

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Rack-tile dysfunction from Week 1212

BY PAT MYERS

It's Neologism Central in Loserland this week. Besides the new word-find puzzle, in **Week 1212** we presented 40 seven-letter "racks" from ScrabbleGrams puzzles and asked you to come up with new terms of at least five letters. Submitted too frequently: **BONKLIT** or **KNOBKIT** as porn, and **WHISPAP** for that hushed tone golf commentators make.

4th place

AILOPTV → **TV PAIL**: Bucket kept close at hand for reality shows — and, increasingly, for reality. (Mark Richardson, Takoma Park, Md.)

3rd place

AQOPPRS → **ARSPPOOP**: Don't tell me there's another kind! (Jim Lubell, Hillsboro, Ore.; Frank Mann, Washington)

2nd place and the Vietnamese civet coffee:

AMRRSTY → **SMARTYR**: One who vows to live for the cause. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

CHILSTU: Two names for the president's inner circle: **HIS CULT** and **LIC TUSH**. (William Kennard, Arlington)

Clearance racks: honorable mentions

AILOPTV → **POLIVAT**: A pork barrel. (Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia)

BBEORRY → **ROBE-RY**: What Senate Republicans did to Merrick Garland. (Allen K. Robinson, Charlottesville, a First Offender)

ALLOPRY → **YAPROLL**: A dachshund (Bruce Niedt, Cherry Hill, N.J.)

BGIORTY → **GORYBIT**: A particularly graphic scene in a horror movie: **ORGYBIT**: the same in a porn flick. (Bruce Niedt)

BIKLNOT → **BILKTON**: Las Vegas (Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)

CDELMSU → **CLUMSED**: Moved less than gracefully. "Fred just clumsied in here and knocked over the TV again." (Sarah Jay, Churchville, Md.)

CDELMSU → **DE-SLUM**: To gentry, from the point of view of the gentry. (Josh Fedblyum, Philadelphia)

CIILNUV → **LUVNIC**: A cute term for a vasectomy. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

AHINRSV → **VARNISH**: Somewhat like a varn. (Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

AHINRSV → **RAVISH**: To carjack a Toyota SUV. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

AHINRSV → **VINRASH**: Rosé-cea. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

AHINRSV → **NRA-SHIV**: "Help protect the incarcerated from prison gang violence: Arm inmates." (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

AHIPRSW → **R.I.P. SHAW**: A two-wheeled hearse. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.; Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

AHIPRSW → **RAWSHIP**: How to address an inexperienced, crude officeholder. "Your executive orders are working out perfectly, Your Rawship." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

AIMNNV → **MINIVAN**: A Dutch toddler. (Ed Edwards, Worcester Park, Surrey, England)

AILLNNO → **LOINAL**: The region on a woman most likely to be regulated by the moon, or the GOP. (Marni Penning Coleman, Falls Church)

AILLNNO → **NONILLA**: World's blandest flavor. (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

AILLNNO → **NO-AIL**: The health-care system replacing the ACA. It saves money by mandating that all Americans just stay healthy. (Jason Russo, Annandale)

AILOPTV → **VAIL POT**: The best thing to happen to Colorado tourism since snow. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring)

AIMMOSS → **MIASMOS**: The stinkiest kind of cigars. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

AIMMOSS → **IOS-MAS**: Holiday in which presents are put under an Apple tree. (Mark Raffman, Reston)



New contest for Week 1216: As the word turns

L-9: Piglav: A bar's men's room by last call.
P-6: Reggy: How you won't be describing most federal agencies this year.

We're on our third go-round — or go-up, go-down, go-sideways, go-diagonally — with our contest in which you "discover" brand-new words by tracing a line through letters on a word search grid. The Empress created the grid by feeding 20 randomly generated words — including oddities ranging from "darr" to "quindecimvirate" — into an online puzzle generator, but lots of other real words showed up as well. **This week: Create a word or multi-word term that consists of adjacent letters — in any direction or several directions — in the grid above, and provide a humorous definition, as in the examples above.** You may also give an especially clever definition for an existing term you find. And you may use the word in a sentence, if that makes your entry funnier. (Even with this many possible words, there's a good chance that many people will send in the same word, and it'll come down to the description.)

IMPORTANT: You *absolutely* must begin each entry with the letter-number coordinates that mark the first letter of your term, as in the examples; no way is your reasonably obliging but got-her-limits Empress going to search the grid for it. Also, please don't begin the line with numbering, bullets, etc.; they mess up the entry-sorting.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1216 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a nifty toy called Toilet Tunes: It's an electronic floor pad with some piano keys drawn on it. Tap your feet and make some melodies while you're, you know, occupied with other matters. It is a little-known fact that Beethoven worked out his Symphony No. 2 on a primitive version of this instrument. Donated by Loser Nan Reiner, who tried it out and reports that it actually works pretty well.

