

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Renames to be seen: Report from Week 1150

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1150**, we ran a twist on our classic change-one-letter neologism contests: This time it was someone's name that had to be changed by (a) adding or subtracting one letter; (b) substituting one letter for another; or (c) transposing two nearby letters. The Empress also allowed for adding spaces, hyphens, etc., but a letter had to change, too. This disqualified this nifty one from Chris Damm: "Michael P. Helps: He knows the secret for going really fast in the pool."

4th place

My-GYN Kelly: "If you have a problem with blood coming out of your wherever . . ." (J. Larry Schott, West Plains, Mo.)

3rd place

Allan She-man: "Hello Muddah, hello Fadduh/ Here I am out in Nevada/ To my true self I surrendered/ And this tweet is just to tell you I'm transgendered." (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

2nd place and the floaty-frog shake-box:

Jugs Bunny: Jessica Rabbit. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Napoleon Bonaparte: French leader famed for unsuccessfully using IEDs at Waterloo. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Miss-nomers:

Honorable mentions

Trumpy Cat: Not only does he dislike just about everyone, but he coughs up the strangest-shaped hairballs. (Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)

Queasimodo: The Lunch-Back of Notre Dame. (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Britney Swears: "****, I did it again." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Jeb Mush: Now with even less backbone. (Duncan Stevens)

Bong John Silver: It's Toke Like a Pirate Day! (Chris Doyle)

Bend Carson: He sees history like a joint replacement: conveniently flexible — and if there should be any errors, it's not the doctor's fault. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Elvish Costello: Middle Earth Bard known for his hits like "Accid-Ents Will Happen." (Dave Brewer, Seattle)

The-odor Roosevelt: White House aides quit when he began to speak softly and carry a big stink. (Chris Doyle)

Tinderella: Prince Charming swiped right, but she swiped left. Will he ever find her? (Beth Karp, Portland, Ore., a First Offender)

Wilt Chamberlaid: Basketball star who broke many scoring records. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Alex Kvechkin: "What means 'No goal'?" Is blind, the referee. Does he know job? Nyet! (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Bashar Al-Asswad: Murderous tyrant with a pants-load of problems. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Aziz Amsari: He's so funny, but I wish he'd stop being so apologetic. (George-Ann Rosenberg, Washington)

Clint Eastwood: Rumored to pack the smallest pistol in Hollywood. (Michael Rosen, New York)

George Ohwell: "You know, those telecreens do help with security . . ." (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

CEOpatra: A boss who expects to be worshiped, can often be found in de Nile, and would rather die than experience a takeover. (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

Braid Pitt: The bride at a [insert disfavored ethnic group here] wedding. (Mark Raffman)

Approdite: Greek version of Tinder. (Mark Raffman)

Chief Crazy House: Speaker Paul Ryan. (Jerry Pohl, Rockville)

Drew Carrymore: Star of "E.A.T.: The Extra-Ample Terrestrial." (Larry Miller, Bethesda)

Darth Evader: Emperor Palpatine's press secretary. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

David Hide Pierce: Acupuncturist to the stars. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1154: Tabby Road— songs for cats

Does Fluffy fail to appreciate your rendition of "Bohemian Rhapsody," or even your best belting version of "Memory"? There's a good chance she'd rather hear "Music for Cats," a collection of compositions by virtuoso cellist David Teie in which he uses pitches, purry sounds and pulsating rhythms that cats seem to relate to instinctively. A study published this year in an academic journal reported that Teie's "Rusty's Ballad" and "Cozmo's Air" were favored by the 47 cats in the study twice as much as Bach's "Air on the G String" or Fauré's "Elégie." (Yeah, but they didn't test for "Honky Cat" or "The Lion Sleeps Tonight.")

We tell you all this because it gave us *some* excuse for another of our song parody contests, however tenuously linked. **This week: Write a song for — or about — cats or other animals, set to a familiar tune.** If your cat loves it, good for you, but we really don't care. As always, parodies that run in the print version of the Invitational tend to be very well known melodies, while online we're able to include links to the tunes. And in an uncharacteristic attack of holiday season benevolence, the Empress announces **two special bendings of the rules this week:** First, the E won't grouse if two people collaborate on a song; usually she doesn't consider the Invite a team sport. And second, given that even members of the Greater Loser Community might have one or two other things to do around now, she will extend the deadline another week — all the way to Jan. 4.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, given this week's topic, a **Twinkle Tush**, a little modesty jewel that hangs from your cat's tail to cover its, uh, littering area. "Not for human use," it advises. (It also advises you, duh, not to actually leave it on your cat. Just sing to him, okay?) Donated by Loser Melissa Yorks.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug, the older-model "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our brand-new Loser magnets, "Magnet Dum Laude" or "Falling Jst Short." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Email entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Jan. 4; results published Jan. 17 (online Jan. 14). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest (if you really want to write 25 songs in two weeks). Include "Week 1154" in your email 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 Nan Reiner. 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 on Twitter.

