

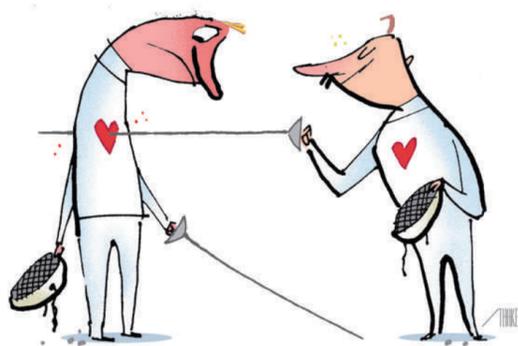
DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

It's a small-word laugh for all

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1188 the Empress asked you to explain a concept only in one-syllable words, and no more than 100 of them. As Loser Jesse Frankovich put it in an entry: "Write on some theme with words that have just one sound chunk each. The count of the words must not be more than 10 squared. . . . If one of yours is deemed the best of the bunch, you will get a cheap Abe thing with a big head."



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

4th place

THE OLYMPIC PHILOSOPHY
CREED OF THE FIVE RINGS
Use your bod, from feet to hands, To vie with folks from strange new lands:
Chase them, rush them, ace them, crush them,
Flip them, cream them, trip them, ream them,
Throw and shove them . . . oh, and love them.
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

3rd place

LIBERTARIANISM
Me. Mine. Me. Mine. Me. Mine. Oh no, a flood!
We. Ours. We. Ours. We. Ours. Help!
The flood is gone!
Me. Mine. Me. Mine . . .
(Ed Sobansky, Bowie, Md.)

2nd place and the 'snot nose' and windup Groucho glasses:

BASEBALL
"Look, Jacques, one guy throws the ball, one guy tries to hit the ball with a bat. If the ball is thrown to the guy wrong, it is called a ball."
"But we knew it was a ball, non?"
"Yes. Now if he swings but does not hit the ball, it is a strike. Three strikes and he is out. A foul ball is a strike, too, but if the count is strike two, then a foul ball is not a strike. "Are you with me so far, Jacques?"
"Non! Just get me a hot dog and a beer."
(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT
When my child was young, I could do no wrong — Best Mom in the World! But when she was a teen, I got so dumb. My rules were lame! My clothes sucked! I was a mess! It's true — she told me.
In spite of my bad mom-skills, she did grow up. And I got fixed! I'm smart once more, so she asks me things. She likes my clothes, so my taste must not suck the way it used to. I'm glad my kid stuck with me while I went through that rough phase.
(Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

What a pithy party: honorable mentions

VOTER FRAUD, NORTH CAROLINA-STYLE
"We can't let all those dark folks vote. There's more and more of them and less and less of us. If we let them all vote, we'll lose. What to do?"
"I know! Let's cut our state up in odd shapes and split up their votes. Spread those folks out so their votes can't hurt us."
"Nice."
"And let's make it so you have to have proof of who you are to vote. And let's make it so just one or two types of proof will work — the kind WE have, but THEY don't."
"Hey, you boys are real smart."
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

HUMAN REPRODUCTION
When a dad loves a mom, they will hug a long time until Mom yells "Oh, God" and is glad. Dad says "Ugh" and goes to sleep.
A small thing that came from Dad goes in an egg that Mom has and makes a new thing. It grows and grows for nine months. Then Mom screams "Oh God" once more but is not glad this time. It hurts and

she gets mad at Dad. That is where young ones come from. Now you can tell the folks at church in a loud voice. (Combined entries from Ward Kay, Vienna, Va., and Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

WHY THE WORLD HATES AMERICANS
"Well, you see, we were in this cab and got stopped. Um, no, I don't know why, but then this cop put a gun to my head and cocked it. He said, 'Give me cash now!' Or at least I think that's what he said, but I know he robbed us, that's for sure. Yeah, that's it, he robbed us. Or not. We were a bit drunk — Oh, did I leave out how we trashed a store?"
(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

CLIMATE CHANGE
Each hour, day, week, month, year, our world grows more hot. Smart folks try to learn the cause.

Ooh! Ask me! I know!
I left the stove on.
(Mary Kappus, Washington)

THE TRUMP DOCTRINE
That weird rude guy says we ought to make this land great the way it used to be. But that "great" was not great. It was bad for girls, those whose skin is not white, and men who love men.
We should not buy it that things were so great then — in fact, we should own it that they were not. Why don't the rude guy's fans get that this land should be great for white guys and all the folks who are not the same as they are? (It seems so, you know, DUH.)
(Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

CLINTON'S EXPLANATION FOR USING A PRIVATE EMAIL SERVER
Oops. My bad. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

SUPPLY SIDE ECONOMICS
Just tax poor folks. If you tax the rich folks, that is bad, for they will not launch and spread wealth and grow our land. So cut the tax for those rich guys, and then we will all be rich. (Note: The time frame for the last part is up in the air. We're sure it will take place real soon.)
(Duncan Stevens)

IF YOU HEAR A NOISE, SOMETHING HAD TO MAKE IT
I learned this the hard way. One cold night at home, I heard a big "whump!" I looked and looked, but no, not one thing out of place. So I just let it go.

