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Style Invitational Week 1042: Go SANE with a neologism in Tour de Fours X

By [Pat Myers](#), Published: October 10

Kinsane : What your spouse's family is.

Densa: A club whose secret password is "It's me."

Die-nasty: A line of succession in which the monarchs didn't tend to expire in bed.

After several long-form contests recently, like the one with today's results, it's time to get pithy again. And it just happens to be time for our 10th annual Tour de Fours neologism contest, in which we give you a block of four letters and you have to build a new word around it. This week, in honor of an adjective that isn't used much around this town anymore: **Create a new word or two-word term containing the letter block S-A-N-E — in any order, but consecutively — and define it**, as in the examples above. New this year, because the Empress is feeling unduly magnanimous: **You may also come up with a humorous definition of an existing word, two-word term or name** containing this letter block. The four-letter block may break across two words. Feel free to enhance your entry by using your term in a funny sentence. Don't feel free to use it in an unfunny sentence.

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the book ["The Big Bento Box of Unuseless Japanese Inventions,"](#) with 442 photographs documenting such gizmos as a rice bowl with a mirror on one side to let dieters pretend they're getting a bigger portion, and little red-and-white umbrellas you attach to the tips of your dressiest shoes. The book is a celebration of *chindogu*, the Japanese humor genre of inventing gadgets that sound like great ideas until you think about them for a moment; it was won as a door prize by the Empress's long-suffering Royal Consort at this year's Flushies, the Invitational Losers' annual awards "banquet."

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after [Loser magnet](#). First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 21; results published Nov. 10 (online Nov. 7). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 1042" in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviterules. The subhead for this week's honorable mentions and the alternative headline in the "Next week's results" line are by Chris Doyle. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, and click "like" on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday.

Report from Week 1038

in which we asked for long, convoluted answers to simple questions: Okay, the logic in some of these is not how-you-say perfectly rigorous.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Why are boogers salty?

Because boogers come from your nose,
and "rhino-" is a prefix that means "nose,"
and Ryan O'Neal starred in "Paper Moon,"
and the moon makes the tides rise,
and a rising tide lifts all boats,
and boats get barnacles,
and "barnacles" contains the letter block "nacl,"
and "NaCl" is the formula for salt. Duh.
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

2. Winner of the necktie [depicting "romantic" cartoon pigs](#):

Why do unicorns have horns?

Well, unicorns don't exist, much like moderate members of Congress who are willing to work together to get something done, but moderate members of Congress who are willing to work together to get something done are the only ones who can save America, unless you count Superman, and Superman can shoot red laser beams out of his eyes, and so can the Devil, and the Devil has horns, and THAT is why unicorns have horns. (Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge, Va.)

3. Why are you handing me the Pepto-Bismol?

Because Pepto-Bismol can help if you're not feeling healthy, and the secretary of health and human services is a woman, and you know how women like to gossip, or, in Haitian Creole, *tripoter*, which is pronounced "trip-otay," which is how Buckwheat rated his first visit to the big city, like D.C. is a big city, but not like AC/DC, which is a band, like Uranus Explodes, which can occur if you eat green eggs and ham. And if that's what you're having for breakfast, well, I gotta hand it to you. (David Garratt, Silver City, N.M.)

4. Why did Jeff Bezos buy The Washington Post?

The Washington Post serves D.C., home of the Redskins, "Redskins" is not PC, PCs need drivers installed, drivers are found on golf courses, golf courses are found at country clubs, some country clubs are all white, Alawites are in Syria, Syria is a dystopia, a dystopia is depicted in the film "Brazil," the Amazon runs through Brazil, Jeff Bezos founded Amazon, so it's only right that Jeff Bezos bought The Washington Post. (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

Second strings: honorable mentions

Is the Loch Ness Monster real?

Nessie belongs to the same family as Cookie Monster, who hangs out with Big Bird, who's related to Tweety Bird, who regularly bests Sylvester the Cat, who shares a name with Sly Stallone, who played Rocky, which is a mountain range often compared to Dolly Parton's two biggest assets, and those are about as real as Nessie. So sure. (Randy Lee, Burke, Va.)

Why do good things come in small packages?

Because good things come to those who wait, and weight is just a number, and numbers don't lie, and lye is a base, and a bass is a singer, and Alvy Singer loved Annie Hall, and Ruth Hall starred in movies with John Wayne, and John Wayne Bobbitt had a small package, and though even though you wouldn't describe John Wayne Bobbitt as "good," it's still why good things come in small packages. (Chris Doyle)

What is 1 + 1?

