

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Shoot first, ask questions later: Week 1143 results

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1143**, our perennial Ask Backwards contest, the Empress listed 15 odd phrases and asked you to write questions that those phrases could answer. This week's best entries came from 11 of those categories. For "L'Oreal and Hardy," too many people asked who had created a line of long-lasting slapstick (or slipstick).

4th place

A. Bei Bei's daily schedule.

Q. What is "Eat. Sleep. Act cute. Gather information for Chinese masters"?

(Neal Starkman, Seattle)

3rd place

A. Somewhere over the rainbow.

Q. Where does Kim Davis think Hell is located?

(Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.; Sam Aaron, Atlanta)

2nd place and the Nationals' Calvin Coolidge bobblehead:

A. Shaquille O'Rabinowitz.

Q. What Israelite routinely passed clean over Jordan?

(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

A. A platypus, a sourpuss, and pus.

Q. What are three things you don't want to run into Down Under?

(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Half-asked efforts: honorable mentions

A SWARM OF FRUIT FLIES

What's an anagram of "awful if it's from arse"?

(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

What lets you know that rather than being happy to see you, someone has a banana in his pocket?

(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

What movie cliché happens in nearly every car chase on city streets?

(Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)

What happens when Dan Snyder steps out in front of D.C. football fans?

(Greg Pearson, Arlington)

THE GOSSAMER-MAN TRIATHLON

What event was canceled when all the participants collapsed under the weight of their number bibs?

(George-Ann Rosenberg, Washington)

What is the final event of the Mr. Punyverse competition?

(Jeff Contompassis)

What consists of the 3-meter wade, the 10-foot stroll and the 2-minute kickstand lift?

(Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

AN ICICLE, A TESTICLE AND A LICKLE

What is "The Top 2 Reasons You Shouldn't Clean Gutters in the Winter"?

(Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

What do you get when you Google "10 things you find in back of a sled dog"?

(Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

What are suggested by "1 below," "two below" and "10 . . . below"?

(Rob Cohen, Potomac)

SHAQUILLE O'RABINOWITZ

Who was the first player inducted into the NBA Challah Fame?

(Chris Doyle)

Who said, "Free throws, I can't do — but I can get them for you wholesale"?

(Mark Raffman, Reston)

Who is a member of the NBA, the IRA and the ABA?

(Tom Witte)

POUTINE ON THE RITZ

If Russia's leader leader bathed in brown gravy, rolled in a tub of cheese curds, and sat on a cracker, what would some people mistakenly call the combination?

(Mark Raffman)

What dish from Quebec is locally known as *Crappe sur la craquer*?

(Barry Koch)

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

Where did Dorothy and Glinda get married?

(Evelyn Voorhees, Worthington, Mass., a First Offender)

Where does Roy G. Biv live?

(Stephen Dudzik, Olney; Rick Haynes, Ocean City, Md.)

Since immigrants are bad, where did The Donald's string of foreign supermodel wives and mistresses come from?

(Kevin Dopart)

A PLATYPUS, A SOURPUSS AND PUS



GRID CONSTRUCTED WITH THE INSTANT ONLINE WORD SEARCH MAKER AT PUZZLE-MAKER.COM

New contest for Week 1147: It's E-Z find-a-word — yours

J-12: BORMENTS: The trials of "listening" patiently to a jabbering acquaintance. ". . . Well, she's not actually my real aunt, but I call her Aunt Marge anyway. And anyway . . ."

N-4: WHIRK: The ceaseless job of helicopter parents.

We're back with a contest we debuted last year, one that attracted lots of entries — most of them by people who seemed to understand what we were asking for. No, no, it's not a word-find puzzle. Well, it is, I guess, in that you get to find your own new words. And there are a zillion of them waiting to be found, given our super-easy rules. **This week: Create a word or multi-word term that consists of adjacent letters — in any direction or several directions — in the grid above, and provide a humorous definition,** as in the examples above. You may also give an especially clever definition for an existing term you find. And you may use the word in a sentence, if that makes your entry funnier.

IMPORTANT: Because the Empress is already bonkers enough without having to search for your precious word through a 361-letter grid, **you must state the coordinates of the first letter of your term (e.g., C-12);** the E can trace it from there. Note that **you may snake your word around the grid;** just don't skip letters or use the same spot on the grid twice. But if you don't give me those coordinates, I'm going to skip your word.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a genuine antique, and a really cool one: Dated 1915, and clearly original, it's a 12-volume set of booklets comprising "Household Engineering," a correspondence course from the American School of Home Economics, and aiming to bring those modern ideas of workplace efficiency to the home. Part I is about kitchen design; it does mention the "refrigerator," but that was simply an insulated chest with an ice compartment.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet designed by Bob Staake: either the last of our current models, "The Wit Hit the Fan" and "Hardly Har-Har," or one of the winners of Week 1146. 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 night, Nov. 9; results published Nov. 29 (online Nov. 25). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1147" 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 headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Brendan Beary. Join the lively 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.

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.

In Australia, what are three things that taste better than Vegemite?

(Mark Raffman)

Who's right ahead of Rand Paul in the polls?