The next spring there was a stench near my front porch — from the well next to a glass pane. What was it? A huge ring tail coon fell off the roof and froze down there. Then it thawed. Then it stank. My spouse had to hoist it out. I held the bag. It was not fun. Then we had a stiff drink.
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

THE POINT OF THE STYLE INVITATIONAL
"To lose, not to win, is the way to win, boss," she said. "High wit and low puns. Sly prose and tight rhymes. If you win (I am the judge) you get a crap prize. The goal for most is just to get ink. What do you think?"
Jeff said, "I don't get it, but fine. We will still print it, but not on the back page. And black and white from now on."
(Rob Cohen)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1192.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Sept. 12: our Mess With Our Heads bank-head contest. See bit.ly/invite1191 (all lowercase).

'New' for Week 1192: Ask Backwards

- **Waist-slimming compression wrap**
- **2,002 old emails**
- **Florida Man's résumé**
- **An elevator and an alligator, but not a waiter**
- **149 yards rushing**
- **The Maltese Parakeet**
- **Ryan Lochte's urine sample**
- **Lobster roll trucks on every corner**
- **A \$27 donation**
- **Swiss chard but not a Swiss bank account**
- **The National Postal Museum**
- **"The Punisher"**
- **Donald Trump's birth certificate**
- **Stinky boots on the ground**
- **Cockroach milk**

Coming your way with such regularity it could get the Scrutan endorsement, a contest the Invite has run dozens of times since Year 1 in 1993. **This week: The 15 phrases above (each marked by a bullet) are the answers.** You provide the questions to as many as you'd like (up to 25 entries total). See the Style Conversational at bit.ly/conv1192 for examples from past contests.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1192 (all lowercase). Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — and some people think we're always so negative here at the Invite — a big electronic button you push and it says "YES" in all sorts of voices. This is the counterpart to our previously awarded No Pen, and of course it's gotten a lot less use than the pen while it's been sitting on the Empress's desk during judging sessions. Donated, as was the pen, by the positively positive Loser Dave Prevar. **Other runners-up** win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug, the older-model "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" mug or our new Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Magnet Dum Laude" or "Falling Jest Short." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Sept. 19; results published Oct. 9 (online Oct. 6). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jon Gearhart; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Tom Witte. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/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.



ZANYTOYS.COM
Yes, you'll get this button if you lose to exactly one entry.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

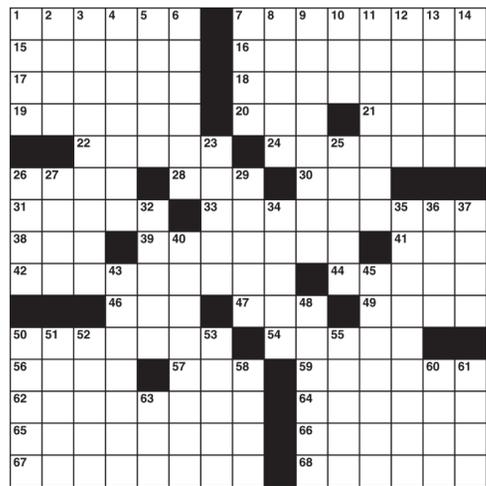
BY TONY ORBACH © 2016 CROSSYNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

- ACROSS**
- Gave, as an endowment
 - Desperate
 - Formal confirmation
 - Aim for
 - Staccato's opposite
 - Togolese neighbor
 - Hindu retreat
 - Instant
 - Seward Peninsula city
 - "The roof of the world"
 - Lampoons
 - Rolling stone's lack
 - Pointillist's point
 - "Clean up on aisle two"
 - Trounce
 - Erased
 - Negroni component
 - Eisenhower's boyhood home
- DOWN**
- Ear-related prefix
 - Whisk
 - Lost
 - Fond du ____
 - Enjoy, slangly
 - Cooper's tool
 - Head docs?
 - Wrangler rival
 - Sharp
 - "Wunderbar!"
 - Emmy winner for "Three's Company"
 - Rival campaign phrase to "All the Way with Adlai"
 - Melodious
 - Main symbol
 - Does a double take, say
 - Most rare
 - Shrek's pal, voiced by Eddie Murphy

Answer to last week



- ACROSS**
- Arizona river
 - Urban addition?
 - Rachel Platten hit of 2015
 - Absolute rule
 - Cornerstone abbr.
 - Destined to fail
 - Trails
 - Pit dross
 - Little green fellows
 - Bronze ingredient
 - "Dirty" De Niro role
 - Five with a sixth, sometimes
 - Notary tool
 - Johannycakes
- DOWN**
- Specifically
 - Intersecting points
 - Bldg. loan
 - Not a dup.
 - Used a trowel and a float, perhaps
 - Ode
 - Dire straits
 - Familiar name for "An Aquarian Exposition in White Lake, N.Y."
 - Exhaustive
 - Team connection?
 - Fall flat
 - Indicator
 - Like merengue or kompa
 - Butler from Scotland
 - Leaves out
 - Prefix meaning "spiral"
 - Queen of Spain
 - Rice brews
 - Bird akin to a warbler
 - Golden root
 - Where el sol rises
 - Full of promise
 - List-ending letters



HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY|Sept. 11: This year you find that your emotions and intellect are more in sync. You'll hear good news about your finances in the next few months; save as much as you can in the meantime. If you are single, your appeal is obvious. Others can't help but say "yes" to you. If you are attached, much of your energy as a couple surrounds a significant purchase or a life-altering event. Capricorn makes you feel like a kid again.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You can meet a demanding request with ease, especially if you know the game plan. A change in mood and how you project yourself become evident by midday. Recognize when you have had enough pressure for one day.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Look beyond the obvious when dealing with a friend who sometimes adds confusion and flakiness to the mix. If this person's behavior really bothers you, consider distancing yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You can't seem to adequately emphasize the importance of a close friend to you and the feelings you have for them. Willingly walk away from confusion around plans or a visit. You might prefer one-on-one time with a loved one.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Others want to make the plans and have you go along with them. You can do that and not feel stressed. If all a partner or loved one needs from you right now is some quality one-on-one time, do your best to make it happen.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Take care of yourself, even if you need to work today. You have a lot to get done, but you also need to set aside a few hours just for you. A partner could be creative and might have some solutions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Your creative energy emerges and adds to the unusual dynamic between you and someone else. Others run with the ball, which allows you to take a step back.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Stay close to home and honor a fast change of pace involving plans and a loved one. Your imagination seems to flow, which adds to the moment. Be a little indulgent, but know when to pull back.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
You have the ability to come to terms with a difficult person and/or situation. You understand what you can and cannot change. Transform a difficult conversation into a meaningful and kind exchange.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Be in touch with your financial needs, and not what you think you need, but what you actually need.

You could discover a discrepancy between your vision and reality that could swing either way.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Tap into your imagination for solutions and ideas. You are transforming, and as a result, so are various areas of your life. Be more direct when dealing with a rebellious loved one. Allow in more laughter, and don't make a big deal of what needs to happen.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Honor a fast pace, as you might not have a choice anyway. Know what you want and expect from an interaction with a friend. You might want to try a different approach, perhaps one that is a little less frenetic.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You have a strong sense of what you want, and you have a group of supporters cheering you on. How you visualize a personal issue could be different from how someone else sees it. Make fewer judgments, and enjoy the moment.

Teen's Skype girlfriend worries mom

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I turned 16 this summer and have gotten into a state of disagreement with my mother on a single issue.

Like with many other guys my age, a great deal of strife tends to surface over relationships. That's my problem, too.

For nearly two years I've kept in touch with a girl from Georgia. I live in New England. For the past few months I've been fostering a long-distance relationship via Skype with her, and it has become a personal goal for both of us to someday meet in person.

We talk daily and get along tremendously well. I've mentioned the idea of traveling to Atlanta to my mother.

Rather than this being an issue of time or expense, my mother has developed a tendency to make ludicrous accusations about this girl and refuses to consider traveling.

I've answered my mother's questions calmly and politely and even offered to have her in a Skype call to communicate with this girl to ease her suspicions. Despite this, she dismisses anything I say with something

along the lines of a "Mother Knows Best" philosophy. This predicament has been frustrating and disheartening for both myself and my partner. How can I convince my mother to allow me to travel to Atlanta?

Morose

Morose: My first suggestion is that you should not refer to your long-distance girlfriend as your "partner." This choice underscores your immaturity.

You haven't mentioned if you've discussed the idea of having your girlfriend visit you — instead of you visiting her. This would involve you and your girlfriend figuring out how to raise the money and working with both sets of parents to get permission. Your mother might be more open to this idea.

You need to do well in school, make sure that this relationship does not interfere with your other friendships and family relationships, and try your hardest to demonstrate that you are both capable, respectful and mature.

I agree with you that your mother should not be disrespectful toward you or your girlfriend regarding this important relationship. Your

mother would be wise to get to know her, since she is so important to you.

Dear Amy: Your reply to "Worried" regarding her negative feelings toward her stepdaughter was so compassionate and beautifully put.

You could not have explained the dynamic between them any better. I especially like the part about how "negative" aspects of the girl's personality (according to the stepmom) will serve her well in life. On behalf of that girl, thank you.

Grateful

Grateful: Thank you for your comments.

I am a stepmother who frequently sees the world through the eyes of stepchildren. They have no power over the choices made by the adults in their lives. It's no wonder that they sometimes fiercely defend themselves against the emotional (and actual) encroachment of stepparents.

The stepfamily relationship is extremely challenging. But when it works well, this relationship is a powerful force for good.