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Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1424: We Bee back — a neologism contest

Our nod to the NYT Spelling Bee game. Plus winning ‘work song’ parodies.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers

Feb. 18, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. EST

Add to list

(Click [here](#) to skip down to the winning “work songs”)

K+CEHINT > Inktini: A cocktail you don’t want to sip when wearing white. “Black raspberry liqueur for the bridal toast? That’s going to make one bad inktini.”

K+CEHINT > Enchicken: To instill fear. “He didn’t need a single tweet to enchicken 43 senators.”

H+CDEIKL > Hick chili: Roadkill possum stew with notes of squirrel.

In April 2018, in a nod to her traitorous guilty-pleasure addiction to the then-weekly New York Times game Spelling Bee, the Empress ran a contest to make up words from some of the Bee’s letter sets. Soon after, the Times turned the thing into a [daily interactive game](#) that’s soooo addictive and sometimes maddening — especially if you keep finding words past the “Genius” level and go for the whole list, “Queen Bee” — well, the E will not comment on the number of times in a given day that she will stare at seven letters on her phone.

THE NEW SPACE ECONOMY

IN A MORGAN STANLEY MINUTE

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ADAM JONAS

Global Head of Auto and Shared Mobility

WE ARE Morgan Stanley

The way the NYT game works: Constructors Sam Ezersky (online) and Frank Longo (the Sunday magazine) present six letters of the alphabet circling, beehive-style, a seventh letter. And you list as many real words as you can that include that central letter plus any of the other six, used as often as you want in the word. Which brings us to this week: **From any of the 30 Spelling Bee letter sets listed at the bottom of this page, coin a new term or phrase and describe it humorously, as in the examples above. You must use the first letter in the set (anywhere in the word) plus any or all of the others, as often as you like.** Please begin each entry with the letter set

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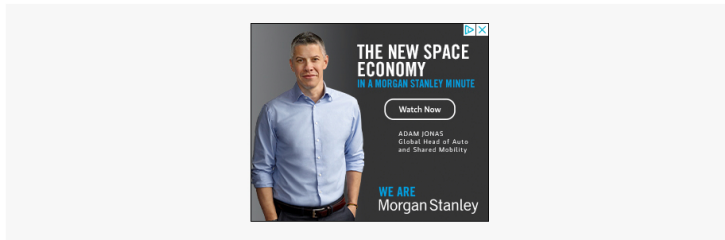
- 1 How cartoonists are roasting Ted Cruz’s Texas-to-Cancun getaway
- 2 Luke Combs apologizes for Confederate flag imagery as tough conversations consume Nashville
- 3 Here’s why deep down we like rewatching the same old movies and shows — especially during the pandemic
- 4 ‘Bachelor’ fans have been talking about diversity issues for years. Now they’re at their breaking point.

you're using; this will help the Empress sort the entries. There's no way she'll look through 30 sets to figure which one you used.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1424 (no capitals in the Web address).

Deadline is Monday, March 1; results appear March 21 in print, March 18 online.

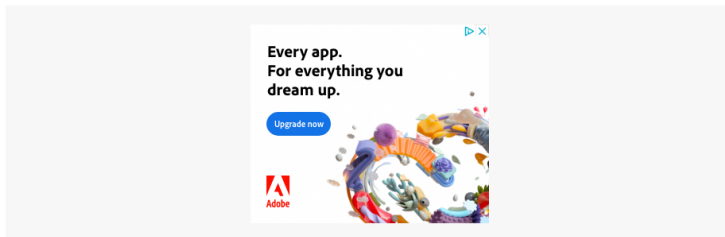
Winner gets the **Clowning Achievement**, our new Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the **Noise! Maker**, a yo-yo-size gadget promising "6 awful sounds!" including "nervous," "up tight" and "ripper." If these mini-bleats are supposed to sound like farts, they don't. Donated by Dave Prevar, who needs no electronic assistance, thank you very much.



Other runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" **Loser Mug** or our "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "No 'Bility" or "Punder-achiever." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Toil and Treble" is by Tom Witte; Tom and Jeff Contompasis both submitted the honorable-mentions subhead. 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. See this week's, published late Thursday, Feb. 18, at wapo.st/conv1424.

New "You're Invited" episode! Mike Gips chats with the very funny Loser Danielle Nowlin, who talks about the Invite as a creative outlet for a stay-at-home mom with three young kids. **See** bit.ly/invite-podcast.



