

The Washington Post

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1104: HOW's this? Compare 2 things with the same abbrev.

Plus a groanfest of story puns from Week 1100

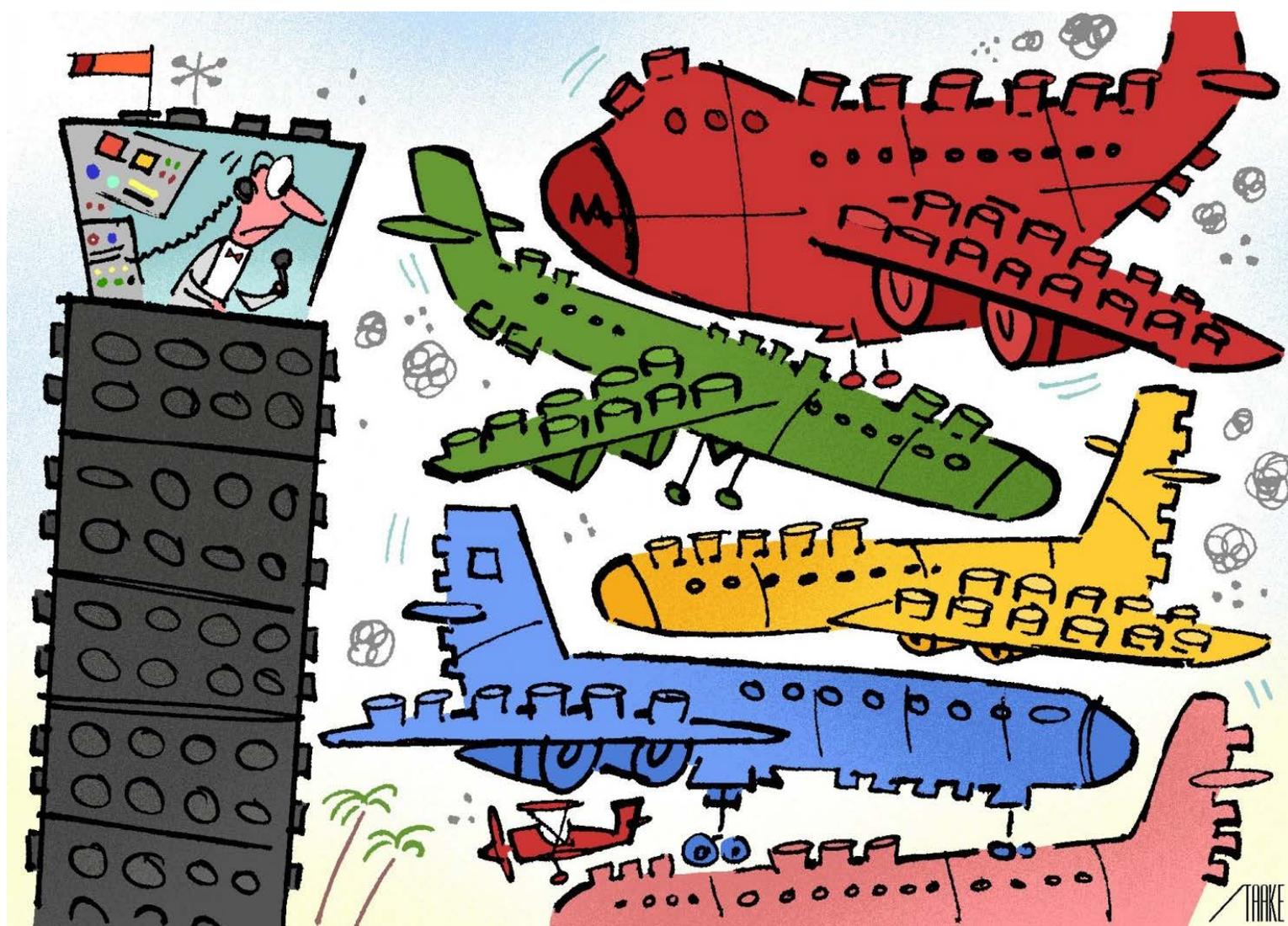


Illustration by Bob Staake for The Washington Post

By Pat Myers December 24  [Follow @PatMyersTWP](#)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the story-pun results from Week 1100)

FLL: First Lego League and **Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport** (the IATA code): Stacking isn't so much fun at the airport.

HME: Hereditary medical exostoses (a condition in which bumps grow on the arms and legs) and **homemade explosives**: The second is generally not recommended by doctors as a way to remove the first.

