

## DIVERSIONS

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## Ole Misc.: More ink from recent contests

BY PAT MYERS

The Empress went off this week to progress through her overseas dominions, so this week's column was done in advance. This week we share more honorable mentions from a few recent weeks.

**Week 1062: Poems from the headlines**

**Md. police chief unwittingly quotes joke article while testifying against decriminalization:** Beware this noxious Killer Weed! the sheriff blustered, lyrical, Without a clue the article he quoted was satirical. Some quick research and he'd have known. But did he bother? Nope.

So here's to you, Annapolis! You gave us one straight dope. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

**Bacon app for the iPhone:**

You're zonked because you stayed out late — your sleep is like a coma;

Then suddenly you're waking to a fabulous aroma!  
And next, the sound of sizzling — all thoughts of sleep have flown; But then your stomach growls and says, "It's just your stupid phone." (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

**Box of gold coins discovered:**

Out walking dogs, some couple found  
A gold-filled strongbox on the ground;  
My dog walks, too, yield something strong,  
But my dog's doing it all wrong. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

**Thousands of people post their own versions of "Let It Go":**

You hear that tune from "Frozen" — it starts off nice and low.  
"Hey, I could sing that song!" you think. "I'll make a video!  
Click 'post' and I'll be famous!" At least that's what you dream,  
You'll surely equal Ms. Menzel (and top Adele Dazeem).  
But you're not first to think that you should sing that song onstage:  
A million screechy takes already howl from YouTube's page.  
Another cover of this song?  
The world may not survive it,  
So please: Rethink your dream of fame, and "Let It Go" in private. (Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge)

**Bitcoin is seen as an ephemeral currency**

In the past, money's value was judged with our teeth;  
We bit coins to confirm they were real.  
But a bitcoin's just data, no gold underneath;  
Bitten bits don't make much of a meal. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

**Girls diet to create "high gap":**

This body shape's clearly unwise,  
But it's skinniness many girls prize.  
They're the teens, it appears,  
Who have gaps 'tween their ears  
Just as wide as the gaps 'tween their thighs. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

**Remains of Europe's largest dinosaur discovered in Portugal:**

Many million years ago, way back in times Jurassic,  
There lived a Torvosaurus, and his grumpiness was classic.  
He weighed five tons, had four-inch teeth — he wasn't like the others;  
A carnivore, he loved to eat his wimpy vegan brothers.  
They've found this dino's embryo, but who will have the nerve?  
The guy who tries to clone him could wind up as an hors d'oeuvre. (Beverly Sharp)

**Week 1063: Compare 2 items from a list of 16**

**The polar vortex and the Arizona legislature:** Both can cause suffering with their extreme dips. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

**The Arizona legislature and XL jeggings:** One occupies the Valley of the Sun; the other accentuates the valley of sin. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

**A Fleetwood Mac reunion and the Arizona legislature:** Although both are old and white, only the Mac says it's okay to go your own way. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

**Adele Dazeem and a Sochi hotel:** Both evoke memories of Johns that didn't do their job. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.; Jeff Covell, Arlington)

**West African fufu and the Human Barbie:** The fufu can be described as doughlike yam. Human Barbie can be described as "Yo, like damn!" (Mike Gips, Bethesda)



BOB STAAKE

New contest for Week 1069:  
It's a small, small word

**There is a name for people who use big words a lot. But you won't find it in these lines — For on the list it's not.**

It's undeniable that the Empress — along with the Invitational itself — has been known to gravitate toward the sesquipedalian. But we like things plain and simple, too. As long as they're clever and funny.

Fifty-four-time Loser Ben Aronin recently showed us a cartoon from Randall Munroe's nerdy insightful Web comic "XKCD." Headlined "US Space Team's Up Goer Five," it's a blueprint-like drawing of the Saturn V rocket, surrounded with explanatory labels. But in a highly un-technical-diagram manner, every word of every label has been taken from a list of "the ten hundred words people use most often": Thus, one tank is described as containing "more breathing-type air," while another has "more funny voice air."

Ben correctly smelled Invite contest, noting that the Losers had recently outpenned a roomful of monkeys while using the words from Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" speech. So this week: **Write a humorous poem of no more than eight lines — it doesn't have to rhyme — using only the top 1,000 words** on Wiktionary.org's list of the most common among 20 million words found in movie and TV scripts. **See the list at bit.ly/invite-1000words.** You may use a word more than once; and you may add "-s," "-ed" or "-ing" to a word. You may not combine two or more of the words into a single word. (You can check your work by just typing into the search bar on the list page and seeing where each word falls on the list, or you can use the nifty tool at splasho.com/upgoer6.

**Wait, there's more!** It's obviously more of a challenge to use less of the list: **The Empress will award a runner-up-level prize to the inking entry whose least common word is highest on the list;** in the example above, by Washington Post Doggerel Laureate Gene Weingarten, the lowest-ranked word is "list," at 919. If you want to be considered, include that rank number with your entry. It still has to be good and funny enough to get ink.

**Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial,** the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives an excellent little souvenir snow dome from oh-so-snowy San Francisco, donated by Recidivist Prize Donor Cheryl Davis; it contains a little cable car that slides back and forth in the snow when you tip the dome, and, not least, it is topped by a perky mermaid who is not wearing her merbra.