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

Toil and treble: Winning songs about jobs from Week 1420

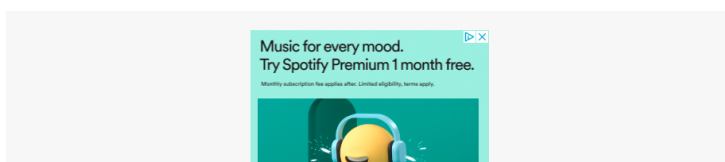
In [Week 1420](#), prompted by the TikTok sea chantey craze, we asked for songs about a particular job, or to work by. If you don't remember a tune or would just like to sing along, click the link in the title to hear the original song. As always happens with our song contests, there were far too many inkworthy ones to include here. Over the next week or so, I'll post some "noinks" in the [Style Invitational Devotees](#) Facebook group (join and the Devs will anagram your name).

4th place:

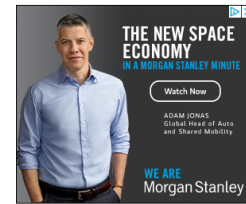
CORPORATE CEO (To "Let It Snow")

Oh, our bottom line makes us pensive,
With employees so expensive.
They are costing us too much dough.
Let them go, let them go, let them go!

While employees are really assets,
We must look at all the facets;
For our costs to come way down low,
Let them go, let them go, let them go!



5 Kim Kardashian files for divorce from Kanye West

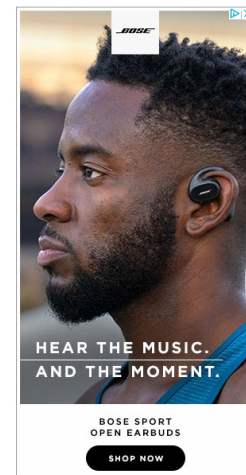


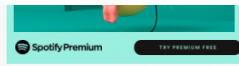
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At the start, it may take a while
To get used to their downhearted mood.
But just let them go with a smile.
(Cut down the chance we'll be sued!)

There are some who may find it frightful
And to you, they might act spiteful.
Just keep your head way down low,
Let them go, let them go, let them go! (*Irene Plotzker, Wilmington, Del.*)

3rd place:

Mortician (*To "My Favorite Things"*)

You may have gone to the greatest physician,
But, in the end, you will need the mortician.
I live for funerals (yes, that's a pun)
Your life is ending, but mine has begun.

To the embalmer for long preservation,
Or you might think about speedy cremation.
Pick out a casket and pick out a hearse:
All of these cost, so just keep out your purse.

Family's crying,
When you're dying
You should plan ahead.
You don't want your loved ones to pay for my bills
For years just because you're dead. (*Louise Dodenhoff Hauser, Sarasota, Fla.*)

2nd place

and the screaming monkey slingshot:

Obstetrician

(*To "The Erie Canal"*)

I've gotta track this baby's locale,
Two more hours in the birthin' canal.
This mom-to-be's one irate gal,
Two more hours in the birthin' canal,
I've known some infants in my day,
Pulled 'em out to earn my pay,
And every inch of the way I know,
From uterus to what's below ...



Breathe! Push! Nurses gather round,
Breathe! Push! 'Cause I think I see a crown.
And you know when she's in labor,
Pitocin is your pal
If you've ever navigated the birthin' canal. (*Mark Raffinan, Reston, Va.*)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Cosmetic surgeon

(*To "I Saw Her Standing There"*)

If you are past 39
And your form's in decline,
Well, there may be parts that I can help repair,
So how 'bout I tuck in your tummy, ooh!
And lift your derriere?


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Well, people are vain
But, hey, I can't complain
'Cause self-regard made me a millionaire
There's still time to look like Jane Fonda, ooh!
When you're on Medicare.

Well, it may be crass but you'll love your ass
And your face without a line!

Oh your skin may shine at night
And it may feel kinda tight,
And when you laugh, your mouth may feel real sore.
But you'll never look like your mother, ooh,
Once you come in through my door. *(Bob Kruger, Rockville, Md.)*

Heigh-no, heigh-no:Honorable mentions

GOP senator

(To "I've Been Working on the Railroad"):

I've been working in the fail mode
All the livelong day
I won't vote for legislation
Joe Biden sends my way,
Have to think about my future: Compromise? What for?
Dems must fail, because I'm running in 2024.



