

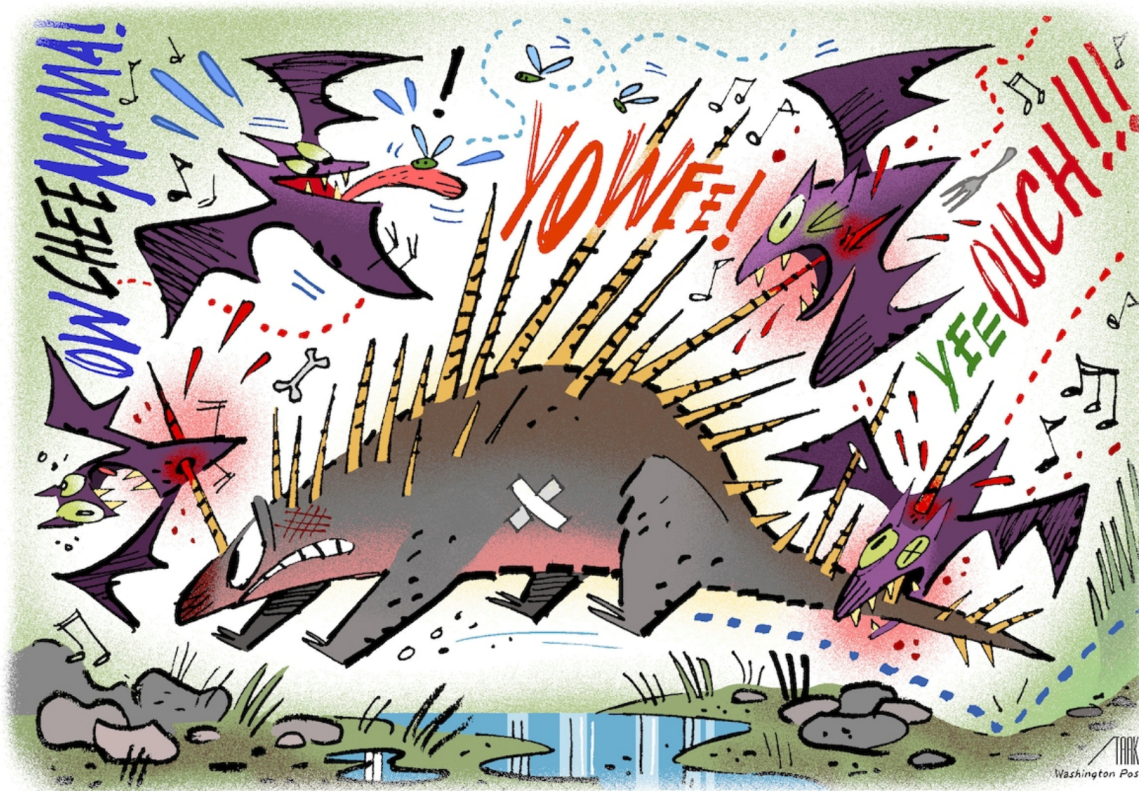
# Style Invitational Week 1512: Alphabetter

Write something with 26 words, each beginning with a different letter. Plus 'Splendooferous' and more neologisms.



By [Pat Myers](#)

October 27, 2022 at 9:49 a.m. EDT



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)



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**All bats can dive eagerly for gnats. However, in jungle kingdom locales, many nosh on porcupine quills — razor-sharp. The undaunted vermin wolf: xylophonically yelping zealously.**

This week's contest was suggested by Loser Al Lubran, who saw it in Marilyn vos Savant's even-older-than-the-Invite "Ask Marilyn" column in the Sunday newspaper insert Parade, which used to be a huge magazine but is now the size of a postage stamp. (Well, bigger than most

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postage stamps, but the paper is thinner.)

Anyway, back in August, Marilyn asked readers to send her sentences of 26 words that each started with a different letter of the alphabet — and the words could be in any order. Two months later [she ran five winners](#) from what she said were 2,000 entrants. The Empress was going to use one of them as an example, but wheeee! In came Our Own Bob Staake with the sentence above — one that uses the words in alphabetical order. (But you don't have to!)

We're going to make one significant change to Marilyn's contest, though. Note how Bob's sentence uses "xylophonically." Vos Savant's five winners used: 1. X-rays. 2. Xylophone. 3. Xylophones. 4. X-ray. 5. X-rays. So the E will offer you an out, for variety's sake.

**This week: Write a 26-word sentence or other passage whose words each start with a different letter — except that the X in the X-word may appear elsewhere in the word, as long as the word has an "ex" syllable.** (Okay: "EXtra." Okay: "MetroseXual." Not okay: "FoX.") If the X-word does start with X, that's swell, too. Hyphenated words may count as one word or two. The aim is to sound natural and to make sense. And, yup, be funny, plz.

