

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1347:
Reologisms — we search for
meaner meaning

+ Add to list

Describe terms like ‘humortician’ and ‘Joan of Arkansas’; plus more ‘woe’ parodies



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

August 29






(Click [here to skip down](#) to the song parodies on “modern woes”)

Every year the Invitational runs several contests that ask readers to create new words (under various requirements) and define them, or show how they’d be used. Always, the Empress gets dozens of funny neologisms with funny definitions — and also always, some funny neologisms that made the E say, “There has to be *something* better for this word.”


This week: Write a clever, funny definition for any of the recent Loser-concocted words and names below, and/or show how they’d be used. NEW: Instead of the usual “Word: Definition” format, you may opt to describe the word first, then say something like: “This would be called a [word on the list].” Or you could present it in Q&A form: “What do you call a ...?” Or even A&Q, a.k.a. Ask Backwards. The E just wants to give the best chance to these inky words. As with any contest in which everyone’s working with the same list, we’ll surely get lots of entries with the same general idea, so it’ll

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- 1 What happened when Trump visited the African American History Museum, according to its founding director 
- 2 Bret Stephens is still talking about bedbugs — and now, the language of the Holocaust 
- 3 The quiet brilliance of Kenan Thompson, SNL’s longest-tenured cast member 
- 4 A black TV host’s co-anchor compared him to a gorilla. He responded with compassion. 
- 5 **Review**
The 10 books to read in September 

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words. As with any contest in which everyone's working with the same list, we'll surely get lots of entries with the same general idea, so it'll come down to the wording. And yes, if one of these words is yours, you can try again; the Empress doesn't remember who wrote them, anyway.

From Week 1333 (words that sound the same as existing words):

Bankquet • Canonbawl • Cusstomer • Exersighs • Fauxbia • Growtesque • Lacksative • Lewdicrouse • Mediochre • Nahledge • Quizine • Sughestion • Veritabull

From Week 1340 (plays on names):

Attila the Hon • Bill DeBlasé • Captain Rehab • Cardi O • F* Scott Fitzgerald • Gen. William Tecumseh Charmin • Genghis Cohen • Henry David Thorough • Horatio Algebra • Ikea Turner • IMH0tep • Joan of Arkansas • John F. Kidney • Kevin Costco • Lady Maga • Marco Pollo • Millard Feelmore • Richard Outhouse Nixon • Rupert Nerdoch • Rutherford B. Hazy • Samuel Morose • The Hardly Boys • The Right Brothers • Thomas Uvula Edison • Useless S. Grant**

From Week 1341 (combinations of two words): **Congressence •**

Egoliath • Epigrammar • Feloony • Fiberseerk • Flexicon • Foreplaywright • Governmentality • Humanemia • Humdrummer • Humortician • Kindergartenerd • Mitcharade • Politicalisthenics • Prignoramus • Quarrelative • Recantankerous • Robottleneck • Rumortality

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1347 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a kind of perverted Mr. Potato Head called **Mr. Turdy**. You actually form Mr. T yourself with the enclosed modeling clay, then stick on the appendages. Donated by Nan Reiner.

Other runners-up win our **"You Gotta Play to Lose"** Loser Mug or our **"Whole Fools"** Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, **"Too-Weak Notice"** or **"Certificate of (de) Merit."** First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday, Sept. 9**; results published Sept. 29 in print, Sept. 26 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Malady Melodies" is by Jesse Frankovich. 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](#) will return next week, but you can email her with questions at pat.myers@washpost.com.

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

MALADY MELODIES: MORE PARODIES ON 'MODERN WOES'

So that the Empress could slip away from her domicile, Mount Vermin, and tour her dominion — she and the Royal Consort have been meeting up with several out-of-town Losers in various out-of-town locales as far away as Chicago — we skipped one contest and this week share more of

FROM LAST WEEK

- 1 What happened when Trump visited the African American History Museum, according to its founding director 
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the many inkworthy parodies from [Week 1339](#), all on the theme of “modern woes.”

Click on the links in the titles to hear the songs the parodies are based on.

