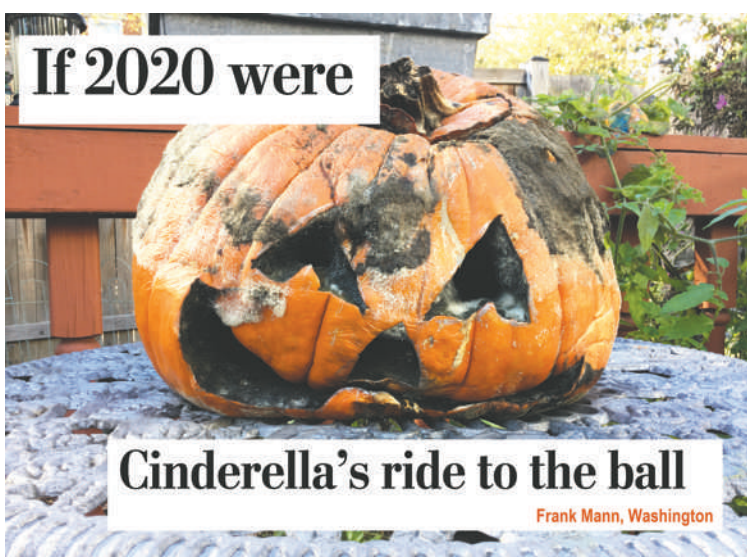
Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1402 (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Tuesday, Sept. 29** (an extra day so that those observing Yom Kippur may think about entries during the sermon); results will appear Oct. 18 in print, Oct. 15 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a tiny tin containing actual foldout “Emergency Underpants” and a coconut-scented car-interior freshener that’s called, we swear, Pimp Oil.

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, “No ‘Bility” or “Punder-achiever.” 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 “Bleep Year” was submitted by both Bill Dornier and Chris Doyle; Chris and Jesse Frankovich each sent in 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, and follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

BRAND-NEW PODCAST! In Episode 3 of **You’re Invited**, host Mike Gips interviews Elden Carnahan, founder 27 years ago of the thriving social community we now call the Losers. Hear it at bit.ly/invite-podcast.

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week’s at wapo.st/conv1402.



the laws of physics would apply. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

If 2020 were a Facebook friend request, it’d be from Stephen Miller. (David Shombert, Harrisonburg, Va.)

If 2020 were a Kama Sutra position, it would be called Abstinence. (Lee Graham, Rockville)

If 2020 were your homework, you’d be scrubbing it out of the carpet because your dog spit it back up. (Marli Melton, Carmel Valley, Calif.)

If 2020 were a piece of pie, it would be from “The Help.” (Art Grinath)

If my eyesight were 2020, I’d sue my Lasik surgeon. (David Zvijac,

Annandale) The audiobook of 2020 will be narrated by Gilbert Gottfried and Kimberly Guilfoyle. (Duncan Stevens)

If 2020 is an opera, the fat lady obviously has laryngitis. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

If 2020 were the Style Invitational, it’d be a poetry contest requiring the words “orange,” “silver,” “opus” and “discombobulate.” (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