(Duncan Stevens, Vienna)

2028 C.E.

What is currently displayed on the "next train" sign above the platform at Metro's Dulles Airport station?

(Jeff Contompassis, still waiting in nearby Ashburn, Va.)

When will Chelsea Clinton and Jenna Bush square off in a presidential election whose central issue will be "getting the truth about Benghazi"?

(Mark Raffman)

What is the year we still don't land an astronaut on Mars?

(Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

According to President Obama's orders to the Secret Service, when will Malia and Sasha be allowed to go on unsupervised dates?

(Kevin Dopart)

A VW GAS PEDAL

What is another name for a lie detector?

(Steve Honley, Washington)

What is the second-fastest way to drive VW into a brick wall?

(Dudley Thompson)

What part of a Beetle sticks when

you squash it with your shoe?

(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

What's sure to become known as part of a "de-feet device"?

(Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.; Ben Aronin, Washington)

15 GB

How much space is left on a 15.0000001 GB drive when you load in all of the GOP candidates' policy ideas?

(Duncan Stevens)

How long did it take Mr. Giga to eat his steak?

(Sam Gwynn, Beau-mont, Tex.)

Can you tell Mr. Shaw here how many times you've read "Pygmalion"?

(Jack McBroom, Fort Valley, Va.)

BEI BEI'S DAILY SCHEDULE

What lists more accomplishments than the Congressional Record?

(Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

What, if interrupted by gunfire, might prompt a serious debate about gun control in this country?

(Mark Raffman)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1147.

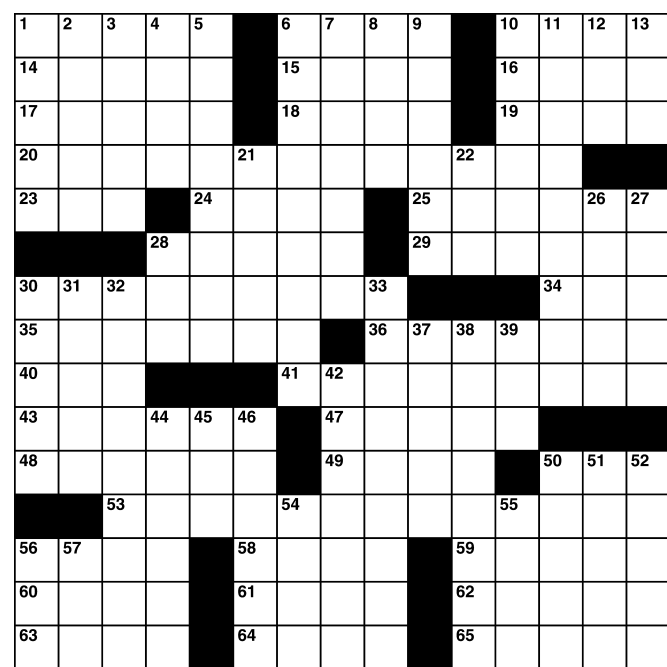
Still running — deadline Monday night: our contest for ideas for two new Loser magnets for honorable mentions. See bit.ly/invite1146.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY PATRICK JORDAN © 2015 CROSSYENERGY SYNDICATE LLC

- ACROSS**
- 1 Proverbial back breaker
6 Sand or speed follower
10 Part of some bistro names
14 "George Washington at Princeton" painter
15 Ken of "Fort Apache The Bronx"
16 "This is yours"
17 Endorse enthusiastically
18 Novel that inspired the film "Clueless"
19 Come by honestly
20 New celebrity of 2015
23 Product prefix indicating coldness
24 Focus fondly (on)
25 Made like an "Iron Chef America" judge
28 Phrase before a clarification
29 Put away, in a way
30 Free of stigma
34 It's taken before firing
- 35 Top-selling
36 Enlarge, as a home
40 Bus, card datum
41 Pamplona plantations
43 1967-'70 secessionist state
47 Like Lewis Black's character in Pavar's "Inside Out"
48 Come to terms with
49 "And Then There Were None" director Clair
50 Perform a christie or a telemark
53 Famous stepdaughter of 20-Across
56 Automotive Hall of Fame surname
58 Desktop whose first version was the G3
59 Packs tightly
60 Sidesplitting show
61 Scrapped space shot
62 Abscond to bond
63 Propriety-challenging

- 64 Put out of kilter
65 Best Actor Oscar winner between Tracy and Stewart
- DOWN**
- 1 Brief details?
2 NRG Stadium player
3 Computation often containing a colon
4 Copiously
5 "Great job!"
6 Garfield's position among presidents
7 Engines that require assisted takeoffs
8 World-weary utterance
9 Greenhouse effects?
- 10 Favorite nosh of Gromit's pal Wallace
11 Region symbolizing traditional values
12 Make the blooper reel
13 Satori-seeking discipline
21 Long, loud laments
22 "I'm gonna pass"
26 Musical with the song "Buenos Aires"
27 Record biz samples
28 Chickadee cousin
30 Fancy Feast rival
31 2004 Britney Spears hit
32 Junkyard guard, perhaps
33 Entity exempt from criticism
37 Dorothy's portrayer in
- 1978's "The Wiz"
38 Couldn't stand
39 Last word of "A Christmas Carol"
42 Cabin pressure result?
44 Aggressively lively
45 Stat for a DJ, back in the day
46 Weight-loss brand hawked by Sharon Osbourne
50 Creator of Madison and Ungar
51 Corinthian's K
52 Cartographer's close-up
54 Frenziedly
55 Xbox since 2001
56 Strike discovery
57 Tupperware piece