WE CONTINUE THIS WEEK with a contest that made its debut this past May, with an earlier chunk of the alphabet. There are several pages on Wikipedia that each consist of literally thousands of three-letter combinations. Each one is an itty-bitty link either to a page about something the letters stand for or to a list of several possibilities. And this week we're concentrating on the E-through-H page: **Choose two or three entities represented by a single three-letter combination beginning with E- through H- — see the links at bit.ly/abbrevs-e-h — and say how they are alike or different**, as in the examples above. **Note:** The entity could be something abbreviated by the three letters, as above, or it might be a full three-letter word or name: "FOG" or "fog," say. *And it doesn't have to be mentioned in the Wikipedia link*, as long as it's real. But the three letters must fall between EAA and HZZ. Be sure to include the three-letter block in your entry — as three consecutive letters — so that the Empress may search for them with her Imperial Ctrl-f.

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives **a tiny box of [genuine fossilized dinosaur poop](#)**, donated by Mike Creveling. The pooplets look just like any other tiny rocks, but they are from Skulls Unlimited, "the world's leading supplier of osteological specimens," and so we'll take its word for it.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired

“Whole Fools” [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet designed by Bob Staake: either “[The Wit Hit the Fan](#)” or “[Hardly Har-Har.](#)” First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Jan. 5; results published Jan. 25 (online Jan. 22). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include “Week 1104” 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/InvRules. The subhead for this week’s results is by Tom Witte; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Chris Doyle. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

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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/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

GAME OF GROANS: STORY PUNS FROM WEEK 1100

In Week 1100 we asked for feghoots — little stories that end in a pun on some well-known line or expression. The format of the Invitational demands *very* little stories; perhaps we'll call them fhts. Warning: These puns are outrageous groaners. It's part of the genre.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Despite trying and trying and trying and not getting any early action on WMDs, Operation Iraqi Freedom did ultimately nab Hussein and many of his henchmen. But after the former Iraqi president was hanged, Dubya nixed the plan to transfer the rest of the inner circle to Guantanamo. "Political opposition is too great," he said. **"I can't Gitmo Saddam's faction."** (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

2nd place and the tiny rubbery brain and plastic nose:

The famed businessman Victor Kiam told a story about his service in World War II: "At the Battle of the Bulge, a colonel kept ordering waves of grunts like me out of the trench we were in, only to see them cut down by cannon fire. So I shouted, "Hey, why are you doing that?" He replied, **"Look, Kiam, you're fodder."** (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

3rd place

Yet another reason for Americans' expanding waistlines — this time it's the recent craze of adding fatty fish to your diet. They may be getting lots of omega-3 and all that, but still, **their butts for the grease of cod go wide.** (Marc Shapiro, Alexandria, Va.)

4th place

The place: Heaven. The event: the annual cook-off. This year, Chinese. The team: the inventor of the sewing machine, the grande dame of the Grand Ole Opry, the founder of what is now Zimbabwe, and Charles Gulden of condiment fame. The group was just about to complete its pièce de résistance when in flew the Angel in Charge to announce that time was up: **"Howe, Minnie, Rhodes, Mustard Man – wok down!"** (Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

THIN PUN ALLEY: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Methane released by livestock is a major contributor to global warming. For several years, climatologists have been working with the tea industry to develop crops that thrive on these greenhouse gases. It doesn't look promising, though; **they've been trying for fart-oolong.** (Brian Cohen, Norfolk, Va.)

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Humphrey Bogart had several rather odd hobbies; one of them was collecting miniatures of Greek mythological characters. One day he was talking about his collection with fellow movie star Ray Milland. “You know, Broderick Crawford has always greatly admired them,” Milland said. “Yes, I know,” answered Bogie. “Tell you what: **Give my wee gods to Brod, Ray.**” (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Twenty years ago, Earl Scruggs started a two-year gig at the Flamingo in Las Vegas. About 10 months in, the legendary banjo player took three weeks off to do a series of charity concerts, so the casino replaced his act with Robert Earl Keen, offering a 40 percent discount on tickets. The successful move became known as the “**1995 Earl Change Special.**” (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Although Ms. Witherspoon had already received acclaim for several movie roles, the director of her latest film found her performance terribly wooden and unconvincing, so he demanded that the producer take some immediate action. The savvy producer quickly decided what needed to

be done: He drafted **an immediate Reese training order**. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

When I arrived for a three-month stay on Olympus, Mercury told me he would rent his house to me while I was there, at a very low cost. There was only one restriction: I could not remove the carcass of a songbird from his freezer, because Zeus had promised to restore it to life when he returned. When I entered the house I went straight to the refrigerator and looked in: Yep.

Chilled wren of a lessor god. (Ted Remington, Marion, N.C., a First Offender)

Did you read about the ordinance in Fort Lauderdale that restricted the feeding of the homeless?