In "Principia Mathematica," Alfred North Whitehead took 362 pages to get to 1 + 1, and a whitehead is a pimple, and pimple-faced geeks create new technologies like toasters on the Internet, and a toaster often says "Cheers," and "Cheers" had Cliff as a regular, and the GOP uses a cliff as a regular negotiation strategy in Congress, and Congress gives lobbyists whatever they want. So, 1 + 1, at least in Washington, is whatever you want it to be. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Why do you insist that Obama is a Kenyan citizen?

Obama's mother is from Kansas;
Kansas is also home to Dorothy;
Dorothy's dog is Toto;

Toto is a band that sang "Africa";
Africa is home to the Republic of Kenya . . . *(Kristen Rowe, Silver Spring, Md.)*

Why do mimes have white faces?

Well, mimes are silent, and silence is golden, and gold makes you rich, and accepting shady contributions while you're the governor of Virginia also makes you rich, and reading a Post article about how you accepted shady contributions while you were the governor of Virginia makes your face go white, and that is why mimes have white faces. *(Danielle Nowlin)*

Why is a cigar sometimes just a cigar?

Because a cigar is a smoke, and smoke gets in your eyes, and the eyes are the window to the soul, and Seoul is in Korea, and Korea loves Psy, and psi is a letter in Greece, and Greece was once called Hellas, and hell has no fury like a woman scorned, and the scorned woman in "Fatal Attraction" was played by Glenn Close, and close only counts in horseshoes, and Cigar was a horse, and that's why sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. *(Chris Doyle)*

Which side is port?

Port is wine. Wine is red. Reds are commies. Commies are leftists. So port is left. *(Robert Rosen, Gaithersburg, Md., a First Offender)*

Why are babies cute?

Babies frequently soil their diapers, which means you have to wash the diapers, but sometimes they're so dirty that you put in way too much detergent — for example, All — and then have to find some way to get the All out, and everyone knows that babies are as cute as All get-out. *(Neal Starkman, Seattle)*

Why is the noun form of "explain" spelled "explanation" rather than "explanation"?

In the 1700s Samuel Johnson vainly attempted to trace how "ex-plain" changed in meaning from "no longer clear" to "expound," which of course means "no longer heavy." Dispirited (though not actually sober), Johnson wrote in the margin, "In the pursuit of explanation I realized I was lost." His clerk took that as face value, and that was that. *(Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia)*

Can any artist today be discussed in the same breath with the Old Masters?

Sure! Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel; Elvis sang "Crying in the Chapel"; Janis Joplin sang "Cry Baby Cry"; Justin Bieber sang "Baby"; Michelangelo also painted the Baby Jesus; and so when I think of Justin Bieber, I think of Michelangelo. *(Kristen Rowe)*

Why did the chicken cross the road?

Because a chicken lays eggs, and eggs are oval, and so is the president's office, and the president was born in Hawaii, but Donald Trump doesn't believe this, and Trump is known for his comover, and also does a Macy's commercial with Sean Combs, better known as P. Diddy, who was part of the tribute song "Better on the Other Side." Which explains why the chicken crossed the road. *(Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)*

I had the funniest entry. Why didn't I win the Style Invitational?

Because the Invitational is run by an Empress, and Empresses live in Castles and people who live in castles ride around in carriages and carriages are pulled by horses and horses eat hay. And hey, aren't you the guy that compared the Empress to a prostitute in week 1034? (Robert Falk, Takoma Park, and he did; see ["And Last"](#)).

Why can't I get ink in the Style Invitational?

The winners must be funny. *(Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)*

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our Week 1041 contest to answer a question that's posed in a song. (And if you happened to send such a question for Week 1038, you can go ahead and send it again.) See bit.ly/invite1041.

See the Empress's online column [The Style Conversational](#) (published late Thursday), in which she discusses

today's new contest and results along with news about the Loser Community — and you can vote for your favorite among the inking entries, since you no doubt figured the Empress chose the wrong winner. If you'd like an e-mail notification each week when the Invitational and Conversational are posted online, [sign up here](#) or write to the Empress at losers@washpost.com (note that in the subject line) and she'll add you to the mailing list. And on Facebook, join the far more lively group [Style Invitational Devotees](#) and chime in there.

Next week's results: [Shookspeare](#), or **Flip Us the Bard, our contest to write something funny using only the words in the "To be, or not to be" soliloquy from "Hamlet."**

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