

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Quibbles 'n' wits: Pedantic antics

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1220**, we asked you to be comically pedantic in correcting or clarifying some statement or voicing some peeve. Yes, dozens of people, we also noted that despite its name, The Style Invitational is open to any old loser, and that it is notably lacking in you-know-what.

4th place

Since **toilet paper** is rarely used to wipe a toilet (alas!), I always refer to it as toilet-user paper. (Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park, Md.)

3rd place

I've always found that famous scene from **"Last Tango in Paris"** highly troubling: Parisians in the 1970s bought their butter in blocks, not sticks. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

2nd place and the UFO mug labeled "Get In Loser":

I am amazed at how many otherwise intelligent people will say, **"It goes without saying** that . . ." When I need to convey that concept, I express it in mime so I don't look like an idiot. (Seth Tucker, Washington)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Diamonds turn into graphite in considerably less time than forever — in fact, at 4,000 degrees Celsius and 1 atmosphere pressure, almost immediately! That's why, on our next big anniversary, I plan to give my wife a No. 2 pencil. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Speaking of pedantry: The Empress bet Bob Staake she'd get complaints that in Week 1221, he drew Richard Nixon as a lefty. The E was shocked to lose.

More's the petty: honorable mentions

Each time my pregnant wife complains that she is **nauseous**, she is correct in a different way from what she intended. "Nauseous" refers to something that *causes* nausea, and as you can imagine, her repeated misuse of that term always makes me a little sick to my stomach, i.e., nauseated. But most mornings I sensitively refrain from correcting her. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

I firmly refuse to **RSVP** to any invitation: It's *Répondez s'il VOUS plaît* — "if it pleases YOU." I will, however, send a JRPMP: *Je réponds parce-qu'il ME plaît* — "because it pleases me." Actually, I've done that once, some years ago, but I am waiting for a second opportunity. (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

A steak that is **"well done"** is quite the opposite! It is dry and flavorless, rather than juicy, dark pink and 135 degrees Fahrenheit. In place of the traditional five levels of steak doneness, diners should specify "under well done," "well done," "past well done," "overdone" or "ruined." (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

It is absolutely possible to **"have your cake and eat it too."** In the context of foodstuffs, "have" is a synonym for "eat," as in "let's have pizza for dinner" — and at any rate, one inevitably "has" anything one consumes, even if only briefly. The sensible way to say it is "Once you eat your cake, you no longer have it available." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

I have found two separate articles in The Washington Post in the past three months that say Trump's proposed policies would make **"foreign imports"** more expensive. Unless one of those policies is to change the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution, there will continue to be only one kind of imports here. And you wonder why people have lost respect for the media. (Kevin Dopart)

Earth is only sometimes the **"3rd Rock From the Sun."** As the moon



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1224: We beg you to differ

The difference between the **White House visitor logs** and a **kale-and-blueberry smoothie**: Both are likely to produce some unsavory stuff, but we'd still like to see what's going down inside the White House.

The **White House visitor logs** are like a **left sock with a hole in it**: You can cover them up, but eventually a rotten smell is going to make itself known.

- April the giraffe
- A flight on United Express
- A golf cart ride at Mar-a-Lago
- Lunch with Mike Pence
- Beyoncé's vocal cords
- MOAB
- A pink knit hat
- A response by Sean Spicer
- A self-driving car
- A left sock with a hole in it
- A ham and cheese sandwich
- World War III
- The past five Style Invitational contests
- An intentional walk
- Easter Bunny ears
- A vacation in space
- The 50-yard line at FedEx Field
- The White House visitor logs
- A kale and blueberry smoothie

It's been more than a year since our last installment of our hardy perennial (or sometimes more-often-than-ennial) compare-and-contrast contest. **This week: Explain how any two (or more) items on a list are the same or different, or otherwise connected**, as in the examples above. The Empress is keeping her fingers crossed that four weeks from now, we'll still be able to joke in the abstract about World War III.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1224 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Inkin' Memorial**, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the lovely and exuberant fuchsia "I Pooped Today!" T-shirt pictured here — in an adult size, of course. Donated by 138-time Loser Barbara Turner, who did not provide any information about her daily successes.

Other runners-up win our new "You Gotta Play to Lose" 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, May 1; results published May 21 (online May 18). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Quibbles 'n' Wits" for this week's results was submitted by both Tom Witte and Jesse Frankovich; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Chris Doyle. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday.

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.



