

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Mr. Myth Goes to Washington: D.C. fictoids from Week 1109

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1109 we asked for bogus trivia about Washington and its environs; several people hastened to offer the fake fact that Washington has a football team. (If you're new to the D.C. area and don't get some of the references below, see the links to explanatory (or at least hinty-hinty) articles in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1113.

4th place

Michelle Obama collects USDA subsidies for not growing wheat in the White House garden. (Thad Humphries, Washington, Va.)

3rd place

The headquarters of the U.S. Department of Education was designed to resemble a large, nondescript office building. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

2nd place and two trivia books:

At the oddly named D.C. State Fair, the Congressional Budget Office sponsors the Guess Your Height and Weight Within an Order of Magnitude Booth. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

During an attempt to attack Washington in July 1862, Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson became so ensnared in "an infernal circle of carriages and waggons surrounding the city. . . that sits forever unmoving" that he gave up and turned back toward Richmond. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

DMVetoed: honorable mentions

After Nixon visited China in 1972, the Smithsonian removed the exhibit of the panda that Teddy Roosevelt had killed in 1892 with a big stick. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

The D.C. flag has three red stars over two red bars, symbolizing city's two bars for every three people. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

D.C.'s transit system was originally the Washington-Harbor Area Train Service and Metropolitan Transit Authority, but it was felt that the acronym WHATSAMATA was just asking for it. (Frank Osen)

The Marine Corps Marathon course follows the typical cab route from the Arlington Cemetery Metro stop to the Iwo Jima Memorial. (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

From 1751 to 1871, Georgetown residents prevented any bridges from being built over Rock Creek to prevent ruffians from the West End from visiting. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

The Capitol dome is named after Rotunda, the Roman goddess of pork. (Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park)

President Ford always declined invitations to attend shows at the Lincoln Theatre. (Kristen Rahman, Silver Spring)

The Secret Service was given responsibility for both presidential protection and financial crimes because it was more efficient that way with Warren Harding as president. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

Young George Washington did not chop down his father's favorite cherry tree, as popularly believed. He TP'ed it. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

The Old Executive Office Building was recently expanded to provide space for both young and middle-aged executives. (George-Ann Rosenberg, Washington)

Ironically, at Verizon Center you cannot hear me now. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

If you stand atop the DAR Building with binoculars and look toward the White House, you are likely to learn more about snipers than you need to know. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

When specialists at the National Archives recently inspected the Declaration of Independence, infrared light revealed the partially obscured signature of a hitherto unknown Founding Father named Brian Williams. (Chris Doyle)

The first athletic scholarship given by Georgetown University was to basketball player Joe Saxe of La Jolla, Calif. (Kevin Dopart)

In August 1965, D.C. cabdriver



New contest for Week 1113: Our occasional parodies

Sixty-four-time Loser Fred Dawson celebrated his 70th birthday last Sunday. Fred has famously self-deprecating humor; once he sent the Invite a photo called "Looking Down Toward My Feet," which showed no feet but instead an expansive view of Fred's expansive middle. (It won the contest "Humiliate Yourself for Ink.") And so the Empress wasn't surprised when he told her he didn't want "Happy Birthday" sung to him at his party, but instead had written a show tune parody: "I am sixty-nine, going on seventy, starting to sound a wheeze/ There is no dodging, soon I'll be codging/ But first I should learn to geeze . . ."

Fred also knows bad art when he sees it — he famously donated to the Invite a portrait he painted that, in the early days of Google, showed up at the top of a search on "world's ugliest painting" — and so he realizes that someone else in the Loser Community just might come up with a slightly better parody than his. **This week: Write a song celebrating someone's birthday or other personal occasion (rather than, say, a holiday), set to a familiar tune.** As in all our parody contests, songs that run in the print paper tend to be very well known melodies, while ones that run just online can link to a clip of the tune in question. Contrary to her usual policy, the Empress won't complain if an entry this week is credited to two people; still, she's just sending out one prize for it (does she look as if she's made of magnets?).

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the latest in our series of incongruous snow domes; this one's a souvenir of that Alpine attraction New Orleans, complete with a crawfish that doubles as a ring toss game: shake the dome until the little ring lands on a little snowy orange pincer. Donated by Queen of the Snow Domes Cheryl Davis.

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 designed by Bob Staake: either "The Wit Hit The Fan" or "Hardly Har-Har." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, March 9; results published March 29 (online March 26). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1113" 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. The headline for this week's results is by Chris Doyle; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jeff Contompasis. 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.