Answer to last week



HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | NOV. 1: This year your intuition allows you to tune in to many people. You also have a sense for when something you would prefer to avoid is about to happen. Use this ability to the max. If you are single, you most likely have a secret admirer. If you are attached, the two of you often are in your own world. Your emotional bond is strong. Cancer has similar sensitivities as you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Your family demands your time. Make it your pleasure to indulge them. You have an unusual way of fulfilling requests. By inviting someone over to play a favorite game, you'll remind both of you of the importance of the bond.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Make your round of Sunday calls. If you don't reach out to others as often as you know you should, consider making that more of a priority. Your vitality sparks, even in a simple conversation.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Your sense of humor will emerge when dealing with matters from yesterday. A friend might pitch in at the last minute. You know that you can't handle everything on your own. The stories you hear could spark your imagination.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Avoid getting hung up on details when talking with others. One person in particular might feel the need to tell you everything. Be careful about whom you

draw toward you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You finally can make time for yourself. Whether you nap or head out to participate in a favorite sport makes no difference. Everyone, especially someone as sociable as you, needs a break from others from time to time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You mean well, but you might be a bit short in your delivery today. Try not to let your fatigue affect your conversations and interactions with others. Consider taking a midday nap, if possible. Reach out to others after you renew your energy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Stay in charge of your thoughts. Don't let a momentary lapse of judgment cause you to say something you won't be able to take back. The less you say, the better off you will be.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

You could be tired and not willing to push as hard as usual. A friend

might not allow you to vanish. Be careful, as sharp words exchanged can't be taken back.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

One-on-one relating takes its toll on you. You are likely to wake up already tired as a result of yesterday's hectic pace. A friend or loved one demands your time and attention. If you can postpone a meeting, do.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Others seek you out to recount some of their recent adventures. You might have an unanticipated reaction if you feel as if you're in a forced situation. Honor a need for space. Keep conversations polite.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You no longer can avoid an obligation, no matter how much you would like to. Others will want to get together, and they might not understand the word "no." Prioritize and honor your needs. Explain that you have other commitments.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Your flexibility is a gift no matter how you look at it. You could wonder what would be best to loosen up a problem. Trust yourself. Realize you are dealing with a volatile situation, and perhaps a volatile person. Do not take sour words personally.

Lost keepsakes, lost holiday cheer

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: My ex-husband and I lost our home and subsequently separated. While things were peaceful between us, he rented a storage unit that held everything we had in our garage — camping gear, mini-fridge and, most important (to me), Christmas decorations. Included were many special handmade ornaments from my children over the years.

Things went sour between us when he stopped the payments on the unit and we lost everything at auction. I did not learn about the loss until several months after the auction was held, so there was nothing I could do to recover any items.

I have since lost the desire to celebrate Christmas. I don't want to put up a tree or decorate. Even though it has been five years since all this happened, the thought of Christmas brings me to tears. The holiday season is very depressing, and I no longer look forward to it.

I want the holiday season to bring me joy again, but I don't know how to get it back or what to do.

No Christmas Spirit

No Christmas Spirit: The holiday season is struck through with moments of sweetness, but for very many people, it is tinged with sorrow, sadness and the kind of genuine despair that is so beautifully captured in the Frank Capra film "It's a Wonderful Life." Because, as you know, sometimes life isn't so wonderful; sometimes life is reduced to trying to move forward with the knowledge that you have lost all of your treasured goods in an auction.

These Christmas treasures are symbols, reminders and stand-ins for the relationships in your life, and the thing about Christmas is this: If your relationships are good, nothing else really matters.

You don't say where you stand with your children, but I hope you are able to spend time with them. If not, maybe this Christmas you can mark the five-year anniversary of your loss by turning the page. Get a tiny tabletop tree. Ask a friend to help you decorate it with paper chains or popcorn, drink some cocoa and then go for a walk together. You will have to piece together a new way to feel joy — through sheer determination — and then make it your own.

Christmas also is a great time to tap into your generosity. Even when you are at a low point, holding someone else's hand in comfort can help you feel powerful, compassionate and alive. I hope you can find someone to comfort (and commiserate with this season). If you do, I think you'll feel better.

Dear Amy: Teenagers really do want limits, but they also need to save face when they feel pressured. We had a code for our kids' requests when their friends were around.

It was in the wording: "Mom, is it okay if I go to . . . ?" rather than "Mom, can I go to . . . ?"

If there was an "okay" in the query, we knew they didn't want to go, and this was their way of wanting a NO response from us while saving face.

If there was no "okay" in the request, we knew they really DID want to go.

A Dad

A Dad: I like it.

Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribune.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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