Submit up to 25 entries at [wapo.st/enter-invite-1512](http://wapo.st/enter-invite-1512) (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday night, Nov. 7**; results appear Sunday, Nov. 27, in print; Wednesday, Nov. 23, online.



Not for use in science class: This week's second prize. (Pat Myers/The Washington Post)

**Winner gets the [Clowning Achievement](#)**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives this Halloween week (though in the Loserly Way, the winner won't receive it until around Thanksgiving), a **genuine plastic spider skeleton, complete with those spider**

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**Other runners-up** win their choice of our [“For Best Results, Pour Into Top End” Loser Mug](#) or our [“Whole Fools” Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get one of our [lusted-after Loser magnets](#), “A Small Jester of Appreciation” or “Close, but Ceci N’est Pas un Cigare.” First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/inviteFAQ](#). The headline “NDELible Ink” is by Jesse Frankovich; Jesse also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](#); follow Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](#); follow [@StyleInvite](#) on Twitter.

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**The Style Conversational:** The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week’s at [wapo.st/conv1512](#).

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

## NDELible ink: Neologisms from Week 1508

[Week 1508](#) — in honor of Hall of Fame Loser Elden Carnahan, who’s retiring his entirely volunteer post as Keeper of the Invite Stats at [NRARS.org](#) — was one of our Tour de Fours neologism contests; the coined word or phrase had to include the letter block ELDN, in any order, but together.

### 4th place:

**Return to slender:** Giving up the peanut-butter-banana-and-bacon sandwiches. (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

### 3rd place:

**Impersonnel department:** HR reps who refer to workers as “human capital.” (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

### 2nd place

and the [mid-’90s Loser T-shirt](#):



**Sinfandel:** Its bold, alluring flavor is often followed by a bitter aftertaste — and an indelible stain. (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

## And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

**Splendooferous:** Magnificently stupid. “Did you see that the [Commanders were selling a mug](#) with a picture of Washington state behind the W? Now *that* is splendooferous!” (*Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.*)

## Subprime LENDIng: Honorable mentions

**Forenoon delight:** That’d be coffee, followed by more coffee. (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)

**Bidenly:** Alternating between impressive competence and cringeworthy blunders. “Phil was absolutely bidenly in his eulogy at Kevin’s funeral today, telling several inspirational stories and then inviting Kevin up to share some as well.” (*Jon Carter, Fredericksburg, Va.*)

**Bundle of oy:** A toddler who makes you wonder why you were so eager to be a bubbe. (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

**Modelnibble:** A very skimpy snack. “Victoria knew her zipper would pop if she had a proper meal, so she opted for a modelnibble of two celery sticks and a raisin.” (*Dave Airozo, Silver Spring, Md.*)

**Kennel Dates:** From the maker of Tinder, an app for your pooch: sniff-and-swipe! (*Chris Doyle*)

**Hot Cross Bundle:** Special package for music teachers that comes with 30 plastic recorders and a year’s supply of earplugs. (*Daniel Galef, Tallahassee*)

**Manhandlebar:** What they really ought to call a nightstick. (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)

**Paddle Nerf:** For those intimidated by pickleball. (*Roy Ashley, Washington*)

**Schadenloiter:** Hang around to watch the imminent fail. “As soon as Josh said, ‘Hold my beer,’ we decided to schadenloiter a bit.” (*Chris Doyle*)



**Sudden liberal:** A Republican who learns his mistress is pregnant.  
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**Adlent:** The most festive season of the church year in New Orleans.  
“Adlent already? Party hearty, it’s almost Mardi!” (Beverley Sharp,  
Montgomery, Ala.)

**Al dental:** When pasta is so undercooked that it breaks a molar. (Jeff  
Hazle, San Antonio)

**Applendectomy:** Getting rid of your iPhone. “With that latest update  
of iOS, I had an emergency Applendectomy and went straight for an  
Android.” (Chris Doyle)

**Ax Handel:** What the choral director facing yet another “Messiah”  
would like to do just this once. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

**Baldencare:** Federal prescription program that subsidizes Rogaine.  
(Roy Ashley)

**Bannedleader:** What Rep. Kevin McCarthy fears he’ll become if he  
stops whistling Dixie. (Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)

**Befundlement:** The satisfyingly pleasant confusion one initially feels  
when doing a puzzle. “The Thursday and Friday crosswords are a  
challenge, sure, but for peak befundlement, you have to try the  
Saturday.” (Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase, Md.)

**Beholden Caulfield:** The protagonist grows up and takes a job on  
Madison Avenue to pay off his student loans. (Karen Lambert)

**Bendlam:** Chaos and confusion in the yoga studio. “It was bendlam in  
class today when we tried putting our toes behind our ears.” (Judy  
Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.)