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 our new lusted-after Loser magnets, "No Childishness Left Behind" or "Magnum Dopus." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, March 6; results published March 26 (online March 23). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jeff Contompasis. "As the word turns" was an entry by Dave Prevar in a previous contest. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" 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; this week she'll show the grid with the 20 words used to make it. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.



Compose Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 on the Toilet Tunes mat.

ALOQRSU → **QUAROLS**: Songs from the War on Christmas, like "Violent Night" and "I Saw Mommy Choking Santa Claus." (Jon Gearhart)

AINNNTUY → **ANNUIT**: A native Alaskan who's hit the lottery. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

AINNNTUY → **NAYNUT**: Republican member of Congress, 2009-17; Democratic member of Congress, 2017-... (Mark Raffman)

ALLOPRY → **LOL; PRAY**: The best advice for surviving the president's new empire. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

ALLOTYY → **TALLY OY**: Rallying cry at the end of a lox hunt. (Deb Stewart, Damascus, Md.)

AMNNOSW → **MANNOWS**: Sperm. "Triplets on the way, bro — my

mannows can SWIM!" (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

AMNNOSW → **NO SWAN**: Alas, most ugly ducklings stay ugly. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

AQOPPRS → **SPA-POOR**: Bankrupt, but relaxed. (Jack McBroom, Fort Valley, Va.)

BGIORTY → **B.G. RIOT**: After the Bowling Green Massacre, there was also this. Or something like that somewhere. Clearly we need to militarize the police. — K. Conway (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

BNNRSUU → **NUN RUBS**: The most awkward massages ever. (Scott Slaughter, Monrovia, Md.)

CEENNOV → **NEONCÉ**: This entertainer is inert most of the time, but she really lights up onstage. (Harold Mantle, Walnut Creek, Calif.)

CEIORTW → **EWROTIC**: Arousing disgust. "Sending photos of your junk is so ewrotic!" (Perry Beider, Silver Spring)

AILOPTV → **ILOVPAT**: The vanity plate I chose in a shameless grab at Invite ink. (Jesse Frankovich)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1216.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 27: our contest for jokes in the "X was so Y that ..." format. See bit.ly/invite1215.

SUNDAY CHALLENGE

BY RANDOLPH ROSS © 2017 CROSSYENERGY SYNDICATE LLC

ACROSS

1 In a major way
10 Funny Fox
14 "I'll be right there!"
15 Accept
16 Pets on perches
17 Expenditure
18 Duffs
19 Awful place to work
21 Fish caught in pots
22 Govt. security
23 Home field of the Rays, with "the"
24 "Dear old" guy
25 Confound
27 Flowery verse
28 "What ___!" ("So funny")
29 Not as nice
31 FIFA superstar
34 Dishonest competitors

35 ___gatherum
36 Medicinal plant
37 Former "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" broadcaster
38 Cheapen
40 Some AL hitters
43 Clash of heavyweights
45 Relocated athlete from St. Lou
46 Something to follow
47 Doesn't get hit
49 "The Wreck of the Mary ___"
50 Network, e.g.
51 Its branch represents peace
53 Dog, in commercialese

54 Looked at again
55 Got gray
56 Squalid state

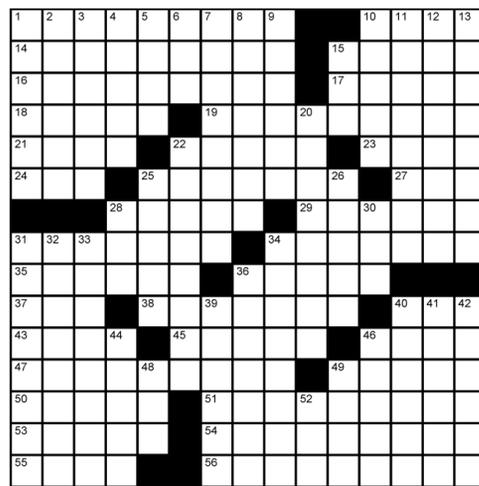
DOWN

1 Hit on the head
2 One way congruent plane geometry figures are the same
3 1970s White House name
4 Hurdles for aspiring attys.
5 Fun house cries
6 Point of no return?