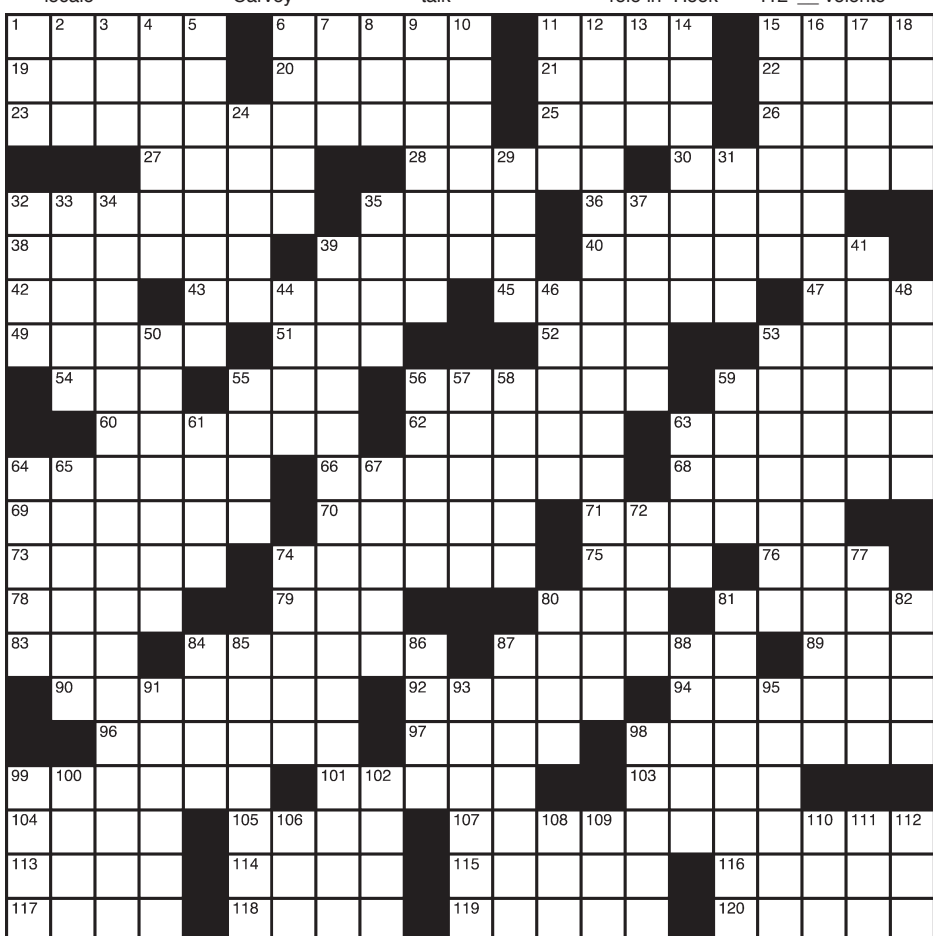
If 2020 were an Invitational prize, it would actually be one of the better ones. (Jesse Frankovich)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1402.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- “ADDITIONALLY”** By DAN MARGOLIS
- 75 Chicago’s Center
 - 76 TV drama settings
 - 78 First name in blues
 - 79 Baba in a cave
 - 80 “Miniver”
 - 81 Qualifying races
 - 83 Rallying word
 - 84 Short program
 - 87 1980s Cabbage Patch Kids
 - 89 NASA vehicle
 - 90 Spot for a spot
 - 92 Torment
 - 94 2001 French title heroine
 - 96 Carnival ride?
 - 97 Bar request
 - 98 It relieves pain
 - 99 Summer ermines
 - 101 Auspices
 - 103 Bit of producer
 - 104 Come down hard
 - 105 Earthenware pot
 - 107 Peacock, say?
 - 113 Pearl Mosque locale
 - 114 Guitarist Logfren
 - 115 Surround
 - 116 MGM Resorts reward program
 - 117 Damon or Dillon
 - 118 Eyelid problem
 - 119 Like horseshoes
 - 120 Fancy watch brand
 - 12 Main follower?
 - 11 Code word for “A”
 - 12 Singer Simon, refusing to take a limo?
 - 13 Prefix with -bar
 - 14 Unproductive
 - 15 Fictional boxer’s surname
 - 16 Part-time lawyer?
 - 17 Whistler, at times
 - 18 Cabriod seat?
 - 24 Wooden slats
 - 29 Shellfish serving
 - 31 Lover of Geraint
 - 32 “never work”
 - 33 Easily led sorts
 - 34 Hospital worker on trial?
 - 35 “Come I”
 - 37 Allots, with “out”
 - 39 Paul Simon song about a budding international union?
 - 41 Whom picadors assist in a Bush 41 quote of Dana Carvey
 - 44 ___ music: idle talk
 - 46 Idol whose fans are called Claymates
 - 50 Waters near Jericho
 - 53 Gander
 - 55 Twins’ home: Abbr.
 - 56 Whale food
 - 57 Winnie-the-Pooh greeting
 - 58 Out of whack
 - 59 Big name in audio systems
 - 61 Israel’s Iron Lady
 - 63 Battle of Normandy city
 - 64 Martini comparative
 - 65 Go off on
 - 67 Home with a view
 - 72 Stockings
 - 74 Guitar accessories
 - 77 Draft holder
 - 80 Chamomile peak
 - 81 Common features of wordplay
 - 82 Bob Hoskins’ role in “Hook”
 - 84 Stuck, after “in”
 - 85 Contaminates
 - 86 Zest
 - 87 “The drink’s on me” speaker?
 - 88 Lock site
 - 91 Turkey’s highest peak
 - 93 Performer with many fans?
 - 95 Fit to serve
 - 98 Add a rider to, say
 - 99 Cybernuisance
 - 100 When repeated, “Animal House” chant
 - 102 Facilitate
 - 106 Blitzed
 - 108 “Better Call Saul” network
 - 109 20-20, e.g.
 - 110 George ___ first king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland
 - 111 What D.C. Stadium was renamed in 1969
 - 112 ___ volante