The city passed it, but protests threatened to turn ugly, and a judge suspended the law.

Apparently he feared it might cause **a riot to bear alms**. (Chris Doyle)

“This was no suicide,” said Poirot. “He was murdered with the bolo of an Argentinian cowboy, who then tried to make it look like a hanging. But the pattern of neck bruises is unmistakable: It is **a dead-on impression of gaucho marks**.” (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

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The group photo wasn't going well at a 1965 U.N. reception honoring celebrities for their efforts to fight global hunger: The famed French German chef Michel Obercumb and his fiancée had had a tiff and were maintaining a chilly distance. Fortunately, the secretary general worked his charm and reunited the couple with a mock frown and gentle elbow to the ribs. And the photographer never forgot seeing **U Thant nudge a cook by his lover**. (Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.)

A mystic from the East came to visit a small Nebraska town and received quite a welcome in the town hall. But a Native American man made a joke about “real Indians,” which confused the visitor and embarrassed the other townspeople. The joker then felt terrible, as no slight had been intended. You see, things like this **weigh down a Pawnee swami-ribber**. (Mae Scanlan)

If John Dryden were alive today and having lunch at McDonald's, he would never order a hamburger: He believed that **a bun is the lowest form of wheat.** (Gary Crockett)

Lois always accompanied her husband during his bowling tournaments by bringing along her antique harp, which she played continually. Finally, someone on the other team had had enough — he yanked the instrument out of Lois's hands, hurled it to the floor, and slammed his bowling ball on it. "Don't worry," said her husband, "we can fix it." "Fix it?" sobbed Lois. "Look at it! It's **nothing but a ball-defaced lyre!**" (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

The tribal council wanted to hold an event for married couples only, so it decided to require each couple to display wedding rings at the door. As the sign read: "**A band on all Hopi who enter here.**" (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Down on his luck, Sylvester Stallone was appearing off-off-Broadway in a production of "Hair," for which he had to let his locks grow long and tangled. But he wouldn't even tidy himself on his off days — even though his friends pleaded: "**There's no play, Sly! Comb!**" (Ann Martin, Falls Church, Va.)

Traveling in New Brunswick, you're invited to a local's home for a traditional Acadian meal of poutine, pea soup and fried smelt. In the middle of the meal, with your mouth full, you have to sneeze. Fearing you're about to splatter your hosts with chewed-up fish, you clamp your mouth shut and clasp your hands over your face. The result: **Smelts in your mouth, snot in your hands.** (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

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My parents told me the bittersweet tale of Great Aunt Connie who came to America from England between the wars. Her wealthy, handsome fiancé literally missed the boat. On the transatlantic trip, she suspected he had had cold feet and then embarked on a shipboard romance with another man. He was somewhat plain, but devoted to her. Still, everyone thought that **Constance of that passage may have settled in transit.** (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Yeah, yeah, we've all heard the story: Julius Caesar was stabbed to death by Brutus and Cassius. Well, guess what? It's a crock. The truth is that Caesar was poisoned — with a hemlock-laced yam. Don't believe it? Listen closely to his last words: **“A tuber root, eh?”** (Chris Doyle)

Young romance could be risky in the old days in the mountains. During one 19th-century family feud, a young Romeo tried to elope with his Juliet. But the girl's daddy hunted them down, shot the boy in the ankles and dragged his daughter home — leaving him **footless and fiancée-free**. (Jeff Contompasis)

“Wake up!” said my hubby on Christmas morning. He hurried me into the car. Our first stop, a brambly field where a quartet of sheepdogs were herding a flock, their coats bearing bits of the underbrush. Next, our neighborhood barbershop, where a trio of our pals were being shaved. Quickly on to the University of Maryland golf course, where the No. 1- and No. 2-ranked players teed off, both whiffing badly. I knew then where our final stop would be: the National Arboretum's prize oak tree. Nestled in its branches devoid of foliage, I spied what I was looking for: a postcard of Skyline Drive. After all these years, the romance was not dead. For my true love gave to me ... **four collie burrs, three friend chins, two Turtle duffs, and a park ridge in a bare tree.** (Nan Reiner)

And Last: The Empress's predecessor at The Style Invitational scored two tickets to “The Importance of Being Earnest” at the National Theatre. Dressing for the show, he draped one of his wife's silk scarves around his neck, tied it into an elaborate bow and asked, “What d'ya think, hon?” She turned, rolled her eyes and said: “Yeah, sure, **wear the Wilde thing, Czar.**” (Chris Doyle)

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Still running — deadline Monday night: Our contest to pair a TV show with a comically fitting song. See bit.ly/invite1103.

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