

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Maledictionary: Cynical definitions

BY PAT MYERS

Flailing around in search of *some* tie-in for **Week 1200**, the Empress trotted out a recurring contest in which we ask for wry, cynical "Devil's Dictionary"-type definitions of words or expressions; the catch was that the term plus the definition had to consist of exactly 12 words (two words connected with a hyphen counted as two).

4th place

Mythology: Religions no one will get angry that you call mythology anymore. (Daniel Galef, Montclair, N.J.)

3rd place

A nail-biter: The first 30 seconds of a Cleveland Browns game. (Dave Airozo, Silver Spring)

2nd place and the ski mask with curly tentacles under the eyeholes:

Promises: These need to be made frequently, since they don't keep well. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Sex: Something to do during the lame sketches on "Saturday Night Live." (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

The twelves of nether: honorable mentions

"Eat your vegetables": Phrase uttered before finding spinach dangling from dog's mouth. (Hildy Zampella)

Hands: In a severed country, the man with tiny ones is king. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

Negligee: Sleepwear for times you expect to neither sleep nor wear it. (Kevin Dopart)

Reality TV: How people genuinely act while performing scripted stunts on camera. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Telephone: A retro app that some people actually use on their phones. (Daniel Galef)

Hoi polloi: If you have to ask, you're surely one of them. (Cindi Rae Caron, Blowing Rock, N.C.)

"Believe me": A lie has just been told, or shortly will be. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

"Make America great again": Fill in the blank with your chosen prejudice. (William Kennard, Arlington)

"With all due respect": "Prepare, as I snort in your general direction." (Gigi Thompson Jarvis, McLean, Va., a First Offender)

"My bad": "I'm scoring points by flippantly admitting that I messed up." (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

"Locker room talk": A terrible defense used to cover a terrible offense. (Jesse Frankovich)

"Use at own risk": "Legal team made us write this. Have fun!" (Nathanael Dewhurst, Lynn, Mass.)

Ego trip: The belief that people worship the water you walk on. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Bar: A place characterized by raising of glasses and lowering of morals. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Good old days: When we could afford two spaces after a period. (Mary Kappus, Washington)

Bridgegate: The story of how clogged arteries caused a fat politician's demise. (Dave Airozo)

Buyer's remorse: Coming to a neighborhood near you on January twenty-first. (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Cialis: You want something to happen? Get in the same bathtub, dummy! (Hildy Zampella)

"Drain the swamp": Get rid of those who don't look like you. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Cubs: A team that has managed to disappoint its most masochistic fans. (Gary Crockett)

Dieter: Someone who counts the calories in what everyone else is eating. (Chris Doyle)

Diplomacy: The art and practice of committing international extortion without obvious hostility. (Kevin Dopart)

Election: A quadrennial event that one is tempted to elect to shun.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1204: Well, at least . . .

— **Melania won't be nagging you to eat your vegetables.**
— **The "Hamilton" cast won't have to come all the way down to the White House Blue Room anymore.**
— **The Trump Library won't take up very much space.**
— **There's at least a chance we won't keep hearing about her damn emails.**

In Week 1202 we asked for song parodies that expressed some kind of hope. If you've been in a funk since Nov. 8 but aren't the lyrical type (or even if you are) — or if you *are* happy with the election results but would like to buck up a funk-dweller: **Note some good news for the coming year to comfort — or "comfort" — those who are depressed about the change of presidential administration.**

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1204 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a hefty-feeling eight-inch-tall Donald Trump bobblehead from RoyalBobbles.com, the same company that sold us our extremely limited edition (just 19 left!) Bobble-Linc. It's a pretty good if too svelte likeness of the president-elect except for the uncharacteristic closed mouth (and single chin). Donated by Loser Dave Prevar.

Other runners-up win their choice of the yearned-for "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" Loser 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, Dec. 12; results published Jan. 1 (online Dec. myers29). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Maledictionary" was suggested by Kevin Dopart; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jon Gearhart. 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.



PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

If you win, you get Abraham Lincoln. If you finish second, you get him.

(Douglas Raybeck, Amherst, Mass.)

Electoral college: Designed over 200 years ago specifically to defeat your candidate. (Jerry Birchmore, Springfield, Va.)

Empty-nesters: Parents who fear their chickens may come home to roost. (Chris Doyle)

Exercise bike: An oddly shaped coat rack usually found in basement corners. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Fine print at the bottom: An anagram of "Often the important bit." (Jesse Frankovich)

Grace: The ability to wish a scoundrel well while gritting your teeth. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Mike Pence: A politician who willingly hitched his wagon to a tsar. (Kevin Dopart)

Pollster: An oracle who has swapped entrails for numbers, with similar accuracy. (James W.

Hertsch III, Fairfax)

Roller coaster: A carnival ride to help you relax after the election. (Mary Kappus)

Sinkhole: When God decides a vacation home in Florida needs a basement. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Subway: Mass transit technology that is rumored to work in other cities. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Supermoon: No prettier than other hardworking moons, but better lit and publicized. (Melissa Balmain)

Tim Kaine: Someone whose favorite expression is "Don't quit your day job." (Hildy Zampella)

Tootsie Roll: Food that, when chewed, helpfully removes old, worn-out fillings. (Duncan Stevens)

Understudy: An actor who *means* "break a leg" when he says it. (Kevin Dopart)

Veterinarian: A sort of magician who pulls things out of a rabbit. (Daniel Galef)

Voter: One who studiously gathers all available misinformation about candidates for office. (Duncan Stevens)

Voters: People with their middle fingers on the polls of the nation. (Chris Doyle)

Losers: A person who succeeds at a pursuit you deem insufficiently worthwhile. (Tom Witte)

Style Invitational: Contest used to prove who has the most free time. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Dec. 5: two simultaneous contests!

