

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Comfort & Oy: Silver linings for 2017

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1204** the Empress asked for some post-election “silver linings” for those who were less than euphoric over the election results. Close to 20 Losers noted that we won’t have to have our prime-time TV preempted next month, now that the **State of the Union address will be delivered as a tweet** (“Believe me, it’s great!”) at 3 a.m.

4th place

We can all look forward to Fireside Tweets. (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

3rd place

It’ll be fun to see Cabinet meetings televised and end with a firing. (Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.)

2nd place and the Trump bobblehead:

With the ice caps melting, we can invade the North Pole and finally win the war on Christmas. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.)

And the winner of the Inkin’ Memorial:

From now on, everyone who says “Thanks, Obama” will really mean it. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

So long, succors: honorable mentions

At least now you can be sincere when you tell your children that “ANYONE (sigh) can grow up to be president.” (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

We can look forward to the debut of the 21st century’s first coal-powered car. (Terry Reimer, Frederick, Md.)

Saying “I told you so” may be not be gracious, but it never gets old. (Art Grinath)

At least we won’t have to watch this president’s hair go gray from the burdens of office. (Terri Berg Smith; Rockville; Eileen Doll, Gwynn Oak, Md.)

Now it’s your turn to rag on the other party’s leadership every day, hour or minute. (Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

We won’t have to worry about how to pronounce FGOTUS. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Thank God we don’t have to “go high” anymore! So bite me! (Sarah Jacobs, New York, a First Offender)

When the country files for bankruptcy, we’ll have an expert in office. (Keith Ord, Potomac, a First Offender; Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

When we nuke Belgium, they probably won’t fight back. (Michael Rolfe, Cape Town, South Africa)

With Melania staying in New York, the Secret Service agents assigned to her will have a fun, vibrant place to get in trouble when they’re off duty. (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

Alec Baldwin will be so busy on “SNL” that he won’t be able to make a “Mercury Rising” sequel. (Dan Mauer, Washington)

Justice Ginsburg will receive the absolute best round-the-clock medical care. (Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

At least the new administration has no connection with Anthony Weiner. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Although some people may lose Medicare, Social Security or veterans’ benefits, at least we now get to choose our own facts. (Kevin Dopart)

Billy Bush is off the air. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.)

Global warming won’t be a problem anymore, what with nuclear winter. (Dave Matuskey, Sacramento; Ed Sobansky, Bowie, Md.)

A constant state of existential dread really makes those pounds come off! (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Tourists will have no trouble finding the White House once the giant neon TRUMP sign goes up. (Hildy Zampella)

Elon Musk will get many more applicants for his one-way trips to Mars. (Art Grinath; Allan Breon, Clarksville, Md.)

Private contracts cost the federal government \$500 billion a year.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

A RIP-roaring year: Week 1208: Obit poems

Florence Henderson (1934-2016)
“Marcia, Marcia, Marcia!” the other girls, they quipped. The senior Brady daughter was the cute one (says the script). But just ask Greg, the eldest, which castmate was the bomb — The hottie whom he pinned for was his lovely on-screen mom.

One death most of us can cheer about is the demise, finally, of the year 2016, which, in addition to such pesky distractions as the world falling apart, seemed to claim a weirdly high number of beloved entertainment figures. But their loss is our game, our annual one: **Write a humorous poem of no longer than eight lines about someone who died in 2016**, as in the example above by Washington Post Staff Tasteless Person Gene Weingarten. You’re certain to find many lists of newly former people by Googling “deaths 2016” (without quotes). As always with our obit poems, being witty doesn’t mean you have to be cruel; don’t express glee over someone’s death just because you didn’t like her singing or his tax policies. Your poem isn’t required to rhyme, but in the 14 previous times we did this contest, almost all the inking entries did.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1208 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Inkin’ Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets, after our year of similarly great (if not similarly “great”) upheaval, a genuine **“Authentic Cut taken directly from the heart of the Berlin Wall.”** It comes complete with a little pouch, a declaration of authenticity, and a box — which is good, because otherwise it looks like a piece of gravel. Donated by Loser 4 Ever Elden Carnahan, who thought he was regifting an earlier prize but wasn’t.

Other runners-up win 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 the last of our lusted-after Loser magnets, “Magnet Dum Laude” or “Falling Jest Short,” or a new model TBD. First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Jan. 9; results published Jan. 29 (online Jan. 26). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week’s results is by Mark Raffman; 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; 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.

Just think how much we’ll save with a president who knows how to stiff contractors! (Chris Doyle, Town, W.Va.)

Evil clowns no longer have to hide in the woods. (Frank Osen)

What are you so sad about? I’m gonna be rich! (Mike Merrigan, Riverdale Park, Md., a First Offender)

We may finally end the long reign of terror inflicted on us by former Miss USAs, federal judges from Indiana, and Gold Star parents. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

These Cabinet appointments could get some bad hombres off Wall Street. (Dan Kinney, Charlottesville, Va.)

The middle class will finally disappear, so we won’t have to worry anymore about what to do with them. (Roger Dalrymple)

No more Little Bo Poop on the White House lawn. (Ed Scarbrough, Germantown, Md.)

