

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Septic tanka: Verses on the news

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1231** we had our third contest for TankaWanka, a form of verse we coined so that people wouldn't accuse us of doing the real *tanka* form improperly. Our only rules were (a) that the syllable count had to be 5-7-5-7-7 (like haiku with two extra lines); (b) that any two lines had to rhyme; and (c) that the verse had to be about something in the news. And you know what that brings us . . .

4th place

Superhero films
Keep making box office news.
Why? Not hard to see:
We wish our troubles could be
Wrapped up in a great "S" cape.
(Perry Beider, Silver Spring)

3rd place

"Amazon's buying
Whole Foods??" Other grocers
wince
As their stocks tumble.
"We need an Amazon on
Our side — call Diana Prince!" (Perry Beider again!)

2nd place and the basketball-hoop-on-head game:

"Hello, Cabinet!
Tell me how much you love me!"
Each of them complied.
Thought: Having fewer suck-ups
Might produce fewer . . .
organizational failures.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Cabinet meeting,
Filled with yes-men all bleating
Fealty to their Don.
You suck up to El Jefe
Or land in Deep Covfeve.
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Clunka: Honorable mentions

The Russia matter:
Flynn, Manafort, Page,
Kushner, Sessions — all the rage.
What's the problem? Trump's
Just a fashion-forward guy;
Every day, a new red tie.
(Nan Reiner)

Sir Comey
"Will you kiss the ring?"
Questioned the newly crowned king
To the earnest knight.
When he did not do as sought,
He was banished from the court.
(Barry Goodman, Hackensack, N.J., a First Offender)

Firing Comey
Was not about the Russians,
Or so we are told.
Did his probe become a threat?
White House sources just say nyet.
(Maria Zimmerman, Berryville, Va.)

Trumpet tweets profess,
"It's a witch hunt, nothing less!"
So be it. It's time
For our nation to abort
The sad(!) reign of Vulgarmort.
(Nan Reiner)

The Cabinet meeting:
The longer one goes
In the Cabinet of Trump,
The browner the nose.
They've all got the idea:
Act like it's North Korea.
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

The Nationals' bullpen:
Our starters have kept
Fans and their Roloids apart.
But one big issue
Has brought late-game angst and
grief:
Some pitchers can't spell "relief."
(Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

'Millions doubt global warming':
"Science" says, "It's hot!"
So '14's "the hottest!" first,
Then '15 topped that,
Then, for heat, '16's the worst!
See? They can't keep their facts
straight!
(Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

The latest men's fashion fad, rompers:
What gets women hot?
Men in rompers, dude — that's what.
Watch how quick your chick
Gives this sign she wants to boff:
Begging you to "take that off!" (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

The British election:
It's Mayday for May,
Who's in complete disarray.
Can she carry on
With her majority gone?
Who knows? Theresa may not.
(Stephen Gold, London)

Disruptive upstart
Uber faces a crisis
Draining its own swamp.
Make their leaders' exits swift
Kindly giving each a Lyft.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1235: The Sound of Science

In our last song parody contest, just days after the election, the Empress pleaded for lyrics that in some way expressed hope. Eight months later, we're not bothering to ask for *that* again. This time we'll switch gears a bit with a new theme, suggested by veteran Loserbard Mark Raffman: **This week: Write humorous lyrics on the subject of science or technology, set to a well-known tune.** "Science or technology" can cover a *lot* — anything from an ode to the vastness of the universe to a ditty about a phone app that won't update. And while the songs, for once, aren't required to pertain to current events and politics, neither are they required *not* to. As always, the results we run in the print edition (including the top winners) will be parodies of (what we hope are) very well known songs; in the online Invite, we'll supply links to all the melodies so that readers can hear an unfamiliar tune. See this week's Style Conversational column for more on what we're looking for in a song parody (remember, it has to be *read*). And since the Empress will be on vacation, you get an extra week to work on them; entries aren't due till July 24.

Submit entries at this website: wapo.st/enter-invite-1235 (all lowercase). Feel free to include a link to an audio or video clip to the tune you're using. You can even make your own recording.

Winner gets the **Inkin' Memorial**, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy — one of the last few before we come out with a new design. Second place receives yet another in our lengthy series of Silly Second-Place Headwear: This time it's a **face-covering chicken-head hat**, worn by donor Dave Prevar last month during much of the 22nd annual Flushies, the Loser Community's award "banquet."

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our 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, July 24; results published Aug. 6 (online Aug. 3). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jeff Contompasis; the honorable-mentions subhead is by William Kennard. 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 for song parody guidance this week, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.



MARK HOLT

The product of the Empress's own egg models this week's second prize.