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Answers to last week’s puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY MADALYN ASLAN

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Sept. 20: A manager, a harmonizer and a healer, you excel this year because of your powers of observation. They allow you to make a profitable investment and to complete an important project close to your heart. If single, you fall in love with someone in your same field. You’ll need patience though. If attached, you work on an exciting enterprise together that brings you recognition. You grow even closer. Scorpio worships you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) A sense of déjà vu surrounds you today. It’s a very interesting day. It allows you to purge any old dilemmas and financial debts. You’re deeply aware of interconnections now. It is an ideal time to examine financial decisions and documents.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Partnerships are growing. Others want commitment from you. Encourage others to communicate. Conversations and emails help you explore the parameters of important relationships.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) You’ll find satisfaction in getting organized today, especially if the household is a little lively. Use a subtle approach. Share your love and concern in practical ways. Prepare a nourishing dish, make a warm garment or play with someone you care about.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Approach others with initiative. Be confident and bold about your ideas. While everyone else is relaxing, you will be working on something important. Today makes you aware of the need for adjustments and growth.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Your family life may be entering a new cycle. Make improvements, adding to the beauty and comfort of your home. Bookshelves for your constantly expanding library would be a good place to start.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Resist the temptation to exaggerate today. A tall tale told now could damage your credibility. Be factual about all communication, and be subtle with jokes and humor. Others may be in a serious frame of mind.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You will enjoy beautiful possessions today. Shopping sprees result in important acquisitions. There is a yearning for more spending power and cash flow. Extra work that promises to compensate you suddenly looks very attractive.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Make plans involving study or travel. Expect to feel more enthusiastic and motivated. You assume a new aura of authority. Sincerity is a must. Expand cautiously and be certain you can keep promises you make.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You’re kindly disposed to someone in need, and extend help and advice. Make sure your efforts are wanted and appreciated before going through extra trouble. Listen to inner guidance to tap into your creativity.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan 19) Involvement with organizations bring satisfaction through altruistic and humanitarian activity. You can make real progress today. Friends contact you today wanting to catch up. Everyone talks about the pandemic. You receive an important invitation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Your confidence and trust in others is rewarded. Companions freely share information and skills. Social events will be brightened if games of skill and strategy such as chess or even Scrabble are available.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Love assumes an abstract quality. You would appreciate an exciting and imaginative companion with whom to share adventures. You think of someone from your past. It may be time to finally do a healing.

Answers to last week’s puzzle.

