

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1212: The Tile Invitational IV

Make new words from 7-letter ScrabbleGrams racks; plus this year's top obit poems



One way to unscramble BDELOUT: BEDLOUT: A parasite that does its thing, rolls over and goes to sleep. (The intended word: "doublet.") (Bob Staake/for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers 

January 26

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning poems about people who died in 2016)

BDELOUT —> BEDLOUT: A parasite that does its thing, rolls over and goes to sleep.

BDELOUT —> OUTBLED: Got that extra pound of flesh, thereby winning the 2016 Ambulance Chasers Championship.

BDELOUT —> BUDLET: One of those 8-ounce cans of beer.



This civet, a member of the mongoose family, had a hand (well, another body part) in processing the coffee beans that are this week's second prize. (In Vietnam the standard translation is "weasel coffee.") (By JordyMeow/via Wikipedia (Creative Commons))

Somehow the Empress forgot to run this contest last year, as she had the previous three: It's our homage to ScrabbleGrams, the word puzzle that appears daily on The Post's comics pages: At the bottom of this page is a list of 40 seven-letter sets taken from "[The Big Book of ScrabbleGrams](#)" by Obsessive Loser Jeff Contompasis. **Give us a five-, six- or seven-letter word (or two words) by scrambling the letters of any of the sets and define it**, as in the examples above. In past contests almost all the ink has gone to made-up terms, but you may also find an existing word and supply a clever definition for it. Feel free to make your entry funnier by using your term in a funny sample sentence. *Note that we are not playing for Scrabble points; the letter values don't matter.* Please begin *each* entry with the letter set you're scrambling, as above — and spell it correctly; the E is going to search through her Giant Master List of Entries for all the entries for each set, one after the other.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1212 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets — direct from a Vietnam vacation by Losers Mark and Claudia Raffman — **a bag of coffee beans that are a costly delicacy because they have been [digested and pooped out by "weasels"](#)** (actually civets), evidently adding some incomparable flavor. But first the Empress is going to let Washington Post Staff Poop-Obsessive Gene Weingarten try a little bit of it, for a possible column.

Other runners-up win the yearned-for "[This Is Your Brain on Mugs](#)" [Loser mug](#) or our Grossery Bag, "[I Got a B in Punmanship.](#)" Honorable mentions get one of our new lusted-after Loser magnets, "[No Childishness Left Behind](#)" or "[Magnum Dopus.](#)" First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Feb. 6; results published Feb. 26 (online Feb. 23). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Nan Reiner; the honorable-mentions subhead was suggested by both Nan and Kevin Doport. 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; follow [@StyleInvite](https://twitter.com/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.

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

CIAO LINES: THE OBIT POEMS OF WEEK 1208



Pouf, she's gone, alas: Margaret Vinci Heldt in 2011 (at age 92!), showing the beehive hairdo she created in 1960 for Modern Beauty Shop magazine. (Caryn Rousseau/AP)

Perhaps more than ever, there was no shortage of material for our annual obit poem contest, **Week 1208**. Though we asked for verses about people who died in 2016, the Empress occasionally widened the memorial gates, as for this week's third-place Loser.

4th place:

Ray Tomlinson (1941-2016), email pioneer

Higgledy piggledy,
Raymond "Ray" Tomlinson
Sent the first email, but
Bear in mind that
Reaching him now is an
Impossibility,
Since the domain's unknown
Where he is @.
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

3rd place:

Cleveland's championship drought (1964-2016)

The Cavs came back and ended Cleveland's championship drought,
While Wahoo came in second as their Wrigley luck ran out.
Their residents can celebrate, like many other towns,

But Cleveland still is Cleveland, and [the Browns are still the Browns](#).
(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

2nd place and the genuine teeny piece of the Berlin Wall:

Carrie Fisher (1956-2016)

Diagnosed as bipolar, she turned it
Into humor. (Denial, she spurned it.)
Her remains now lie still
In a [huge Prozac pill!](#)
Carrie had the last laugh, and she urred it.
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Gillis Lundgren (1929-2016), Ikea bookcase designer

The men who bore his coffin from its hearse
Wept loudly as they lumbered past the pews:
They missed their buddy, naturally—but worse,
The coffin still was missing half its screws.
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Passed imperfect: honorable mentions

TV star Alan Young (1919-2016)

A hearse is a hearse, and death's a curse,
But now you are one with the universe,
So don't be terse — go on, converse
With the ghost of Mr. Ed!
(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Prince (1958-2016)

There once was an artist who shone
With a musical style all his own.
Now, alas, fans of Prince
Are in misery, since
He'll forever be Formerly Known. (Jesse Frankovich)

Antonin Scalia (1936-2016)

I. With merry wit and repartee
You livened up the Court,
But let's just say humility
Was never quite your forte.
So if you make your way up there
And watch the Lord relent
And grant some sinner's earnest prayer,
Please try not to dissent.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

II. Justice Scalia is with us no more,
Unexpectedly pushing up clover; it
Seems that his life was like Bush versus Gore:

He believed it was time to get over it.
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Jim Delligatti (1918-2016), creator of the Big Mac

How fitting would this obit be,
Though false, and quite improper:
“The cause of death: Big Mac attack.”
(But that would be a Whopper.)
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Delligatti and chef Peng Chang-Kuei (1918-2016)

One invented the Big Mac, and the other “General Tso”
One’s a burger, and the other’s dipped in batter.
Though it’s true the flavors differ, still they’re similar, we know,
In that that which doesn’t kill us makes us fatter.
(Mark Raffman)

Mary Fiumara (1927-2016), actress in a long-running commercial

In the [ad for Prince Spaghetti](#),
She played Mama Martignetti,
Calling “Anthony!” to race back home for pasta.
But today in North End Boston,
They must mourn another lost ‘un
Because Mary Fiumara’s breathed her lasta. (Mark Raffman)