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.

Mel Smith stopped for a pedestrian in a crosswalk. (Peter Jenkins, Bethesda)

Along with setting up a \$250,000 "We DC" lounge at Austin's South by Southwest festival, the Bowser administration has also authorized a second venue, "We Wasting Your Money." (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

The Potomac River changes course every four to eight years, which is confusing to the native species, except for the bottom-feeders. (George-Ann Rosenberg)

Stand outside exactly 25 feet



Put a ring on it: A souvenir from Alpine New Orleans, this week's second prize.

from a corner of the Pentagon, at dawn on the winter solstice, and you will discover your butt has frozen. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

The Beatles' 1964 American tour was supposed to open in New York — until Beatlemaniac J. Edgar Hoover made a few calls. (Rachel Bernhardt, Silver Spring)

In 1774 the Maryland tobacco planter John Marva became the first delegate from the Eastern Shore to serve in the Continental Congress. Soon afterward, the land containing his plantation was named the Del.Marva Peninsula. (James Foster, Silver Spring)

Hundreds of people lost their lives during the construction of the Washington Monument, though none of them were on the site at the time. (George-Ann Rosenberg)

The Beltway expands about two inches every five years. (Art Grinath; Jon Craft, Centreville)

The National Space Museum became the National Air and Space Museum so that visitors could breathe. (John Kammer, South Riding)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1113.

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our "SHARP" neologism contest. See bit.ly/invite1112.

POST PUZZLER

No. 256

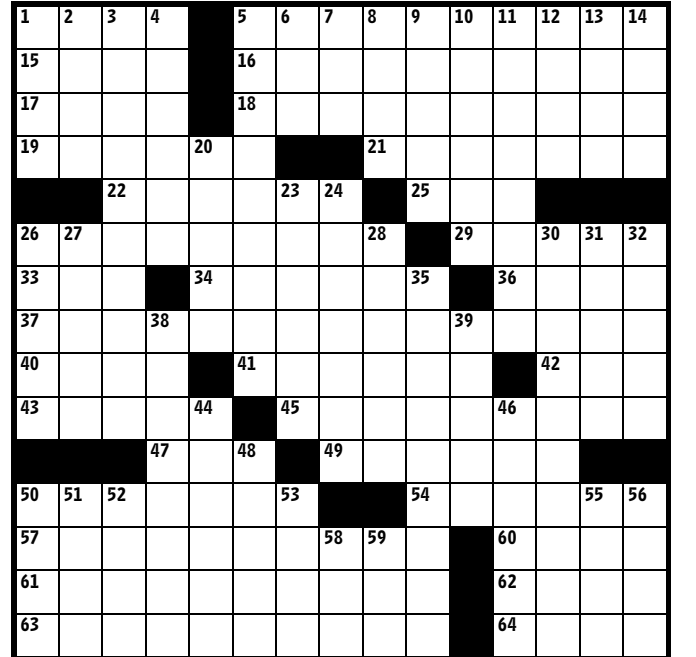
BY FRANK LONGO EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

- ACROSS**
- Olympic skating gold medalist before Yamaguchi
 - It reveals character flaws
 - Swiss Roll look-alike
 - Halls option
 - "Take ___ from me ..."
 - Thriller describing the Riga ghetto, with "The"
 - One who might have refused to recant
 - Battery regulations, e.g.
 - Video game accumulation
 - Polynesian wedding ring
 - Fireworks watcher's bring-along, often
 - Battery composition
 - Turned-off sound
 - Like topaz vis-à-vis quartz
 - Diesel coat?

- DOWN**
- Sound made by a sock
 - Crumb
 - Potential date spoiler
 - Most popular decade?
 - Little way
 - Often-edible container
 - 14th letter of the Spanish alphabet
 - Out of concern that
 - Krud Kutter competitor
 - Purplish red
 - Maximally muscular
 - 2008-12 Romanian prime minister ___ Boc
 - Buzz on "The Simpsons," e.g.
 - Was up on

- It might produce sound waves
- Ground-breaking implement
- Alexander alternative
- Like royal flush drawers
- Have the same gender, perhaps
- Counter convincingly
- Where won may be won
- "Getting fired is what happens to a manager sooner or later" speaker
- Buttermilk, for example
- Is like
- Like a fox
- Humans have right and left ones