2024, 2024, that's just four more years to go,
2024, 2024, four more years of "just say no." *(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)*



Capitol Police officer *(To "A Policeman's Lot Is Not a Happy One" by Gilbert and Sullivan)*

(By Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore; performed by Jonathan and singer John T. K. Scherch)

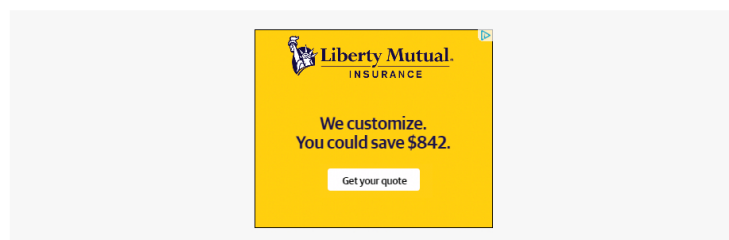
[If you don't see the video on your screen, click here.](#)

Anarchist day trader (To "Under the Boardwalk")

Oh when the market dives and the S&P index is chillin'
While the short sellers thrive, tracking losers and make a killin'
Go buy some GameStop and find your niche,
If a million more suckers will follow, you'll be instantly rich

Buy some GameStop, just roll the dice
Buy some GameStop, and push the price
Buy some GameStop, we'll be ownin' the hedges
Buy some GameStop, Push them off the ledges
Oh NO! PRICE DROP!

Game stopped! *(Frank Mann, Washington)*



Hitman mob informant (To “*On the Street Where You Live*”)

I have often walked down this street before,
But I never saw you turn a snitch to meat before.
All at once do I keep a wary eye,
Knowing I’m on the street where you’d shiv.

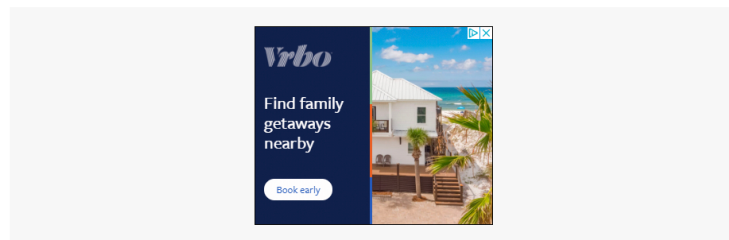
Yes, I testified in that murder case
And explained you’d told us, “Please remove the victim’s face.”
You skipped town, they say, and yet anyway
I feel tense on the street where you’d shiv.

And oh, the troubling feeling
That, oh no, somehow you are near.
The stomach-bubbling feeling
That your goons, or you, may suddenly appear.

People stop and stare; they sure bother me
’Cause I wonder whether they’re employed Godfatherly.
I’ll get out of here! I won’t live in fear
Knowing I’m on the street where you’d shiv. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

Jewish space laser wielder (To “*White Christmas*”)

I’m aiming Jewish space lasers.
I make them bright and fast and hot.
I start work on Monday
And work through Sunday
(Though I don’t work on Shabbat).
I’m aiming Jewish space lasers.
I launch them from a trampoline.
When you see these words on your screen,
They’ll be coming from Ms. Taylor Greene. (*Barbara Sarshik, McLean, Va.*)



The Librarian’s Lament, or The Cartful Drudger (To “*Consider Yourself*”)

Written and sung by children’s librarian Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.

If you don’t see the video on your screen, click on this link.

Coronavirus vaccine nurses (To “*Lincoln Park Pirates*”)

The laptops are on in Potomac tonight,
And everyone’s tapping at screens,
They want an appointment, no more disappointment
For those with appropriate means.
They’ve shared every link they can find with their friends,
Doesn’t matter who they’re for.
The front of the line seems to suit them just fine,
But they’ll sneak in the clinic’s back door.

Go away-ay, send them away,
They shouldn’t be cutting the line.
You don’t live in the county, you can’t pay a bounty,
And no one will care if you whine.
Go away-ay, send them away,
We’re nurses with covid vaccine.
We’ve seen the abuses, heard all the excuses,
And don’t care if you vent your spleen. (*Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.*)

Caterer (To “*Wellerman*”)

A kitchen called Gourmet Paris, purveyor of victuals and fine Chablis,
Was catering lunch for a VIP, a techie CEO [huh!]
[Supervisor] "Chef needs his mise-en-place,
The grass-fed beef and the Vin d'Alsace,
"Hoist crates, and let's haul ass,
Let's load that truck and go!"

The truck had left the downtown shop when from outside came a fright'ning pop:
The truck lurched off to a halting stop as the left front tire did blow [huh!]
Soon may the Triple-A free
Us from this heat — temp is 93!
Save the artisanal brie
And Beaujolais Nouveau.