Modern woe: SHARK ATTACK

(To “[Food, Glorious Food](#)” from “[Oliver!](#)”)

Food, glorious food! This swimmer or that one?
I’m ravenous, dude — let’s go for the fat one!
My teeth are arranged in rows, conveniently double;
One chomp and a swimmer knows
He’s in trouble!
Keep eating all day (don’t mind all the screeches)!
Chow down before they start closing the beaches!
Two arms and a leg to start (let’s face it, they’re screwed!)
Oh, food, tasty fast food, soon-to-be chewed, glorious food!
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Modern woe: PHONE SPAM

I. (To “[Another Brick in the Wall](#)”)

I don’t need more interruptions,
Keep your “low-rate” insta-loan.
All this pitching has me twitching;
Rachel, please don’t call my phone.
Hey! Rachel! Eat this dial tone!
All in all, you’re just another fake robocall.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

II. (To “[Operator](#)”)

Regulator, what can you do to stop these calls?
See the number on my cellphone looks like my neighbor.
I’m threatened with arrest and huge fines to be assessed.
A guy tells me to pay now or face hard labor.

Trump has cut your staff down to the bone. Can you get over that,
And block all the spammers if you can find them,
So I can stop auto-forwarding calls on my phone,
Now that my caller’s known, but if you can’t do that,
I will instruct those trolls to call some bureaucrat,
Interrupting his meals, and *then* he’ll know how it feels.
(Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)

Modern woe: EVERYONE’S SO UNFAIR TO THE PRESIDENT

(To “[The Major-General’s Song](#)”)

I am the very model of a modern problem sufferer —
No leader’s first 900 days in office ever rougher were.
The nations that I threaten aren’t keen on just surrendering;
The people on my staff excel at resignation-tendering.

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I'm always getting questions from reporters unprofessional;
My conduct is reviewed by nosy oversight congressional.
I couldn't do an interview without committing perjury;
I'm surely fooling no one with my scalp reduction surgery.
I work as hard as any really rich important fella works,
And so I don't have time to figure out how an umbrella works.

My golfing buddies say, "You are the quintessential duffer, sir."
I am the very model of a modern problem sufferer!
(Jesse Frankovich, *Grand Ledge, Mich.*)

Modern woe: DISILLUSIONMENT

(To "[*Just My Imagination*](#)")

Each day on the Fox News
I listen as he tries to speak.
I write in my blog,
"I'm some kinda lucky freak
"To have a man like him,
It's like winning the Powerball!
Out of all politicians in the world, Trump can fix it all."
But it was just my miseducation, running away with me.
In my zeal for the MAGA Nation, it bigly got away from me . . .

Every night, on my couch, I pray: "Dear Lord, lookit, see?
Don't let those lib'rals get up in here this-a-way or will we surely die.

"Those satanic libertines,
When their schemes ensnare us,
There'll be a million guillotines!"
But in reality, it was Fox just trying to scare us.

Call it autointoxication,
Running away with me,
Ever since the inauguration, running away with me.
(Elden Carnahan, *Laurel, Md.*)

Modern woe: CAMPAIGN PROMISES

(To "[*The Candy Man*](#)")

Who can serve a sunrise
In a crunchy cone,
Cover it in chocolate and forgive your student loan?
The candidates! The candidates can!
The candidates can 'cause they stir it up with love
And make the future taste good.

Who can take a rainbow, wrap it in a sigh,
Add Medicare-for-all and make a Never-Orange Pie?
The candidates! The candidates can . . .

The candidates will make

News that's never fake
But satisfying and delicious!
Grant your most progressive wishes!
Cover preexisting condishes!

Who can take tomorrow, spritz with Spanish quotes,
Skirt around the sorrow and collect up all the votes?
[Blurt out 20 names simultaneously] can!
(Steve Bremner, Philadelphia)

Modern woe: COLLEGE ADMISSION FRAUD

(To “Born in the U.S.A.”)

Ranked last in my high school class;
Teachers told my parents that I'd never pass.
Father knows best but Mom knew better,
She even drafted my acceptance letter.
Got . . . into USC; Mom bribed . . .
Half of the faculty. She laid . . .
Down lots of cold hard green, told them . . .
I was the rowing queen . . .
(Frank Mann, Washington)

Modern woe: FOOD POISONING

(To “Born in the U.S.A.”)