● **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.



TWINKLETUSH.COM

Turn your cat into Puss 'n' Booty with Twinkle Tush, this week's second prize.

Demi Loveto: A very accommodating woman. (Tom Witte)

Jane Foodall: Author of the controversial cookbook "Gorillas in the Mix." (Christopher Lamora, Arlington)

Bernie Panders: Shocking revelation: Senator takes contributions from the 99 percent! (Kathy El-Assal, Middleton, Wis.)

Henny VIII: Take my wives — please. (Ann Martin, Falls Church, Va.)

George Tucas: "May the arse be with you." (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

Ima Farrow: Mia's grammatical twin. (Jon Gearhart)

Dolly Patton: "[SLAP] . . . My eyes are up here, soldier!" (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

Trevor Nah: One of the unsuccessful applicants to replace Jon Stewart. (Jesse Frankovich)

J Edgar Hover: Leader of the FBI's "Zero G-Men." (David Friedman, Arlington)

Chuck Snorris: The sounds he makes while sleeping can be heard hundreds of miles away. (Rob Wolf, Gaithersburg)

Ethan Alien: Leader of the Little Green Mountain Men. (Nathanael Dewhurst, Lynn, Mass.)

Leon Tootsky: A victim of Stalin's silent but deadly purges. (Jerry Pohl)

Mickey Moose: Had Walt gone with his first idea of a 7-foot anthropomorphic character from Maine, families wearing antler hats might be spending \$700 per day at a theme park in Bangor. (Michael Levy, Silver Spring)

Mr. Roget's: He'd love to have you as his companion, pal, buddy, comrade, chum, confidant or playmate in his neighborhood. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Noses: Let my people blow. (Jack McBroom, Fort Valley, Va.)

George Clowney: What most guys look like who try to look like George Clooney. (Bill Lieberman, Ellicott City, Md.)

Plado: Founder of the ancient Kiddycademy. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

El Cheapo: Mexican drug lord notorious for underpricing hitmen. (Nathanael Dewhurst)

The Hardly Boys: Teen detectives who uncover their gender identity. (Kevin Dopart)

Pat Tyers: "3,700 neologism entries!" (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

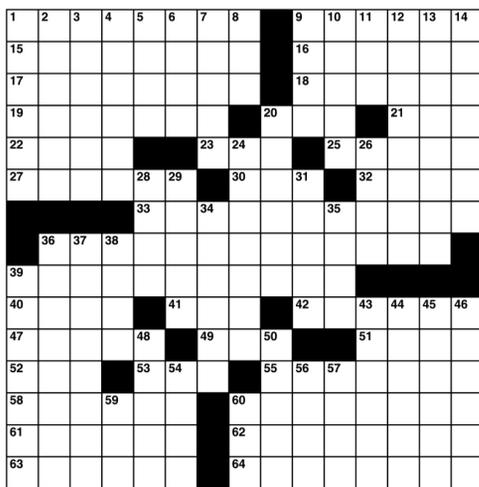
Still running — deadline Monday night: our contest to compare two things with the same abbreviation. See bit.ly/invite1153.

BY BRAD WILBER © 2015 CROSSNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

- ACROSS**
- Fidgety
 - Stately professional dance
 - Bargain-basement
 - Attachable without needle and thread
 - Stretch dangerously thin, as a line of reasoning
 - Chicken
 - Doctor Dolittle patients
 - Sometimes called, for short
 - Put graffiti on
 - Lady Liberty's garb
 - Radar gun reading (abbr.)
 - First TV series to achieve a #1 Nielsen rating for its pilot episode
 - Underwater excavator
 - Some AOL exchanges
 - Homecoming guest, for short
 - Parentetical note from one who has added emphasis to a quotation
 - Coming-of-age story
 - Paris institution where "Whistler's Mother" is on view
 - Schnauzer created by Dashiell Hammett
 - Former Abbey Road Studios owner
 - The NFL's Steely McBeam, e.g.
 - Centipede producer
 - Rapsallion
 - Ex ____ (from the beginning)
 - Diarist who was a bigamist
 - Prior to A.D.
 - Dirtbags
 - Take down a peg
 - Breeze noises
 - Ones who are easily shocked
 - World capital in song titles by Cat Stevens and Bob Seger
 - Angled
 - Tropical fruit with a segmented green rind