On April 15, instead of a check, I can send the IRS a notification that I am smart. (Robyn Carlson, Keyser, W.Va.)

We’ll finally be able to stop talking about the Gore-Bush recount. (Chris Damm, Charles

Town, W.Va.)
Think of the tremendous savings we’ll get by combining the U.S. and Russian embassies around the world. (Jon Hensley, Arlington)

It will be fun watching it all unravel — particularly the single 10-mile-long hair strand. (Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.)

If you get axed from the EPA, don’t worry, the Ministry of Truth is hiring! (Ben Aronin, Washington)

That bomb shelter Grandpa built in 1962 is looking like a smart investment after all. (Rob Cohen)

Like loosening a belt after Thanksgiving dinner, dozens of politicians will enjoy the blissful feeling of relief by unleashing years of pent-up racism. (Dave Airozo, Silver Spring, Md.)

It’s only 0.04 centuries until Election Day 2020. (Jesse Frankovich)

And Last: Since the president-elect doesn’t read, The Style Invitational is safe from the bashing he gives “SNL.” (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

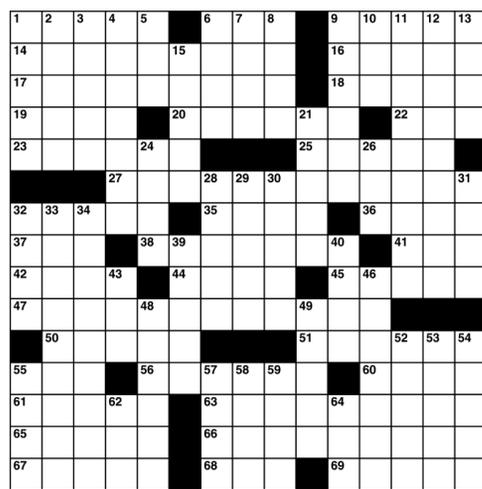
Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 2: Our reverse-crossword contest. See bit.ly/invite1207.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY PATRICK JORDAN © 2017 CROSSYENERGY SYNDICATE LLC

- ACROSS**
- 1 Cloister kingpin
 - 6 CNBC topic, on occasion
 - 9 Spin or rinse
 - 14 Allan-a-Dale, for one
 - 16 Psychics’ detections
 - 17 Rigorous evaluations
 - 18 Reports prejudicially
 - 19 Accounting factor
 - 20 Jet-setter’s getaway
 - 22 Latin 101 conjugation
 - 23 Not al fresco
 - 25 Tokay’s bouquet
 - 27 James “Sully” Sullivan’s pal in “Monsters, Inc.”
 - 32 Monopolize the mirror
 - 35 “Great” detective of kiddie lit
 - 36 Thumbs-downs
 - 37 Barber’s obstacle
 - 38 Heathenish
 - 41 Cube contemporary
 - 42 Raw silk color
 - 44 Fugue finale
 - 45 Subject to shame
 - 47 Watergate special prosecutor
 - 50 “Boston Legal” event
 - 51 Watch the birdie?
 - 55 Pound sound
 - 56 Elsa’s home in “Frozen”
 - 60 Pithy plea for permission
 - 61 Trump’s second ex
 - 63 Realtor-hosted occasion
 - 65 Mariner’s milieu
 - 66 Tupperware purchase
 - 67 TV Guide listings
 - 68 Go (for)
 - 69 Cloud in a summer sky?

- DOWN**
- 1 Early adders
 - 2 Quiche lorraine ingredient
 - 3 Utopian state
 - 4 Veteran
 - 5 Parlor picture, colloquially
 - 6 ___majesté
 - 7 Pool enlargers
 - 8 Estimation qualifier
 - 9 San Francisco district
 - 10 Slangy laugh
 - 11 Vanilla-flavored beverage
 - 12 They know how to handle bills
 - 13 North-of-the-border gas brand
 - 15 Bo in the third “Sharknado” film
 - 21 Knocks to the ground
 - 24 Hail damage evidence
 - 26 Complete the installations on
 - 28 Be a benefactor to
 - 29 Hiker created by Martin Handford
 - 30 Shed ___
 - 31 “What a Wonderful World” starter
 - 32 Spa offering
 - 33 Tout’s hangout
 - 34 Devoid of typos
 - 39 City near the Florida Trail
 - 40 Personal welfare
 - 43 Linear or lateral prefix
 - 46 Digital currency
 - 48 Shiny varnishes
 - 49 Experiencing an energy crisis?
 - 52 Spa offering
 - 53 Cartography detail
 - 54 Amphitheater sections
 - 55 “Jews and Words” co-author Oz
 - 57 Nuts, in Nogales
 - 58 Per item
 - 59 Euro fraction
 - 62 Wee fellow
 - 64 Cauldron stirrer