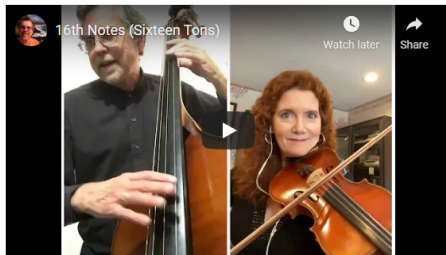
Will help come? We have no clue
But we've cases of wine and a nice Bresse Bleu!
Let's quaff the *haut grand cru* —
Just don't let management know [huh!] (*Caterer Mary Ann Henningsen Frankenfeld, Oakland, Calif.*)

New York City police officer (To "YMCA")

Young man, lie face down on the ground
I said, young man, don't you make one more sound
You can stay there, with your hands on your head
Or we'll do the hard way instead
It's fun to work at the NYPD ... (*Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.*)

Retiree (To "When I'm Sixty-Four")

Now that you're old, with nothing but time,
You've got priority
For signing up to get yourself a new vaccine,
Instead of staying in quarantine.
Log on, pick a spot: tomorrow at 3?
Oops! There's one thing more:
Our site's not created to be navigated
If you're over 64. (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif., age 66, who'll be getting his second shot this week*)



Orchestral violinist (To "Sixteen Tons")

(By Jonathan Jensen, performed by Jonathan, a Baltimore Symphony Orchestra bassist; and BSO violinist Ellen Pendleton Troyer) **If you don't see the video on your screen, click on this link.**

Piano teacher (To "Under the Sea")

This student: no sense of rhythm, can barely decipher scores.
There's no way to keep time with him; the metronome he ignores.
His chords, a chaotic jumble, his ear's just a block of tin.
"Row, Row, Row Your Boat" he'll bumble; and next, to my great chagrin,

He'll blunder in C! Blunder in C!
Chord structure losing, even when choosing easiest key!
Sure, he'll miss all the sharps and flats;
If he were a movie, he'd be "Cats."
Hardly believin' — this kid can even
Blunder in C! (*Duncan Stevens*)

HR manager (To "Firework")

Do you ever feel like you're just a nag,
Spelling out the rules, bein' such a drag?
Do you ever feel you can never win,
Pushin' time cards out, and log 'em comin' in,
Do you ever feel the paper's piled up deep
There's so much red tape, you need to make a quick escape,
Do you know that there's still a chance for you?
Do what you love to do:
You just gotta pull the plug
It's like a drug
And leave no doubt,

Cast someone out!
'Cause baby you're a firin' jerk,
Go on and do your very worst,
A second chance? That's no! No! No!
As you tell 'em it's goodbye! Bye! Bye!
Yeah, firin' is your dire work,
You're makin' sure their bubble's burst,
As you tell 'em they must go! Go! Go!
And you're gonna make 'em cry! Cry! Cry! (*Mark Raffman*)

Maryland public school teacher (*To "If I Only Had a Brain"*)

I could get to classroom teachin' instead of just beseechin'
"Please turn on your Zoom screen"
And my kids I'd be knowin', we'd be happy, safe, and growin'
If we only had vaccine,

We'd explore and learn in person, our test scores wouldn't worsen,
I'd cut down on caffeine.
But a plan's what we're needin', we could STEM all the bleedin'
If we only had vaccine.

Oh, I just wanna try
To open my class door,
Safely doing all the things I did before
And not be called a union whore.

I recall when we were "heroes," but now we're less than zeros
Our governor's just mean.
I'll go back, I'm not lyin' when I'm not afraid of dyin':
Please just give me the vaccine. (*Elementary school teacher Dave Airozo, Silver Spring, Md.*)

And Last: The Post Copy Editor's Chantey (*To "Sixteen Tons"*)

Some people say the news is made outta ink
But, without an editor, the copy might stink.
Make sure the spelling is right and that the prose ain't too lame
And most of all, don't forget to disclaim!

I edit sixteen thousand inches of text,
Need a rubber stamp for what I got to do next:
Every three or four lines, or maybe five at the most:
"(Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.)" (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

And Even Laster (*To "The Major-General's Song"*)

I am the very model of a humor contest editor;
Of those who merit Invite ink I am the only creditor.
Each week I read a jillion jokes to find the best material,
Deciding which to print with my authority imperial.
I judge the entries blindly with dispassionate sincerity,
Rewarding those exhibiting the maximum hilarity.
By sending me your efforts there's a tiny possibility
You'll win some crappy prize that is devoid of all utility.
I thank my many readers for their never-ending loyalty,
Supporting my position as tiara-wearing royalty.
I kill the hopes of Losers with the prowess of a predator —
I am the very model of a humor contest editor! (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 22: Our contest for anagrams of headlines.
See wapo.st/invite1423.

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The Style Invitational and Style Conversational go online every Thursday, complete with links to the
columns.

**Here are 30 letter sets (most from 2018) from the online Spelling Bee from which you
can create new words or phrases. The term must include the first letter (anywhere in the
word) plus any of the other letters, repeated as often as you like. You may enter as many
as 25 terms in all and may do several from the same set.**

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K+C E H I N T

A+C F I L R Y

A+B I L T V Y

O+A F H L T Y

D+ALNRUY
H+ACDNO
T+HILMNO
V+AEGLUY
U+ACNORT
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0 Comments



Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. Follow [Twitter](#)

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