

## DIVERSIONS

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## Reckless deriving: bogus word origins

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1194** we asked for fictitious etymologies, bogus explanations of where various words came from. Sorry to many of you, but we'd already heard the one about "Congress" meaning the opposite of "progress."

## 4th place

**Pokémon** (from Jamaican slang *pokey man*, or jailer): Fictional beings that capture and lock up the brains of nonfictional beings. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

## 3rd place

**Novice** (*no* + Latin *vice*, corruption, deficiency): A person who has yet to learn the wrong way to do something. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

## 2nd place and the collection of New York Magazine Competition entries:

**Autumn** (from *aaugh*, despair + *tummy*): The time of year when one gets a queasy feeling that one's first-place team will yet again go down to ignominious defeat. (Nan Reiner, a passionate Nationals fan now in Boca Raton, Fla.; this entry was written Oct. 4, nine days before The Inevitable)

## And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

**America**: Concatenation of the Spanish *amé* and *rica*; rough translation: "I love the wealthy." (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

## ApocryFail: honorable mentions

**Orangutan** (from *orange* + *tan*): A big animal classified as critically endangering. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

**Euphrates** (Greek *eu-*, good + Old English *phrate*, afraid): An area of the world we are good and scared of. (Warren Tanabe)

**Lavatory** (Latin *lave*, wash + *Tory*, monarchist): During the Revolution, angry colonists would dunk British "loyalists" heads in filled chamber pots as a punishment. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

**Offhand**: Casually negligent. First used to describe a Saudi man who "forgot" to pay for a pomegranate. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

**Grammar** (from French *grand-mère*): "Proper" usage as defined by old people. (Mark Raffman)

**Football**: From the 13th-century Flemish *ffut*, the sound made by a collapsing pig bladder when kicked, an event that tended to happen several times per game. (Bob Turvey, Bristol, England)

**Politics**: Soon after the advent of democracy in Athens, Pericles coined the term from *poly* (many) and *tikia* (twitches): something involving a large number of jerks. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**Decadent**: From Greek *deka-*, ten + French *dent*, tooth: Linguistic relic from a time when having only a few remaining teeth indicated a lifestyle that afforded costly sugar and chocolate. (Daniel Galef, Montclair, N.J.)

**Dowager**: (From *Dow Jones* + *-ager*): An elderly woman with considerable stock market assets. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

**Committee** (Latin *com-*, together + *mitty*, from Walter Mitty) A group fantasizing that it will accomplish something. (Warren Tanabe)

**Nominal**: Trifling, insignificant. From the mishearing of an expression as "It cost a nominal egg." (Chris Doyle)

**Contract** (*con*, abbrev. of *convict* + *tract*, leaflet): A document you probably shouldn't sign. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

**Mystery**: From the Middle Ages, an ephemeral apparition often called "Mr. E," observed at numerous crime scenes but never apprehended. (Jack McBroom, Fort Valley, Va.)

**Offend** (*off* + *end*): To treat someone inconsiderately, as if pushing a person off the end of a crowded bench. (Skip Livingston, Hopewell, N.J.)

Most people think **Delmarva** is an acronym of the three adjoining states. But it actually is a Spanish expression, "of where the sea goes"; while the Spanish never settled this area, they would empty their bilges there so the ocean would wash away their effluence.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## New contest for Week 1198: Give it to us straight

Ad: "Our biggest sweater sale of the year!"  
Translation: "Nobody bought our sweaters!"  
(Dave Prevar, Week 897)

Actual quote: "The economy was in strong condition going into the recent period of volatility, and while certain sectors like housing are undergoing a transition, overall economic fundamentals remain solid."

Translation: "The poo hasn't hit the fan — yet." (Susan Shapiro, Week 729)

You don't have to be from Washington to be used to the language of obfuscation and spin, though we in the D.C. area tend to be especially fluent. It's been six years since the Invite's last of several contests to translate quotes into "plain English," and our need for interpreters is just as dire. **This week: Take any sentence from an article or ad in any publication dated Oct. 20 to Oct. 31 — or from an online article dated within that period — and translate it into "plain English,"** as in the examples above from 2010 and 2007. (In the past, the Empress was caught also giving ink to snarky comments on the quotes even if they weren't really "translations," such as Dion Black's runner-up from Week 897: Quote: "If you are out and about in a kilt, then remember to show some decorum." PE: And decorum is the only thing you'd better be showing.)

Please say where the sentence came from, along with the date. For more guidance and to see the results of previous "plain English" contests, see this week's Style Conversational column at [bit.ly/conv1198](http://bit.ly/conv1198).

Submit entries at this website: [bit.ly/enter-invite-1198](http://bit.ly/enter-invite-1198) (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — just in time for the election to be over — a Hillary Laughing Pen: Press a button on Hillary's throat and her jaw moves up and down as a recorded Clintonian cackle — her own voice — bursts forth. Donated by Loser Dave Prevar, who also gave us the analogous Donald Talking Pen that we offered in Week 1196.