(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Legislation to legalize silencers:
In Congress, a bill:
These gun accessories will
Shortly be legal.
They hush it, but here's the tell:
A silent-but-deadly smell.
(Mark Raffman)

Conjoined twin porpoises caught in fishing net:
In the Dutch nation,
Rare conjoined-twin cetacean
Born. Museum seeks
Space to house this baby boom —
In its Multi-Porpoise Room.
(Nan Reiner)

'Wildfires taint air with microscopic poison particles'
Whew! That fire came close,
But your house did not burn down!
Unfortunately
There is also bad news, mate:
So take a deep breath — oh, wait!
(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Good Ol' Boy Sessions,
Asked about indiscretions,
Stonewalls every time.
As AG, Jeff Beauregard
For the law shows low regard.
(Nan Reiner)

Had he been there in 1776,
Odds are Jeff Sessions

Wouldn't want to find out who
Colluded with the Hessians.
(Duncan Stevens)

North Korea: Grr!
They keep shooting those missiles.
Their leader we hate,
He's stupid but thinks he's great.
We'd never elect — oh, wait.
(Neal Starkman, Seattle)

Report: Russia delves
Into our voting systems,
Hoping to screw up
Our elections. We object!
We can screw them up ourselves!
(Duncan Stevens)

Melania's dad's
Red-tied, portly resemblance
Takes the 'Net by storm.
At last, Freud can explain why
She ever married that guy.
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

'77% of Americans think it will be normal to have a robot in home in 20 years'
Life is so easy
Now that I have you, Robot,
To do my housework.
Ever-obedient pal!
What? You say your name is HAL?
(Beverly Sharp)

EPA Secretary Scott Pruitt:
Trump has appointed
Climate change skeptic Pruitt —
Not as focused on
What to do for the planet.
As on what to do to it.
(Duncan Stevens)

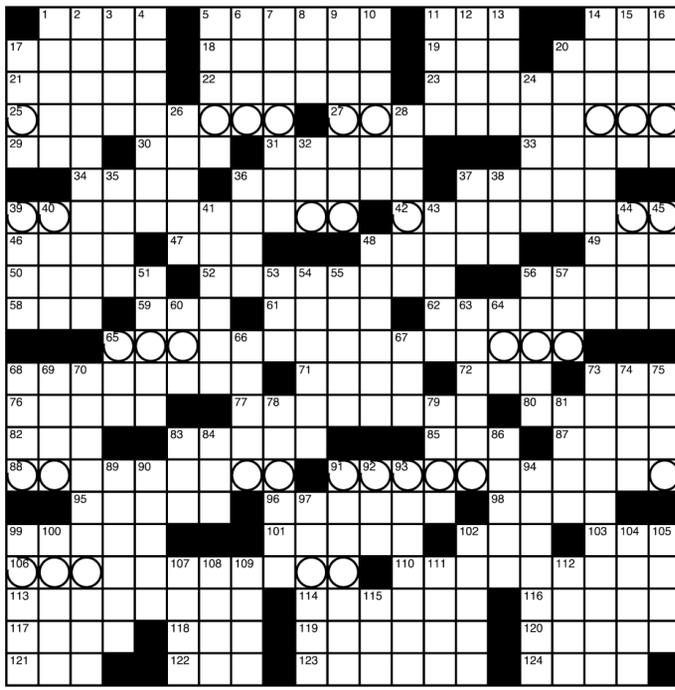
The latest Taylor Swift-Katy Perry feud:
Every morn I cringe
Peeking at the day's news binge.
Just for once, I wish
There were nothing more weighty
Than Taylor versus Katy.
(Nan Reiner)