Week 1202, song parodies containing some lyrics about hope: bit.ly/invite1202

Week 1203, what you would do with any of several magical powers: bit.ly/invite1203

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY MARTIN ASHWOOD-SMITH © 2016 CROSSNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

ACROSS		DOWN	
1	Curmudgeonly consultants	1	Snap up
6	Staff leaders?	2	Home buyer's option, in brief
15	Related to n ephrology	3	Troop group
16	Charcoal chunk	4	Produce producers
17	Full of zeal	5	Swap meets
18	Go into business	6	Propelled pellets
19	PC image type	7	Aphrodite's lover
21	Eschew the lift going down	8	Spruce variety
22	Harvard Science Center designer	9	Stash for the future
23	Far from self-effacing	10	Eight fluid ounces
25	Klee contemporary	11	On sale, say
27	Mormons, initially	12	One of the Kennedys
28	Is, for you?	13	Former Army post in Calif.
31	Summit position	32	(named for a European country)
33	Graycoat	64	Was charming?
35	Ceremonial position in British Commonwealth countries	65	Get one's bearings
41	Nome tower?	66	Faulty Challenger part
		67	Fall insurance
		68	Easily irritated

Answer to last week

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HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Dec. 4: This year you will make a difference and break bad habits and patterns. Review your long-term goals to see if they are still valid. If you are single, should you decide you want to change your status, it will happen easily. Wait for the right person to come along. If you are attached, the two of you will have a lot of fun if you are willing to adapt to various situations. Be more flexible and understanding with each other. Aquarius comes through for you in odd ways.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Follow the example of your loved ones. You might want to squeeze in a call to a friend at a distance this morning. As a result, you are likely to consider planning a long-overdue trip.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Accept what is happening between you and another person. It will take a lot of understanding and caring to work out the kinks in this relationship. Where your friends are is where you will want to be.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You'll have a unique opportunity to throw yourself completely into a concert, movie or some other type of happening that could consume your mind. Once the event or activity is over, you will feel more relaxed and much happier.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Someone makes it clear how he or she feels about you. The real issue is figuring out how you feel about this person. If you are not on the same page, this situation quickly could become problematic.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Others might try to dominate the day. As a result, you could be resentful, as you are not a sign that appreciates being pushed around. How you communicate your irritation will make or break the moment and your interaction.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Use caution if you're using money for bait or to placate someone. Expect a backfire in the near future. Try a different way of relating to this person, if possible.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Don't be surprised by another person's attitude. You have the charm and wherewithal to accomplish what you want, even if you don't know what that is yet. Make a point of visiting an older friend.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Pressure builds to make an appearance at a meeting or get-together, as others make it known that they would appreciate your presence. See how you feel and decide if you want to join these people; it is your call.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You will speak your mind, as you have a tendency to be blunt. Don't worry so much about this trait. Many of your friends appreciate this quality in you and trust you because of your honesty. A friend lightens up your mood as well as others'.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Be aware of a recent tendency to be possessive. You might not even recognize this behavior or realize the looks you are giving others. Understand that jealousy could be at the core of this change in attitude. Recognize how much you value a specific person.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Your smile goes a long way in making a distant friend feel more comfortable. You could also be dealing with in-laws who come from a different world altogether.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Listen to your inner voice when dealing with a personal matter that keeps nagging at you. You need to handle what is going on for your sake, not anyone else's. Being empathetic can take you only so far.

Boyfriend worries family

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: My sister has been dating "Dominic" for close to three years.

She decided she wanted to start a new career path, which would require going back to school. Dom claims to want to be a cop but doesn't appear to be doing anything about it.

We've all been concerned about their situation, but now our fears are growing deeper as I have recently caught Dom in a lie.

Recently, he claimed to have gone on a "ride along" with the police unit's aviation unit. I found it quite hard to believe he did such a thing and did some research and found the relevant paperwork online, which clearly states no one is permitted to ride along with the aviation unit.

Furthermore, the picture he posted on his social media account bragging about his experience was actually taken from a blog posted in 2011. (I learned this doing a "reverse image" search.)

Our whole family is very upset that this guy could be taking advantage of my sister and lying about everything. My sister has taken on a lot of financial

responsibility for the two of them. She works two jobs, can barely afford her bills and can't afford to go to school for the career she wants.

She is in love with this guy. We don't know how to tell her that we fear her relationship is based on lies. She is 26. How can we approach her and talk to her about this without losing her to this guy?

Concerned Sister

Concerned Sister: You've taken it upon yourself to catch this guy, and so you should deliver the news to your sister that "Dominic" is not the man he pretends to be.

You should deliver this in a neutral way, offering her only the facts, and letting her decide what — if anything — she wants to do about it.

It can be heartbreaking to watch a beloved family member bury her own dreams and engage in what seems like a dead-end relationship, but you must always accept the fact that she is making her own choices. Even if you disagree with these choices, you should convey to her that she is in charge of her own life and that you will always be in her corner, no matter what.

Be very wary of making overly negative statements or nonnegotiables concerning this person. You may all be stuck with him for some time to come.

Dear Amy: This time of year, so many families fret about gift-giving. When I was growing up, our extended family consisted of my grandparents, their three sons and spouses and seven grandchildren — 15 people.

Our family decided to do a drawing. Each family member drew the name of another member of the family not in their immediate family group. Each family member got just one gift, each gift from someone not in their immediate family.

However, we kids still got lots of gifts from our parents and grandparents.

Happy

Happy: My family also did this. The drawing occurred around the Thanksgiving table after the dishes had been cleared. This is a fun way to handle the gift exchange.

Amy's column appears seven days a week at washingtonpost.com/advice. Write to 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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