**Other runners-up** win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug, the older-model "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" mug or our 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, Oct. 31; results published Nov. 20 (online Nov. 17). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline for this week's results is by Chris Doyle; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Tom Witte. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev). "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](http://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](http://wapo.st/styleconv).



Push a button on her throat and you get her recorded scary laugh: It's this week's second prize.

(Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

**Diagnose**: From the ancient practice of assessing a patient's condition through the sense of smell, particularly for urinalysis. A far less popular method was to diagtongue. (Jeff Contompasis)

**Uranus**, the seventh planet from the Sun, so called because it was regarded as the original (*ur*) back end of the solar system. (Hugh

Thirlway, The Hague)

**Technology** (Greek *tech*, skill + *no* + *logy*, discourse) A means to avoid interacting with people. (Warren Tanabe)

A French journalist observing a U.S. political party gathering in 1916 observed that the proceedings were full of *vent* (wind); ever since they have been called "conventions." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

**Donybrook** (diminutive of *Donald*, + *brook*, stream): Argument engendered by babbling nonsense. (Nan Reiner)

**Cosmology** (*Cosmopolitan* magazine + *logy*, sluggish): The study of why the universe needed 13 billion years of foreplay before it had its first Earth-shattering organism. (Gary Crockett)

**Incomprehensible**, from *income*, earnings + *prehens*, grasping, as in "The candidate's tax plan is incomprehensible." (Steve Langer, Chevy Chase, Md.)

**Furniture** (*fur* + *niture*, to knit): a place where animals deposit and interweave their hair. (Lynne Larkin, Vero Beach, Fla.)

And Last: **Invite** (Latin *in-*, not + Latin *vita*, life): Having no life. (Warren Tanabe)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 24: Our Bob Staake cartoon caption contest. See [bit.ly/invite1197](http://bit.ly/invite1197).

## SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY BRUCE VENZKE © 2016 CROSSYNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

**ACROSS**

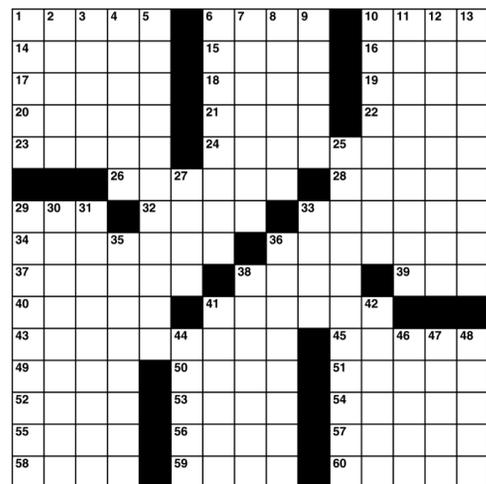
1 Digestive juices  
6 Hosp. workers  
10 Stuffed shirt  
14 Spring growth  
15 Slews  
16 Major under Custer  
17 Polynesian kingdom  
18 Old gray beast  
19 "Outside" prefix used in "Ghostbusters"  
20 Rubber-stamping  
21 Computer term  
22 Wilbur Post's equine  
23 Sum up, in short  
24 Humane Society transactions  
26 Manse dweller  
28 "Siddhartha" author Hermann  
29 Perp prosecutors, briefly

32 Justice appointed after Clarence  
33 Xerxes' empire  
34 Give a right to, as privileges  
36 "Waiting to Exhale" star Angela  
37 Shuttlecock  
38 "Milk" Oscar winner Sean  
39 GPS part (abbr.)  
40 Missed by \_\_\_\_\_ (was way off)  
41 Acknowledges tacitly  
43 Become a reality  
45 Hawaiian coffees  
49 Egyptian sun deity  
50 Olympic speed skater Heiden  
51 Little Boy dropper \_\_\_\_\_ Gay  
52 Be caught, as by a trick

53 European travel expert Steves  
54 Cone creators  
55 Pasture sounds  
56 County in Nebraska  
57 Roman roads  
58 Slaughter of baseball  
59 Where some wedges are used  
60 Short-tempered

**DOWN**

1 Noted Titanic passenger  
2 It's manual on old cars  
3 Like some Greek architecture  
4 Make like Cruella De Vil  
5 Prenuptial bashes  
6 Excoriate  
7 Moldable kids' stuff  
8 Kramden's buddy  
9 Costly  
10 Certain heads of state  
11 Goes to the other side again, as a street  
12 Great strength or force  
13 Goal of a box office purchase  
25 1948 Olivia de Havilland drama  
27 Carpenter's tool  
29 Arguable  
30 Disney forte  
31 Frequent cry of an umpire  
33 Shivaree implements  
35 Unemployment  
36 Decorated  
38 Michael Jackson, e.g.  
41 Airport serving Tokyo  
42 This evening, on marquees  
44 Subway fare?  
46 Fifth canonical hour  
47 In a high state of readiness  
48 Impertinent