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

- DOWN**
- Heading on a lost-dog poster
 - "The Crooked Stick" poet Wylie
 - Newspaper columnist, e.g.
 - Like some birthday parties
 - Helen of Troy's mother
 - Peer below a marquess
 - Sudden contraction
 - Propagate
 - Item in a guitar case
 - Loud like heavy surf
 - Pledge
 - Asian Turkey
 - Actress in the Sweeney Sisters sketches on "SNL"
 - Stage in which you are close to getting a mate?
 - Love-at-first-sight number from Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd"
 - Many a character in "The Canterbury Tales"
 - Jon who broke a long Emmy losing streak in 2015
 - France's 1947 Nobel laureate in literature
 - Exercise that involves pedaling?
 - "Buzz off!"
 - Disintegration of social norms
 - Edamame source
 - Form-fitting pieces of lingerie
 - Where "Murder on the Orient Express" opens
 - Shakespearean father who calls ingratitude a "marble-hearted fiend"
 - Rustic folks
 - Answer testily
 - Hoodwinks
 - Risk burnout, maybe
 - Type of "College Bowl" question
 - "Ghosts" playwright
 - "I don't buy it!"
 - ____ la guerre!
 - Less filling, maybe
 - Carlisle Cullen's wife in the "Twilight" series
 - Org. whose seal appears on Listerine bottles
 - Fortnight's pair (abbr.)



Answer to last week



HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | DEC. 20: This year you have the energy and wherewithal to create much more of what you desire from life. Your creativity seems limitless, and your ability to follow through on daily matters remains high. If you are single, a key person finds your imagination to be endearing and intriguing. You could see the beginning of an important relationship blossom this year. If you are attached, the two of you act like new lovers. Romance thrives between you. Taurus can drag you down sometimes.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You need to use all your energy in a positive way. You might want to get involved with a favorite winter sport. Take an overview of what you need to do, and see if you have time to take off and enjoy yourself. Read between the lines with a loved one.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
If you want to take the day off, make it so. Time off during this busy season could refuel your energy. You don't need to explain anything to anyone. In the late afternoon, a call from a friend will get you motivated and excited about the holidays.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You might need to gain a different perspective about a personal matter. One of the best ways is to pull yourself away from the issue and go enjoy yourself in a different situation. Maintain a sense of humor when speaking to others.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
All eyes look to you for

leadership, or at least for ideas as to what to do. You might be up for a lazy brunch and visit with friends. By the late afternoon, you could be energized enough to follow through on a friend's request.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You might be in the midst of a difficult situation. Try not to get involved and go on your merry way. You don't need to resolve everyone else's problems. Your flirtatious ways add magic to a relationship. Be careful; someone might misread your intentions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
One-on-one relating will be very satisfying. You have an opportunity to catch up on someone's news. As a result, you'll enjoy the depth that exists between you. You could be uncomfortable with a revelation. Take an overview.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Others will be running with the ball before you even arrive. Make their dominance okay. Your need

for some special downtime with a loved one will help you feel great. The two of you even might decide to vanish for a little while.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Clear out some of your obligations involving the holidays. By the late afternoon, you'll have reason to smile and will be able to start enjoying yourself. Catch up with friends and loved ones who might be having a holiday party.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You could feel pushed by a child or new friend. You might feel pressured by a situation involving an older person. Do your best to handle everything that is on your plate.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Attend to a family matter, and don't lose your focus when it comes to a relative or a friend at a distance; this person needs your attention.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You could be full of energy and ready to proceed with your plans, but you might get caught up in a long conversation. A partner wants more of your time and attention.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You might decide that you need to use part of the day to finish up some holiday errands. Getting everything done would be nice, but you don't want to miss an opportunity to visit with friends and family.

Looking for ways to bring family closer

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

to his mother, who passed away five years ago.

My husband's father and stepmother are not as open as my mother-in-law was. We are never invited to their home.

I feel awkward asking them if we can come over because the whole visit they just watch television and no one really talks, making me feel like we are intruding.

My husband's stepmother has often lamented that my two small children don't really know them, but when we visit, my in-laws barely pay the kids any attention. The television is often blaring, which scares the baby and he ends up crying the whole time. (I have told them he's not used to the loud noise, but the television stays at the same volume.)

We have a very small house, but when I invited them over they commented on the length of the drive (we live 20 miles away) and didn't stay very long.

When we visit my parents, the whole visit is spent talking, playing with the kids, etc. I've expressed these concerns multiple times to my husband. He doesn't really like it either, but he won't put any effort into furthering the relationship. It bothers me that my kids barely know their family members. Is there anything I can do?

Wondering

Wondering: I give you a lot of credit for being concerned about this relationship and making the effort to try to improve it. You don't seem to have ever asked your in-laws, "Do you mind if we turn off the TV while we're here? We won't stay long; it's pretty loud for the baby."

You say you don't get invited,

but if you did find yourself in their home it might be a good idea to bring a puzzle that the kids and adults can work on together. Puzzle-building is cooperative and often easier for people who don't know how to interact with children.

In addition to inviting your in-laws to your home, you should ask them to attend any events outside the home that the children might be involved in. Meeting on neutral ground might be easier for everyone.

Ultimately you cannot make a relationship happen if these grandparents don't participate. If they are able-bodied and want to be closer to the grandkids, they should make the effort.

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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