Carrie Fisher

Where has Carrie gone to stay?
A galaxy far, far away?
The Force will not abandon her,
And Darth can’t Leia hand on her. (Beverley Sharp)

David Bowie (1947-2016)

David Bowie, fair of face,
Pan-seduced the human race.
Bagging belle or boffing beau,
His “spaceship” knew which way to go. (Nan Reiner)

Gordie Howe (1928-2016)

Mr. Hockey earned his name;
He gave and took hard knocks.
Now he’s ejected from the game,
Forever in the box. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Arnold Palmer (1929-2016)

A hole in one is every golfer’s goal,
But Arnold Palmer’s now one in a hole. (Brian Allgar, Paris)

Marni Nixon (1930-2016), whose voice was dubbed in for many movie musicals

(sung to “Wouldn’t It Be Lovely” from “My Fair Lady”)
“All I want is a credit line
Making clear that the voice was mine.
Celestial marquee sign,
Oh, wouldn’t it be Heavenly . . .
Kerr and Hepburn, Monroe and Wood,
Couldn’t sing; it was I who could.

To reap the raves I should —
Oh, wouldn't it be Heavenly!"
(Nan Reiner)

Nancy Reagan (1929-2016)

The Grim Reaper said it was time to go
And Nancy Reagan just couldn't say no.
(Ira Allen, Bethesda, Md.)

Fidel Castro (1926-2016)

"I'll make it to a hundred" was his boast,
"I'll outlive all my enemies by far."
And yet, at only 90, Castro's toast.
Nice try, Fidel – but sorry, no cigar. (Brian Allgar)

Robert Leo Hulseman, creator of the red Solo cup

In retrospect the undertaker
Made a big mistake
By letting fans of Solo cups
Arrange that bier pong wake. (Kevin Dopart)

Margaret Vinci Heldt (1918-2016), creator of the beehive hairdo

You have to figure beehive gals
Kept plenty hidden in their hair.
(A pack of Kents? A Jell-O mold?
A handy set of Farberware?)
They'd never even tell their pals
Precisely what was stashed in there.
But Margaret's clients — her, they told.
And now, alas, she'll never share. (Melissa Balmain)

Abe Vigoda (1921-2016), actor and a constant victim of death hoaxes

This time it's true that Abe Vigoda
Won't be getting any oda. (Nan Reiner)

Greta Zimmer Friedman (1924-2016), the woman in the V-J Day "kissing photo" by Alfred Eisenstadt

A nurse named Greta Zimmer's walking down the street when lo!
She's seized and smooched in public by some gob she doesn't know
And Eisenstadt immortalized this pair that happy day:
Iconic then — but now that pic would be Exhibit A.
(Elliott Shevin, Oak Park, Mich.)

Email pioneer Ray Tomlinson

ARPANET, harpanet,
Raymond S. Tomlinson
Added an @ sign and
Email was born.
Making our messaging
Internetworkable,
Brought us together (though
Much of it's porn). (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Rob Ford (1969-2016), "colorful" Toronto mayor:

Blond and bombastic, unmannered and crass,

Richer than Croesus but lacking in class,
Made a career out of glib bellicosity
Wrapped in delusions of self-grandiosity.
Corpulent pol with his head up his nose...
(Thank goodness WE haven't got one of those....) (Nan Reiner)

**Powerboat designer Sonny Levi (1926-2016),
Boeing 747 designer Joe Sutter (1921-2016)
and Volvo designer Jan Wilsgaard (1930-2016)**

Three designers walk into a bar.
Braggs the boat guy, "Mine's fast, and goes far—
Maine to Boston, six hours!"
But his glee quickly sours;
Sniffs the plane guy, "Six hours to Dakar."

Then the Volvo guy (known as a sage),
Interrupts them: "No meter can gauge
Station wagons' true speed—
At the wheel, all concede
That in seconds, they reach middle age." (Melissa Balmain) [This double limerick goes over the eight-line limit,
but the Empress decrees that it qualifies because it's 3.33 lines per person]

Entertainment Alerts

Big stories in the entertainment world as they break.

[Sign up](#)

The Pokémon Go craze (2016-2016)

O Pokémon Go
For a minute you were "it"
Now Pokémon Gone.
(Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 30: our contest for disparaging tweets about historical or literary heroes. See bit.ly/invite1211.

THE LETTER RACKS FOR WEEK 1212

(for a printable four-column version of this list that might be easier to work with, see this week's [Style Conversational column](#), published late Thursday afternoon, Jan. 26)

AHINRSV
AHIPRSW
AIIMNNV
AILLNNO
AILOPTV
AIMMOSS
AINNTUY
ALLOPRY
ALLOTYY
ALOQRSU
AMNNOSW
AMRRSTY
AOOPPRS
AOORRTY

**BBEHINS
BBEORRY
BCEJSTU
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BEEHRWY
BEIOSTY
BGIORTY
BIKLNOT
BNNRSUU
CCIIRTU
CDELMSU
CEEGLNT
CEEIJOR
CEEISTU
CEELRTU
CEENNOV
CEFKLOT
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How Older Men Tighten Their Skin

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How To: Get Rid of Dark Under Eye Circles [Watch]

Health Headlines

Most Read

- 1** Barbara Hale, who played Della Street on 'Perry Mason,' dies at 94

- 2** Mike Connors, brawny star of 'Mannix' TV detective series, dies at 91

- 3** John Hurt, British actor who played desperate, eccentric characters, dies at 77

- 4** TV highlights: 'The Affair' finale on Showtime

- 5** Marsha Mason, still putting the pedal to the metal

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