Answer to last week

G L I M P S E C O S T A R  
T E A C A R T S O N A U T O  
I N T H R E E S M I T R E S  
T E T S T N A P O S T L E  
A R I A T O A M A N L I T  
N I C E T Y P E N B E E T  
S C E N E P O L Y H E D R A  
L I M I T A B L E L E G G S  
A R O D P L O S A F A R I  
B A R T R U I S M T V A D  
A N A H E I M H O T O W L  
M I L A N O P A K E T T L E  
B A L L O T C L E M A T I S  
A N Y O N E P E R P L E X

## HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!** **OCT. 23:** This year you become more caring. You also make your mark in the professional world. Others enjoy having your upbeat spirit around them. If you are single, you meet many people, but only you can decide who would be the best choice for you. Be careful, as you are likely to meet someone who is not emotionally available. If you are attached, the two of you can be quite a dynamic couple. Leo likes your style.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)

Your Sunday starts perfectly as you lounge around and catch up on a loved one's news. Do not make plans with others; instead, luxuriate in the freedom of not having to do anything.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)

You could be overwhelmed by a roommate's or family member's requests and demands. Recognize that you are just one person, and try not to spread yourself too thin. You will feel better if you occasionally say "no."

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)

You can be quite chatty at times, and you'll demonstrate that facet of your personality today. A friend can't help but laugh as you start to imitate different people. Your sense of humor draws a child closer to you.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22)

Don't be surprised by a bout of insecurity. You might need to take some time for yourself to update your look or have a chat with a loved one who sees both your negative and positive qualities. You will quickly pull out of your present mood.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22)

You might not know what your plans are as you wake up. Don't worry — you will be delighted by whatever happens. Some of you might isolate yourselves just to get some extra R and R.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You might want to kick back for a day or so. You often run around helping others with a project, errands or whatever needs to be done. Take a day just for you.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

You might be more possessive of a loved one than you have been in a long time. You tend to send out good vibes and draw in what you want. Ask yourself why you feel so insecure right now. Make an effort to remedy the issue.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

You could be pushed to handle a commitment that isn't your responsibility. Do not feel as if you must say "yes." Choose what is best for you. Use caution with spending, especially if you feel tight on money.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You might not discover how complicated a situation really is until the last moment. If you need to bail out, do. It would be helpful to you to detach and look at the big picture.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You appreciate the benefits of one-on-one business conversations more than other signs do. The same goes for your personal life. Do not hesitate to initiate a talk, especially if you are uncomfortable with a recent event or comment.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You might have planned the perfect Sunday, only to be met with interference. Instead of getting on your high horse, relax and adjust. You have a tendency to become rigid. Don't allow this to happen today.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)

Don't make a big deal out of turning down invitations to go out in order to simply relax at home. You have a hobby you love, so make it okay to dedicate some hours to this pastime.

## Employee needs cash, not cashmere

## Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

I am a

housekeeper for the best family in the world. I know they love me, and we share mutual respect.

I am paid \$400 per week. I'm not starving, for sure. But the problem is that on holidays and my birthday, the gifts are mostly clothes from stores I will never go to.

I cannot afford to maintain these clothes — the dry cleaning is not cheap.

I do not need nor want a designer cashmere sweater, because it's as if I had a Mercedes-Benz but couldn't afford the oil change!

Please tell your readers that I (and other domestic workers) would rather have cash. Cash will help me with savings and give me room to breathe.

I feel a week's salary in cash would be the best bonus or gift I could ever receive.

Domestic Worker

**Domestic Worker:** Thank you so much for the honest recommendation. The holiday season will soon be upon us, and I hope that employers will pay

close attention to your letter.

An extra week's worth of pay would be a great gift, is about the same price of a fancy cashmere sweater and doesn't require special handling.

**Dear Amy:** Thank you for advising your recent writer ("Stuck at 17") and all your other readers that it is never too late for a survivor of sexual assault to come forward.

There is help available, and sometimes there is even a chance for the police and prosecutors to get some justice and hold the criminal accountable.

In California recently, Gov. Jerry Brown wisely signed a law (SB 813) abolishing the statute of limitations for serious sexual-assault cases.

As a career prosecutor, I have been working for such a law for 16 years. And now we have it. It is prospective only; it doesn't apply to crimes occurring before Jan. 1, 2017. However, state laws vary, and depending on where a survivor lives, prosecution may be possible.

Even if prosecution is not an option, a survivor can access support, such as counseling, but

only when they summon the courage to come forward.

Your answer encouraging them to do so was morally right and most welcome.

Jay B in California

**Jay B in California:** Thank you so much.

I am of the firm belief that someone who is brave enough to send a letter to me is already taking the first step toward healing.

I hope it gives assault survivors a boost to know that their bravery inspires countless unknown people who read their story and may choose to act on their own behalf.

Different states have different statutes of limitations, but there is no limitation on compassionate help. Even years later, trauma survivors can recover by telling their stories, by accepting assistance and by helping others.

Amy's column appears seven days a week at [washingtonpost.com/advice](http://washingtonpost.com/advice). Write to [askamy@amydickinson.com](mailto:askamy@amydickinson.com) or Amy Dickinson, Tribune Content Agency, 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, Tex. 75001. You can also follow her @askingamy.

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