7 Makes a loud noise
8 Take off, as a soda cap
9 Ford flops
10 Debunk?
11 Place in power
12 Samaritan
13 Ophthalmologist's instruments
15 In great demand
20 Siding substance
22 Mining sieves
25 It's hot in Le Havre
26 Tubular pasta
28 Yellowfin tuna
30 Turkish title

31 Greek restaurant order
32 Making attribution
33 "That Girl" girl
34 Not absolute
36 Mrs. Smith's rival
39 Fumes
40 Evita's maiden name
41 New employees
42 Mounts
44 Ceaselessly
46 Become established
48 "Still ___" (1999 rap song)
49 Lucy's partner
52 YouTube clip, for short

Answer to last week



HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAYFeb. 26: This year you decide to change directions. For some of you, an event could push you into accepting different lifestyles. Understand what is happening around you, and make decisions for you and not just for others. If you are attached, the two of you experience a very romantic year. Excitement surrounds you and your significant other. A fellow Pisces can be quirky at times, and the two of you tend to be on different pages.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Today's eclipse could get you mired down in details or conflicts. Honor what you would like to do. Don't be surprised if you feel exhausted. Know that you suddenly might become angry with a friend. Let it go before you say something unkind.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
You could find that anger you have been suppressing for a long time starts to emerge. Verbalize what is ailing you. Make sure you are directing your feelings properly.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Pressure builds when dealing with an older friend or a respected family member. You will want to connect on a deeper level, but you could be surprised by how volatile this person might be.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You might be creating more of what you need to make a situation work. Detach and consider the opportunities that surround each person involved. Try to emphasize what is positive when discussing this matter.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Make time for a loved one without any interference. This person is likely to open up about a very vulnerable topic. Try to imagine what it is like to walk in their shoes.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You could find a partner to be testy, if not volatile. This person has a set of expectations that sometimes creates a problem. A new beginning becomes possible if you both take a quick break from reality.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You'll find it necessary to restructure parts of your day-to-day life. Make a point of sharing more of what is on your mind with a trusted associate. You could be tired of working in a vague, uninspiring situation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Your creativity surges and allows greater give-and-take. You seem to be somewhat off-kilter and wondering what will happen next. Maintain a sense of humor.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You could be dealing with an emotional matter that you don't want others to know about. You have the ability to see a personal matter differently because of this situation. Your increased sensitivity to others will be one of the positive outcomes of this experience.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Do more listening, ask key questions and be willing to get past an immediate problem. Your imagination will allow you to find answers and solutions. A family member could be irritating and somewhat explosive. Try to avoid a collision.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Money could slip right through your hands. You also might have a problem doing the necessary accounting. Know that a new beginning is more than possible.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Today's solar eclipse makes nearly everything you want possible. Maintain a sense of humor about an issue involving your finances. You could be inadvertently challenging someone.

Atheist could step into 'goshfather' role

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy:

I am a happily married man with two wonderful children, ages 6

and 8. Recently, a close friend and his wife (who are Catholic) asked me to be the godfather to their child.

I instantly reminded them that I am an atheist. My children weren't baptized, and my understanding is that a godparent is a religious mentor; indeed, in a recent column, you noted that a godparent provides a spiritual backdrop to a child's life.

Although I am not Catholic, religious or spiritual, I would be delighted to be a mentor, close confidant, friend, uncle, etc., to the child.

If anything happened to my friend and his wife, assuming it was consistent with their wishes, my wife and I would happily provide for and love the child and raise it as our own, on equal footing with our children.

Nonetheless, in my head the question remains, is it appropriate for me to be a godfather?

Atheist Godfather

Atheist Godfather: First there is this: Are you willing to participate in the church service during the child's baptism and

swear in front of your friends, priests and the congregation not only to renounce the devil (my favorite part) but to also uphold the tenets of the church?

The following is from Catholic Church canon regarding the role of godparents: A godparent will "... help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it."

If you are not comfortable participating at this level, it would be most ethical to decline.

If you are comfortable participating in the baptism service and other church services, and if you feel able to fulfill this role for the child, then you should accept.

The second hurdle is the church itself.

Christian churches differ regarding the godparent role. But a Catholic priest might not be willing for a non-Catholic, non-Christian, nonbeliever to take it on. Your friend should check with his priest.

If you are *not* comfortable fulfilling religious-oriented roles as a godfather, you should thank your friend for this honor and gesture of friendship and trust. Ask him whether you can be given an alternate status, whereby you will forge a special friendship with the child. Perhaps you could be the

"goshfather" — a special friend and honorary uncle.

Dear Amy: "Mom" was wrestling with how to encourage her underachieving daughter to succeed at an expensive college. I, too, had a child who skated under the wire in high school, and I thought was too immature for college.

They should let her go to her dream school, under the caveat that she apply for and use student loans for tuition. If she achieves the C's her parents want, then they can reimburse her, semester by semester. If not, it's her dime. It worked for us. Having some skin in the game can make a big difference.

Been There

Been There: This seems potentially expensive and risky (if the student doesn't get Cs, stays in school and continues to compile debt), but I agree that this student must have skin in the game.

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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