It's adult-size, of course. Brag about your achievements in this week's second prize.

orbits Earth, it is closer to the sun about half the time, thereby making Earth the *fourth* rock from the sun. Come to think of it, there are also thousands of asteroids that are closer to the sun, so really that show was pretty dumb. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

No, I'm sorry, I don't have a **Kleenex**. I do have some facial tissues manufactured by another corporation. But since you seem hellbent on using one particular brand name, it appears you're out of luck. Gesundheit. (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

How on earth is **"Mary, Mary"** acting "quite contrary" in the nursery rhyme? If she really were,

she'd answer "How does your garden grow?" with "None of your business — and get off my lawn." (Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.)

Why would anyone say **"heat up"**? Can you heat in any other direction? I used to say "heat sideways" for melting ice or boiling water, but that was just a phase I was going through. (Kevin Dopart)

"Pardon me, Mr. Tech Support Genius, but **when I put my mouse on the X** in the upper right corner of the screen and left-clicked, it didn't close the window. However, when I used my mouse to move the mouse pointer to . . ." (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

When someone boasts of making a **"quantum leap"** in a project, I always say, "Well, keep trying." Because a quantum of something is the smallest possible amount. (Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.)

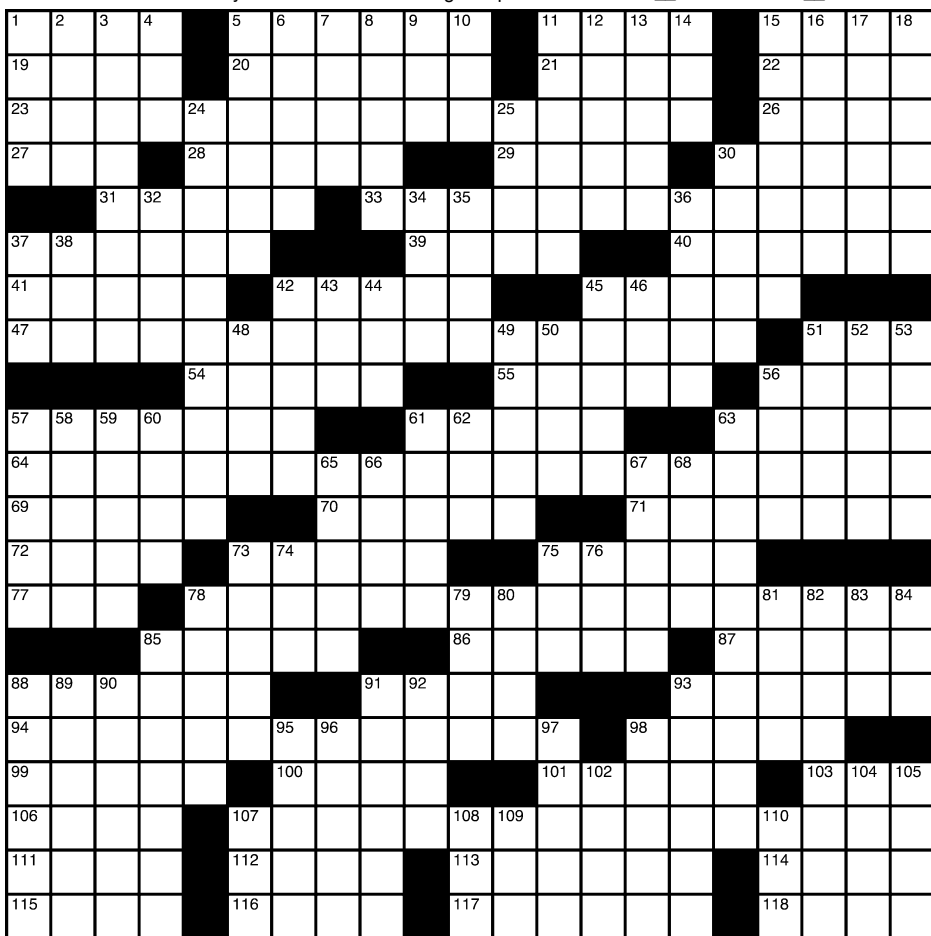
Do you have any idea how far ahead you need to schedule someone to come out to **clean your pool**? I'm supposed to believe some guy just shows up at a woman's door to do the job? Jeez, who comes up with the plots for these pornos? (Hildy Zampella)