Got back from the dive in town;
The illness struck and I was feelin' down.
Wound up on all fours like a little pup,
And I spent half the night just a-throwin' up.
Borne in the food I ate! It was borne in the food I ate!

Went to a little corner stand
Where they put a taco in my hand.
Sent me off to the bathroom, man,
To go and fill the whole damn can . . .
(Jesse Frankovich)

Modern woe: REVENGE PORN

(To “Hey Jude”)

Hey! Nudes could come to light
On a site for embittered exes,
I hope you don't send them steamy stockpiles,
Listing the files where all of our sex is.

Bed-cam set to record,
Vids were stored as we worshiped Venus,
And now this misgiving's troubling my sleep:
Has every creep on Pornhub now seen us?

'Cause often, when we got our kicks, I heard some clicks,
Your camera was right there digitizing,
'Cause if that stuff gets passed around, I'll be renowned —
I don't need co-workers fantasizing.

Hey, dude, our thing is done,
Had our fun — now, erase our nooky,
It's better for both of us if they're gone —
That back-hair lawn! You're like a Wookiee. (Wookiee, Wookie,
Wookiee, Wo okiee, like a Wookiee, yeah!) (*Duncan Stevens*)

Modern woe: FACEBOOK READS MY EMAIL

(To “[Bad Bad Leroy Brown](#)”)

Well I changed my Facebook status
To “engaged”, and suddenly,
Well, the page was filled with tons of ads that shilled
For the wedding industry/
Now, I could browse for DJ's,
Honeymoon resorts, and yes,
There were links to sites to order my invites
And of course, the perfect dress.

All those ads, ads, on my feed
Selling me everything I need,
Promised my special day
Was merely a click away.

But soon I wrote an email;
It was private, so I thought;
And I told my friend, “This is the end!”
He was cheating. He got caught.
It started up just minutes later,
Splashed right across my laptop screen:
“Hey there, you're single,” “Get out and mingle,”
“Welcome to the dating scene”

All those ads, ads, just for me
Targeted so specifically;
Internet, that's enough!
Stop snooping in my private stuff!
(*Hildy Zampella, Alexandria, Va.*)

Modern woe: AUTO-FLUSH

(to Amy Winehouse's “[Rehab](#)”)

They said use the automatic toilet, I said no, no, no.
It's got its own mind,
It watches my behind, you know, know, know.
I ain't gonna let
The stupid toilet get me wet
If it tries to flush itself on me while I go, go, go.

I'd rather stay at home all day
And use one that won't spray
'Cause I'd rather just jiggle on the handle
Than get an aquatic Roman candle.
When I need to be sitting down

FROM A ROOM TO BE SITTING DOWN

It will shoot me with seltzer like a clown ...

(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

Modern woe: OVERRATED HOTELS

(to “[There’s a Small Hotel](#)”)

There’s a small hotel where we stayed a spell

To do a little celebrating.

Had no minibar, WiFi, VCR.

Bizarre it got a five-star rating.

Looking out the window, we

Could see that rain was pouring.

Tried but failed ignoring next door’s snoring.

When we bid farewell to that small hotel,

Our Yelp review was devastating.

(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Modern woe: DISAPPEARING REMOTE

(To “[Some Enchanted Evening](#)”) |

One enchanted evening, you will spy the clicker,

You will spy the clicker across the family room

But somehow you’ll know, you’ll know even then,

That somehow you’ll lose it again and again.

One distressing evening, children will be laughing,

You may hear them laughing across a cluttered room,

And later that night, when they’re put to bed,

The sound of their taunting will ring in your head.

Where did they hide it, you may never know;


One thing’s for certain: You’re gonna miss your show.

(Dave Airozo, Silver Spring, Md.)

See the first set of Week 1339 parodies at wapo.st/invite1343.

Still running — deadline Tuesday night, Sept. 3: Our contest for “alphabetically balanced” words. See wapo.st/invite1346.

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