Dad of Ivanka
Inspires my TankaWanka:
With his "covfeve."
The source of our yuge schism
Coined a neologism.
(Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- "CEREAL BOXES"** 80 Words with remember or forget
By JOHN LAMPKIN
- ACROSS**
1 Hunk
5 Tortilla-wrapped serving
11 Hardly a haymaker
14 Pulled up a chair
17 Whom Samwise accompanied to Rivendell
18 Backspace key, often
19 One who might err on the safe side?
20 ___ dixit: assertion without proof
21 Add zing to
22 Berate
23 "Heavens!"
25 "Lids for a fancy box?"
27 "Easy order for a mixologist"
29 Zing
30 Donizetti aria
31 "Regnava ___ silenzio"
31 Bee bunch
33 Watergate figure with a radio talk show
34 Exude
36 Learn
37 Giant ___ world's largest antelope
39 "Ceremonious choreography"
42 "Lothario's organ"
46 Bearded blossom
47 G, in the key of C
48 Adjust, as a chronometer
49 Tat misreadable as WOW
50 Honey
52 Tweaks
56 "Is this some kind of ___?"
58 New England cape
59 ___ chi
61 Biting
62 "Good-bye, cruel world," in Westerns
65 "Ring leaders"
68 Worldwide anticrime gp.
71 Rod's partner
72 Author Deighton
73 Bench press muscle
76 Ethel on "I Love Lucy"
77 Produce a steady stream of
- 116 Blink of an eye
117 D.C. pros
118 Cleo's undoing
119 Fix, as a pump
120 Former Midwest territorial capital
121 Is for you
122 Steely ___
123 Airborne camera holders
124 Many a competition
- DOWN**
1 Bone to pick
2 Fictional turn-on power
3 Smelly-sounding German river?
4 Windfall
5 Wild ___
6 Smell
7 Fugitive portrayed before Ford
8 Believer's suffix
9 Pots, cups, etc.
10 Prefix with -pod
11 Handled containers
12 Every which way
13 Fraternal initials
14 Leadfoot
15 Syrian president
16 Touchy
17 Bomb
20 Baseball unit with distinct halves
24 Musician with a Nobel Prize
26 Bread butts
28 The Who classic
32 Female in WWII
35 Boot from power
36 Heavenly topper
37 Original sinner
38 Fired up
39 Dexter's wife in "Dexter"
40 Metal that's pumped
41 ___ effect
43 Alternate version, in scores
44 Farm connection
45 ER part: Abbr.
48 Word with debt or guilt
51 HBO rival
53 Beaver's work
54 Victim of hot wings?
55 More classy
56 Bond or bonding follower
57 Delight
60 Dada daddy?
63 "Uncle" of old TV
64 Flagon filler
65 Risk
66 Peptic problem
67 Rain-___ gum
68 Apple computer
69 Nautilus captain
70 Like poison ivy
73 One who remembers old flames with fondness?
74 Shocked accusation
75 Outlay
78 Actor Pat of Batman films
79 NCAA's Bruins
81 Broccoli ___
83 LBJ's antipoverty agcy.
84 "The Sound of Music" extra
86 Calculating snake?
89 Leads, as a band
90 "Family Ties" mom
91 Ancient Roman currency minter
92 Anger
93 Go-between
94 Bubbler
97 Gecko, for one
99 Dryer brand
100 Texas university in Beaumont
102 Fairy tale baddies
104 Café con ___
105 Thought
107 Campus area
108 Heavenly bear
109 "Monday Night Football" channel
111 Shade of green
112 Hogwarts librarian ___
115 That thing in Tijuana



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | July 9: This year you go back and forth with your opinions. Though you are generally reliable, you could drive some people a little wild with frustration. Learn to empathize with others more often and understand where they are coming from. If you are single, you attract many people. In general, the opposite sex finds you to be very appealing. If you are attached, your relationship is likely to experience many ups and downs. You and your significant other need to accept your differences and understand that you both can be right, even if you have different approaches. Capricorn helps guide you emotionally.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
The full moon could encourage you to do more, or you might decide to completely withdraw and hide out. You would be well advised to choose your words with care. Avoid controversy with those in charge or with those who dominate your life.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
You hear news that encourages you to pick up the phone and share your opinions. You quickly will discover that many people around you have different opinions and ideas.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You might not agree on a budgeting issue. Your anger could come to the surface. Recognize that you need to separate your funds, especially if you hit difficult periods frequently.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You'll hear a lot of different opinions, and as a result, it could change how you feel about a recent conversation. Try to keep the discussion a conversation and not an argument, and the resolution will appear much faster.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You'll opt for a quiet day spent at home. You could be in a position where you might want to cancel any activity that throws you into a group setting. You have a lot on your mind.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
A new friend might steal center stage and want to take control. You could feel as if an important matter needs to be handled, but you'll need to come to an agreement with this person first.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Defer to the person in charge. This person might be responsible for a matter that you are involved with. You might want to question where

others are coming from. Why not wait until later? Tempers are close to the surface right now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Make a point of calling a friend whom you have not seen in a while. You might be surprised by this person's news. Conversations are likely to be more important than you originally had thought.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Your pace could be unusually hectic, as you want to get a lot of errands done. Is it worth it to run around like this when you could be on the beach with friends relaxing? Decide which event or happening has the most meaning to you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You seem to be somewhat of a force in others' plans, even if you don't realize it. Avoid an argument,

and just listen. A higher-up might feel as if you have not met an expectation of theirs. Discussions will help solve a problem.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
A lot is happening around you, but you might not want to discuss much of it just yet. You are trying to work through a problem and process some anger or frustration. A relationship or a new person in your life could be the root of the emotions you are feeling.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Your friends might be more instrumental to your well-being than you realize. Say "yes" to going to a game of softball or a get-together. Others depend on your presence. Relax and maintain a sense of humor, but observe what is happening.

Answers to last week's puzzle.