- Big name in jammers
- Prescription, often
- One of Hitchcock's dozens
- Unsafe sun block?
- Mountaineering map, briefly
- Model replaced by the Sonic in 2011
- All forms of it are excluded from the language E-Prime
- Stinky
- Brought to utter ruin
- Like much of Logo's audience
- Rival of a Beaver, Cougar or Duck



Answer to last week, No. 255



HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | MARCH 1: This year there are times when you might feel as if you are having a mini identity crisis. You may be questioning your long-term goals and whether they suit you anymore. You have a creative and dynamic way of looking at people and expressing yourself. If you are single, you need to take your time getting to know a potential sweetie. You might not be realistic when it comes to this person. If you are attached, your lives revolve around the practical. From September on, increased romance adds a new dimension to your relationship.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Confusion seems to mark the morning. In the afternoon, you'll visit with others and enjoy yourself. Make extra time to spend with a loved one; you must not ignore this person.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Make calls and reach out to friends and loved ones. You might have a sudden realization about an expenditure. Rethink this cost, and give yourself permission to change your mind.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You might have a problem with a suggestion from a friend. A loved one is likely to come through for you in an odd way.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Stay optimistic despite a lot of unexpected demands that might disrupt your plans. Go along with someone else's suggestion.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Take the morning off just for you. Some of you will get a head start on your taxes, and some will relax or sleep in. When you surface in the afternoon, others will express their appreciation for your company.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You might be in a situation this morning that delights you. Go with the flow rather than manipulate plans, especially if you desire a repeat occurrence.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You might be in a situation where you would prefer to be open and forthright. Make no commitments, but watch what goes on around you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
An unexpected diversion might take you down a new and different path. You'll hear news

from a loved one that may get you thinking. More information might come forward.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Reconsider a recent change involving a child. Take a drive in the country or otherwise distance yourself from the issue. You may be surprised by all the energy you get from the people around you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You will see a situation in a new light. How you deal with this new perspective and how you to choose to inform others where you stand will be important. Expect a surprising reaction.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You have a lot to get done. No one is likely to mind that you won't be present in the earlier part of the day, as long as you plan on being more social in the evening. A loved one might share news that makes you happy.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Use the morning to be among your immediate loved ones. This special time is so important to all of you. By mid-afternoon, relax and decide whether you want to go out. You might be happiest where you are.

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Aunt hurt by lack of acknowledgment

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: In yesterday's mail we received a birth announcement of a new great-nephew,

addressed only to my husband. Christmas cards, wedding announcements, birth announcements, thank-you cards — anything coming from his sister and her children all are addressed only to him.

The most mention I ever get is "and Family." One wedding invitation actually came to "Uncle John and Family." Our children are grown so presumably I'm the nameless "Family."

I buy the presents and sign the cards and checks. There's no animosity between us. I've known the kids since birth and they are all nice people. But each omission makes me feel, well, a bit unwanted.

I'm tempted to have only my husband sign the card that I bought before the announcement arrived. I want him to tell his sister that this makes me feel sad and left out. He doesn't see it as an issue and thinks I should ignore it, but he also says that since it bothers me, I should tell her myself.

What's your take? The Invisible Aunt

Your husband could have easily dealt with this years ago, because this lack of acknowledgment affects your place in the family. I agree that it is rude and hurtful. You don't say whether there are circumstances that might affect his sister and her family's refusal to acknowledge you — perhaps your husband had a previous wife and your sister-in-law has a misguided notion that you are not "real" family. Regardless, because your husband is sinking away from this, I agree with him that you should express yourself now.

Simply say, "I have a nagging question I hope you can help answer. Why is it that you and the kids never include my name on any family invitations or announcements?" Listen to her explanation and respond, "I want you to know that it bothers me. I consider myself very much a part of the family. I do all of the card buying and gift giving for John and me. I love all of my nieces and nephews, and think it would be great if you could keep that in mind."

Dear Amy: I was amazed by your response to "Disappointed and Confused," the mother of two middle-aged children who asked how much they were getting when she informed them of their inheritance from an uncle.

She was appalled that they would not express appreciation first. I'll bet 99.9 percent of people would first want to know how much they were getting. Otherwise, how would they know how appreciative to be?

It makes a big difference whether the inheritance is \$50 or \$50,000. That's what I expected to see in your answer and was surprised when I didn't.

Surprised

The idea is to be equally appreciative, whether the "windfall" is an old teapot or \$36,000 (which is what these children received).

Amy's column appears seven days a week at www.washingtonpost.com/advice. Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribune.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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