**Other runners-up** win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, either the Po' Wit Laureate or Puns of Steel. First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 5; results published May 25 (online May 22). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 1069" 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](http://wapo.st/InvRules). Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev), and click "like" on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at [bit.ly/inkofday](http://bit.ly/inkofday).

**Week 1064: If a moment in history were different 1 million-2 million years ago:**

What if *Homo erectus* had never flourished? High school anthropology classes would certainly be less amusing. (Jeff Contompasis)

**3500 B.C.:** If the wheel had not been invented, then Pat Sajak would just be another weird guy to Vanna White. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)

**551 B.C.:** What if Confucius had been born mute? There would be nothing inside your fortune cookie. (Beverly Sharp)

**1513:** If Ponce de Leon had found the Fountain of Youth in Florida, then most of the people who live there today would look a lot better in swimsuits. (Mark Raffman)

**1585:** After a historic event, Elizabeth I is no longer the "Virgin Queen." Sir Walter Raleigh, in a fit of jealousy, calls the New World land he claimed not Virginia but Nicotinia, after his new passion. (Barnaby Roberts, Reedville, Va.)

**1752:** If Benjamin Franklin had decided that flying a kite in a storm really was a pretty stupid thing to do, then wedding DJs would be stuck playing the Steam-Powered Slide. (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

**1881:** What if the construction of the Panama Canal had never started? First, today's environmentalists would bemoan

the wasted fuel from shipping around South America and insist that a shorter route be cut through pristine jungle. Second, the world would be bereft of one of its greatest palindromes. (Jeff Contompasis)

**Week 1065: Change an "A-and-B" phrase and describe the result**

**Down and thirty:** Having an early midlife crisis. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

**Pluck and cover:** Instructions from "The Book of Simple Thanksgiving Recipes." (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

**Get up and glow:** What you should do if you get knocked down by a nuclear bomb. (Beverly Sharp)

**Lover and done with:** A one-night stand. (Beverly Sharp)

**Rice and 'shine:** Must-haves at an Appalachian wedding. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

**Rump and coke:** Two components of rap videos. (Mike Ostapij, Mount Pleasant, S.C.)

**Bed and butter:** The only scene remembered from "Last Tango in Paris." (Jeff Covell)

**Alive and, well . . . :** Some days are just like that. (Frank Osen)

**Still running — deadline Monday night: Our "If I were . . ." contest. See bit.ly/invite1068.**

## No. 212

BY PATRICK BERRY EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>32</b> Actor John of "Deadwood"	<b>61</b> Voicer of Sideshow Bob on "The Simpsons"	<b>10</b> Went astray	<b>37</b> Search more effectively, maybe
<b>1</b> Colorful shooters	<b>34</b> Tropical cousins of raccoons	<b>6</b> Dead Sea, e.g.	<b>12</b> By surprise	<b>38</b> States with zoning
<b>7</b> Bar room?	<b>36</b> Crib sheet users	<b>13</b> Past history	<b>15</b> Womenswear section	<b>41</b> Like dog toys
<b>11</b> Under goer?	<b>37</b> Faculty group?	<b>21</b> Snoopy's doghouse, at times	<b>28</b> "Hotter ___ July" (1980 Stevie Wonder album)	<b>44</b> Intimidating words
<b>14</b> Buff stuff	<b>38</b> Platform part	<b>4</b> Company boycotted by the band Pearl Jam	<b>31</b> Border-crossing requirement	<b>45</b> Army general Clark who ran for president in 2004
<b>16</b> One or more	<b>39</b> Backside	<b>5</b> Eastern ___ (extinct North American mammal)	<b>33</b> Help get the job done	<b>47</b> Shoestring-catch move
<b>17</b> What Attila reputedly demanded 3,000 pounds of as a ransom for the city of Rome	<b>40</b> A chain times a furlong	<b>6</b> Flavorful	<b>7</b> Bridge head	<b>49</b> Propecia manufacturer
<b>18</b> Trail	<b>42</b> Purposely lose	<b>8</b> Shock	<b>9</b> Square peg in high school, perhaps	<b>52</b> Oscar nominee for "Nebraska"
<b>19</b> Sure thing	<b>46</b> Stickpin site	<b>34</b> Maker of baked dishes		<b>56</b> Bob Dylan's "___ Belongs to Me"
<b>20</b> 1967 hit single for Marvin Gaye and Kim Weston	<b>48</b> Ill treatment	<b>35</b> How a long-fought case might be won		
<b>22</b> War of 1812 battle site	<b>50</b> Good treatment	<b>36</b> Aussies call it a tube		
<b>23</b> Word engraved on some bars	<b>51</b> Reckless behavior			
<b>24</b> Archbishop of New York after Egan	<b>53</b> Parrots			
<b>25</b> Hail damage	<b>54</b> One to one, for one			
<b>27</b> List	<b>55</b> What you might pick up at a dealership?			
<b>29</b> Diminish, with "down"	<b>57</b> Inaugural Davis Cup winner			
<b>30</b> Ace in a field	<b>58</b> Moon base, supposedly			
	<b>59</b> Defunct TV network founded by the Bakkers			
	<b>60</b> Heels			

Answer to last week, No. 211

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