Answer to last week

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

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Jan. 1: This year you find that your energy dwindles for reasons you can’t understand. Better health habits and letting go of negative patterns could turn this issue around. Stay focused on creating healthy emotional patterns. If you are single, you will meet someone where you least expect to. Be careful not to let fatigue create negativity. Aquarius makes an excellent friend for you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You might want to resist making the party rounds, but you won’t be able to avoid it. Opportunities come through a special person who will make this day close to perfect.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Concerns surround a friend who is unstable or upset. Trying to help this person root out the problem could be futile, as he or she seems to be in denial. Demonstrate your caring, but don’t push.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Your New Year greetings will mean a lot to others. Make a call to someone whom you care a lot about. Your ability to make a difference in someone’s life emerges.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You’ll enjoy the company of others much more than you could’ve imagined. One-on-one relating proves to be successful in ironing out a problem.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Defer to others, but keep your eye on the big picture. You have the ability to touch many people; use your people skills. Your efforts might make a big difference to one key person.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Pace yourself and understand how much you can achieve if you make the extra effort. Someone could be more upset than you might realize. This person counts on you for your advice and feedback.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Your playfulness turns a grimace into a grin. You have the ability to make others lighten up and remain positive. Use your leadership skills to encourage others to make positive choices.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Stay centered and understand what is happening with a family member or with a personal issue. You might want to make a change, but this isn’t the time to make that announcement.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Reach out to someone who has been unusually quiet. This concern and care makes a big difference. Friends surround you, so try not to be overly serious.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Listen to news and follow through on an offer. Get together with friends for an early dinner or late lunch. Share your resolutions openly, and you will help others focus on theirs.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Slowing down will be harder than you think. The unexpected could occur when dealing with a neighbor or good friend. You’ll have the right words to shake up the moment.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Take news with a grain of salt. You can’t help saying what you are feeling — just try not to rain on anyone’s parade, as you might have a moody moment. You will lighten up once you realize how many people care about you.

Pastor inspires husband to clean auto

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: My husband and I have been married for six years. He is a Christian and is active in his

church. I am an atheist. While he tries to convert me on occasion, we have no problems with our religious differences. In fact, the conversations we have are some of the highlights of our marriage.

My husband is not a tidy man. He rarely does any cleaning but will help with the dishes or laundry sometimes, and that’s good enough for me. The one area that I have (slightly) nagged him about over the years is his car. I usually end up waiting for his car to get really bad, then go and clean it out myself or pay to have it detailed while he is at work.

I regularly ask him to clean out his car, but in six long years, he has never done it. Until yesterday. Yesterday, he suddenly spent two hours cleaning out his car. I was thrilled! Then he told me why he cleaned out his car.

Apparently, his pastor had needed a ride somewhere. After the ride in my husband’s car, the pastor gave my husband some great advice: Clean out your car. And he immediately did it.

Amy, I am happy that my husband finally cleaned his own car. But I’m a little upset that after six years of me asking him to perform this small task, he listened to his pastor and not to me.

Am I looking a gift horse in the mouth or am I right to feel a bit slighted?

Bent Out of Shape

Bent Out of Shape: One reason your husband has never cleaned his car is because every once in a while — when it gets really bad —

a magical elf appears and does it for him. If he has been an especially good boy, the elf actually pays for the car to be professionally detailed while he’s at work! No wonder he has religion: Because in his life good things just . . . happen!

The way to stop “nagging” is to simply stop. Disengage. Most of us listen to people outside our families a little more closely than we listen to family members. This dynamic is why you can bug your child about something for years, but the minute a peer says the same thing, it becomes true.

Your husband is showing you that he understands that cleanliness is next to godliness. You should roll your eyes at the source of this sudden transformation and tell him you hope it sticks.

Dear Amy: My husband and I are friends with another couple. We usually get along great and have lots of fun . . . except when the male friend, “Jack,” goes into braggart mode.

Jack will start in on my husband, stating he can beat him at any game, especially racquetball. My husband made the mistake of asking Jack to play racquetball — more for exercise than competition, but he has stopped asking since the chest-beating started.

Jack’s wife excuses his behavior by saying, “This is just Jack being Jack.” Jack blames the behavior on his competitive upbringing.

It is obnoxious, annoying and happens too often. Jack went so far — once — as to call us both stupid, later apologizing.

Any suggestions on how to get this to stop?

Had It

Had It: You can draw “Jack’s” attention to his behavior and see if he is willing to change (his apology to you means that he knows he crossed the line). People who brag are overcompensating in the most obvious way.

The next time he flies into full-braggart mode, you can try to slow things down and get his attention by saying, gently, “Jack, you know we would still like you even if you weren’t the best at everything? You don’t have to prove your greatness to us — we’re your friends.” Repeat, if necessary.

Kindness might be the way to kill off this terrible habit.

Dear Amy: I was shocked by your response to “Not Your Chum in Chico,” who didn’t like it when coffee clerks made small talk. Bah humbug! Why be such a grouch when people are just trying to be friendly?

Disappointed

Disappointed: I love pleasantries but don’t like specific comments regarding what I am purchasing or whether I look tired, stressed, happy or sad. I realize that clerks have a very tough and repetitive job to do and that they are sometimes forced to greet customers in a specific way. I think that for most people, a smile, a simple greeting and then fulfilling the order competently is appreciated.

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.