Still running — deadline Monday night, April 24: our contest to write lurid headlines for mundane news. See bit.ly/invite1223.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| "LABOR DISPUTES" By CRAIG STOWE | 85 Paris divider | 116 Oenophile's adjective | 16 Webster, notably | 50 Latin 101 word | 81 Good "pocket" holding in Hold 'em |
| | 86 Wash off | 117 Fritters away | 17 One of the original | 51 "Me too!" | 52 Power connections |
| | 87 Spelunkers' haunts | 118 Squat | 18 Large chamber groups | 53 Blood relative? | 56 Starfleet VIP |
| ACROSS | 88 Drops off | | 19 "Amarantine" Grammy winner | 57 Key above F | 58 Spacious |
| 1 "Yowzal!" | 91 Pierre's st. | DOWN | 2 Prefix with dermal | 24 Robin Hood foe | 25 ___ box |
| 5 Virtuous | 93 Most artful | 1 Zoey's role in "New Girl" | 3 Gives the once-over | 30 Bank insurance? | 32 Jacob's first wife |
| 11 Numéro avant six | 94 During contract talks, an opera company | 4 Nuke | 5 Breaks the rules | 6 Didn't get a say | 7 Lotion additive |
| 15 ___ speak | 98 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 8 ___ und Drang | 9 Annual Vietnamese celebration | 10 Pre-1868 Tokyo | 11 Square dance figure |
| 19 "Amaretto" | 99 Runs through a sieve | 12 Admission of deceit | 13 Large chamber group | 14 N.Y. neighbor | 15 Copyists of yore |
| 20 Stopped | 100 Instrument with a flared bell | 13 Common soccer score | 14 N.Y. neighbor | 15 Copyists of yore | 115 Vortex |
| 21 Diamond family name | 101 Part of a cast | 113 Common soccer score | 15 Copyists of yore | 116 Oenophile's adjective | 117 Fritters away |
| 22 Nile menace | 102 Part of a cast | 114 Memorabilia times | 118 Squat | 119 "Amarantine" Grammy winner | 120 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs |
| 23 During contract talks, a marching band | 103 Avril follower | 115 Vortex | 119 "Amarantine" Grammy winner | 120 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 121 Pierre's st. |
| 26 All ears | 106 On | 116 Oenophile's adjective | 121 Pierre's st. | 122 Most artful | 123 During contract talks, an opera company |
| 27 ___ story | 107 During contract talks, a fighters' club | 117 Fritters away | 122 Most artful | 123 During contract talks, an opera company | 124 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs |
| 28 One awarding stars, perhaps | 111 Jazzman Saunders | 118 Squat | 123 During contract talks, an opera company | 124 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 125 Pierre's st. |
| 29 Peter Fonda title role | 112 Clog or pump | 119 "Amarantine" Grammy winner | 124 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 125 Pierre's st. | 126 Nile menace |
| 30 Nimble | 113 Common soccer score | 120 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 125 Pierre's st. | 126 Nile menace | 127 ___ story |
| 31 Thomas associate | 114 Memorabilia times | 121 Pierre's st. | 126 Nile menace | 127 ___ story | 128 One awarding stars, perhaps |
| 33 During contract talks, a cruise ship's crew | 115 Vortex | 122 Most artful | 127 ___ story | 128 One awarding stars, perhaps | 129 Peter Fonda title role |
| 37 Woody and others | | 123 During contract talks, an opera company | 128 One awarding stars, perhaps | 129 Peter Fonda title role | 130 Nimble |
| 39 Caribou, e.g. | | 124 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 129 Peter Fonda title role | 130 Nimble | 131 Thomas associate |
| 40 Ducks | | 125 Pierre's st. | 130 Nimble | 131 Thomas associate | 132 Nile menace |
| 41 Fragrant shrub | | 126 Nile menace | 131 Thomas associate | 132 Nile menace | 133 Common soccer score |
| 42 Panache | | 127 ___ story | 132 Nile menace | 133 Common soccer score | 134 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs |
| 45 Shuts up, with "down" | | 128 One awarding stars, perhaps | 133 Common soccer score | 134 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 135 Most artful |
| 47 During contract talks, a postal union | | 129 Peter Fonda title role | 134 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 135 Most artful | 136 Nile menace |
| 51 Beach letters | | 130 Nimble | 135 Most artful | 136 Nile menace | 137 ___ story |
| 54 Bouncing babies? | | 131 Thomas associate | 136 Nile menace | 137 ___ story | 138 One awarding stars, perhaps |
| 55 Plot twist | | 132 Nile menace | 137 ___ story | 138 One awarding stars, perhaps | 139 Peter Fonda title role |
| 56 Part of BC: Abbr. | | 133 Common soccer score | 138 One awarding stars, perhaps | 139 Peter Fonda title role | 140 Nimble |
| 57 Yogurt topping | | 134 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 139 Peter Fonda title role | 140 Nimble | 141 Thomas associate |
| 61 Dental problem | | 135 Most artful | 140 Nimble | 141 Thomas associate | 142 Nile menace |
| 63 Unlucky gambler's wishful words | | 136 Nile menace | 141 Thomas associate | 142 Nile menace | 143 Common soccer score |
| 64 During contract talks, a veterinarians' association | | 137 ___ story | 142 Nile menace | 143 Common soccer score | 144 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs |
| 69 Get ready to surf | | 138 One awarding stars, perhaps | 143 Common soccer score | 144 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 145 Most artful |
| 70 Not just happen once | | 139 Peter Fonda title role | 144 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 145 Most artful | 146 Nile menace |
| 71 Crude | | 140 Nimble | 145 Most artful | 146 Nile menace | 147 ___ story |
| 72 City north of Des Moines | | 141 Thomas associate | 146 Nile menace | 147 ___ story | 148 One awarding stars, perhaps |
| 73 Mythical hunter | | 142 Nile menace | 147 ___ story | 148 One awarding stars, perhaps | 149 Peter Fonda title role |
| 75 "Canst thou not minister to ___ diseased": Macbeth | | 143 Common soccer score | 148 One awarding stars, perhaps | 149 Peter Fonda title role | 150 Nimble |
| 77 One-handed Norse god | | 144 Winner of the first two Super Bowl MVPs | 149 Peter Fonda title role | 150 Nimble | 151 Thomas associate |
| 78 During contract talks, a divers' group | | 145 Most artful | 150 Nimble | 151 Thomas associate | 152 Nile menace |