**Bidenloquaciousness:** Inability to know when to stop talking. “Even  
when the whispers spread through the audience and his aides rolled  
their eyes, the candidate’s bidenloquaciousness kept him from closing  
his trap.” (Dave Airozo)

**Clandelabra:** Extremely complicated family tree. “When Aunt Ethel  
married her first cousin George, that sure tangled up the clandelabra.”  
(Duncan Stevens)

**Colonel Dijon:** Character in the French version of Clue. Contrary to  
rumors, he does not immediately surrender when accused. (Jon Carter)

**Colonel Dynamics:** A fledgling defense contractor. (Duncan Stevens)

**Dawndle:** To move about listlessly until that early morning cup of coffee. (*Jeff Contompasis*)

**Denial deniers:** The only kind not welcomed under the GOP's big tent. (*Kevin Dopart*)

**Eldnerdly:** What is Jeopardy's largest viewer demographic? (*Steve Smith*)

**Friendliar:** A companion who always answers, "You look so good in that!" and assures you in every instance that you're the one who was wronged. (*Jon Carter*)

**Heldnoser:** A voter who casts a ballot for a candidate they don't really like. "Hillary could have won if she'd done better with the heldnoser crowd, but they just stayed home." (*Dave Airozo*)

**Idle Nine:** The Nationals during the playoffs. (*Jerry Birchmore, Springfield, Va.*)

**Swindler's List:** "Okay, let's send them this email saying, ['It is IMPERATIVE that we win BIG in November,'](#) and we should net a quick 7 mil to pay my lawyers." (*Jonathan Jensen*)

**Lendowment:** Money loaned without interest, usually from the Bank of Mom and Dad. (*Barbara Turner, Takoma Park, Md.*)

**Lidl enema:** You can find just about anything in that supermarket's variety aisle. This one's next to the ratchet wrenches and the tube socks. (*Dave Prevar, Annapolis*)

**Lindellicate situation:** When you've lost an election and need the soft touch of a pillow salesman to overthrow your system of government. (*Jon Carter*)

**Linkedln:** If you try to post a profile here, clearly you didn't check your I's and l's to watch for phishing sites, so you don't deserve a cybersecurity job anyway. (*Karen Lambert*)

**Love handle nest:** The now-folded-up location of that tattoo I got 30 years and 40 pounds ago. (*Roxi Slempe, Bariloche, Argentina*)

**Misshandled:** "It's pretty clear that Dan Snyder has badly misshandled matters in the team's front office." (*Steve Smith*)

**Noodle nibs:** Those broken bits of spaghetti that fly out of the box and land everywhere except in the pot. (*Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village,*

*Mich.)*

**Offendling:** A White student who complains that history class made him feel bad. “Travis’s parents were outraged that their offendling had been exposed to Harriet Tubman.” (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

**Oil ’n Desert!:** Failed Saudi Tourist Bureau slogan. (*Mark Raffman*)

**Olden daze:** When your memories are betrayed by your memory. “Kids, when I was your age, I .... uh ... well, I was, once.” (*Pete Morelewicz, Fredericksburg, Va.*)

**Porndeli:** Everyone orders the tongue. (*Frank Mann, Washington*)

**Shiv and Let Shiv:** An experimental laissez-faire program that federal prisons quickly dropped. (*Chris Doyle*)

**The Golden Grillz:** A sitcom featuring four aging rappers who share a crib in Miami. (*Chris Doyle*)

**The UnBundler:** What they’re calling Tom Brady’s divorce lawyer. (*Dan Helming, Whitemarsh, Pa.*)

**Vendliness:** What Amway sellers exude. “I just adore your new haircut, Jess! You know what would go great with that? A new pizza stone! I have just the thing.” (*Pete Morelewicz*)

**Vlad-enlistment:** Conscription. “Yuri found himself Vlad-enlisted by “recruiters” who showed up at his 40th-birthday party.” (*Dan Helming*)

**Ye Olde News:** The Post’s print edition. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

**Pundle:** Collective noun for wordsmiths. “There were at least two dozen of us at the last Loser brunch — quite the pundle.” (*Jeff Contompasis*)

**And Last: End Loser:** The person credited with the “And Last” ink. (*Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.*)

**Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 31:** Our “air quotes” contest to find words inside other words. See [wapo.st/invite1511](http://wapo.st/invite1511).

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By [Pat Myers](#)

Pat Myers is the "Empress" of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's famed contest for clever, edgy, wacky humor and wordplay. In the role since 2003 – 900-plus contests ago – she writes the column and is its only judge. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook.  [Twitter](#)