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | April 23: This year you often hold back and don't say what's on your mind. Other times, you are quick to gab and tell it like it is. This back-and-forth tends to make those around you uncomfortable, as they aren't sure which facet of your personality will greet them. Hopefully, they will learn to adjust. If you are single, you could meet someone any time after summer who could be Mr. or Ms. Right. Take your time getting to know this person.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You might be uncomfortable with everything that is under wraps. You could be wondering who is hiding what. You might be exhausted from dealing with people who seem intent on being secretive. There are many ways around this obstacle.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Use the daylight hours to get together with friends and enjoy time with a close loved one. Make plans that allow you and your inner circle to socialize to your heart's content. Head out to the diner or deli for a late lunch.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) You will feel better as the day progresses. A close friend or loved one inadvertently might have rejected your idea, and then changed his or her mind. This back-and-forth is likely to mess with your head, but just try to go with the flow.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Detach in the daytime. You might want to be in a quiet space, where you can touch base with a friend at a distance. Your conversation could go on and on, as the two of you have much to discuss. Give some thought to getting together.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) One-on-one relating elicits strong results. You might want to revise your plans or make them more appropriate for you. Spend time with a loved one, whom you unintentionally might slight when making plans. An older friend could be testy.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Others declare their intentions. It could seem as if a sudden surge of popularity is keeping you a bit too busy for your taste. Try not to make a fuss over the details of a situation. Reach out to a family member who seems closed down.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Get through as much as you can

early on. Once you spend time with a friend, you'll be more relaxed and easygoing. You might want to make some fun plans to get together with a loved one later in the day. Know what you want, and don't hold back.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You naturally seem to come up with the right answers. Your finances could feel stretched much more than usual. If you decide to get together with someone else, meet halfway or offer to be the host or hostess. Your efforts will pay off.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You could experience some tension between you and someone else. This person might not see eye to eye with you. Mutual respect will be necessary. Learn from your differences. Do not stand on ceremony if you have a scuffle or two.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Make calls early in the morning. You could be too tired for your own good and might need to take a vacation day. Decide to let go of what you don't need to do. Try being a couch potato for a bit. Be clear about your intentions with a loved one.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Assess which way is the best direction for you to head in to pursue an important goal. A loved one will cheer you on. Remain sensitive to others. Refuse to be pushed too hard. A friend tends to take over if you have not already made a decision.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) The Moon in your sign pushes you into the limelight. You could feel as if much of what occurs has been pre-orchestrated in some way. Someone's gestures might not be exact, but the feelings that motivated them are the same as what you had imagined.

Answers to last week's puzzle.

