

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Har for the curse: Winning ill will

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1272** we asked for updated curses in the Yiddish tradition. Sent by a host of Losers among the thousands of entries: May you get the middle seat between two sumo wrestlers. And may you get to be the next presidential press secretary. Clever but too death-wishy: "May you confuse your liquid antacid with your liquid ant acid." No ink for you, Ellen Raphaeli.

4th place

As you travel through barren wilderness, may you find an oasis, only to discover that it is the Sbarro at the Joyce Kilmer Service Plaza at 3 a.m. (Noah Meyerson, Washington)

3rd place

May you and your HOA disagree about the definition of "taupe." (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

2nd place and the electric baseball-mitt chip-and-dip bowl:

May you forever see those three little dots indicating that someone is typing but never get a message. (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

May Hillary Clinton hear about your problems and think, "Wow, I'm glad nothing that frustrating has ever happened to me!" (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)

Dry spells: Honorable mentions

May you on some enchanted evening see a stranger across a crowded room, and somehow you know, you know even then, they're here to serve you a subpoena. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

May your new parrot be the former pet of Anthony Scaramucci. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

May President Trump insist that you're doing a fabulous job. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

May you always find an error in your sudoku when you are two boxes from completion. (Steve Brevig, Springfield)

May you be coming out of the strip club just as the Google Street View car goes by. (David Young, Falmouth, Mass., a First Offender)

May you get trapped in a gondola at a ski resort and have to share body heat to survive and the only other passenger is Harvey Weinstein. (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

May you never figure out where that beeping's coming from. (Daniel Galef, Montclair, N.J.)

May you scratch your phone screen just enough for it to be annoying, but not enough to justify replacing it. (Matthew Zimmer, New York)

May your bare foot always find the Lego. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

May your dentist be behind in paying his gambling debts to the mob. (Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)

May your family always use air quotes when describing your profession (e.g., "Our son Johnny, the 'writer'"). (Rivka Liss-Levinson, Washington)

On that special first date, may the waiter return and ask if you have a different credit card. (David Young)

May the TSA bomb-sniffing dog be especially interested in the suitcase your cat curled up in right before you left for the airport. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

May your mama hear all those nasty things you have been saying about other people's mamas. (Kel Nagel, Salisbury, Md.)

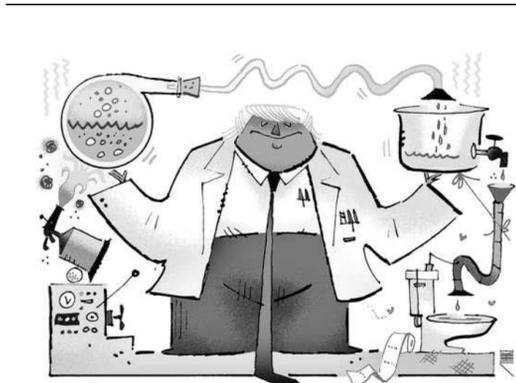
May your dog develop commitment issues. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

May Trump's lawyer use your name as a pseudonym in his next nondisclosure agreement. (Frank Osen)

May all your Amazon purchases be ineligible for Prime shipping. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

May each of your days be better than the next. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

May that girl you loved all



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1276: What 4? A limerick contest

Obamian health care is dead. No prostitutes peed on a bed. There was no collusion. Trump's invented cold fusion! (Well, that's what the president said.)

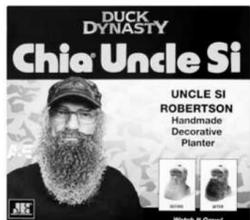
- Well, that's what the president said.
- If only I'd listened to Mother (or Mom).
- But now I have found fifty-one.
- A strategically placed Oxford comma.
- Somebody please take me home.
- I just like to do things in style.
- And they never saw (him/her/name) again.

Today's contest was suggested by John "Ed" Edwards of the Style Invitational Southwest London Suburbs Bureau. John/Ed didn't feel like waiting for our annual Limerick contest in August, so he suggested something to tide us over: **This week: Write a limerick using one of the above lines as Line 5**, as in the example above by Gene "Not John OR Ed" Weingarten of Washington. See wapo.st/limericks2017 for our fairly strict rules on limerick rhyme and meter (in a nutshell: "perfect" rhyme, and a strong "hickory-dickory-dock" rhythm in Lines 1, 2 and 5; a "dickory-dock" in Lines 3 and 4; plus "weak" syllables on either side). Submit entries at the website wapo.st/enter-invite-1276 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a genuine **Chia Uncle Si**, a "decorative planter" in the shape of "Duck Dynasty's" long-bearded Si Robertson; you rub the seeds on the little Uncle and he's supposed to get some bushy green facial foliage. We're thinking that with a name like "SI," he ought to be the Style Invitational's official beardmaker. Donated by Loser Pie Snelson.

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, "We've Seen Better" or "Idiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, April 30**; results published May 20 (online May 23). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results was submitted by Jon Gearhart; Tom Witte wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. 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 isn't so weekly this week; it'll be back next Thursday. You can reach her for questions at pat.myers@washpost.com or in the Facebook group.



Win second place and you can get this Si from the SI.

through high school get you fired as principal, you perv. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

May the only seats left at your movie theater be in the front row, on the far side. (Matthew Zimmer)

May the only thing you have to read during your filibuster speech be Sean Penn's novel (actual excerpt: "Behind decorative gabion walls, an elderly neighbour sits centurion on his porch watching Bob with surreptitious soupçon"). (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

May the paths of your life run as straight and true as the outlines of Maryland's congressional districts. (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

May you always have spinach in your teeth — and teeth in your spinach. (Liv Johansson, Alexandria)

May you be cuckolded before your very eyes. Unless you're into that sort of thing. (Tom Witte)

May Taylor Swift write a song about you. (Larry McClemons, Annandale; Kevin Dopart, Washington)

May you finally get "Let It Go" out of your head by replacing it with

"It's a Small World." (Jesse Frankovich)

May you go bald during your vacation in Mexico, only to find that the only available head covering is a "Make America Great Again" hat. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

May you take a long car trip and find that every single public radio station on your route is having a pledge drive. (John Kupiec, Fairfax)

May your child finally win a first-place trophy — in the condom-snorting challenge. (Nan Reiner)

May your health plan provide only thoughts and prayers. (Frank Mann, Washington)

May your inner monologue take place in Roseanne Barr's voice. (Mark Calandra, Sudbury, Mass.)

May your new in-laws show up at the wedding reception with matching ankle monitors. (Jeff Shirley)

May your TV broadcast only the disclaimers from prescription drug commercials. (Jim Sullins, Ahoskie, N.C., a First Offender)

May the Empress mistake your sincere declaration of love for her as a funny entry and print it. (Tom Witte)

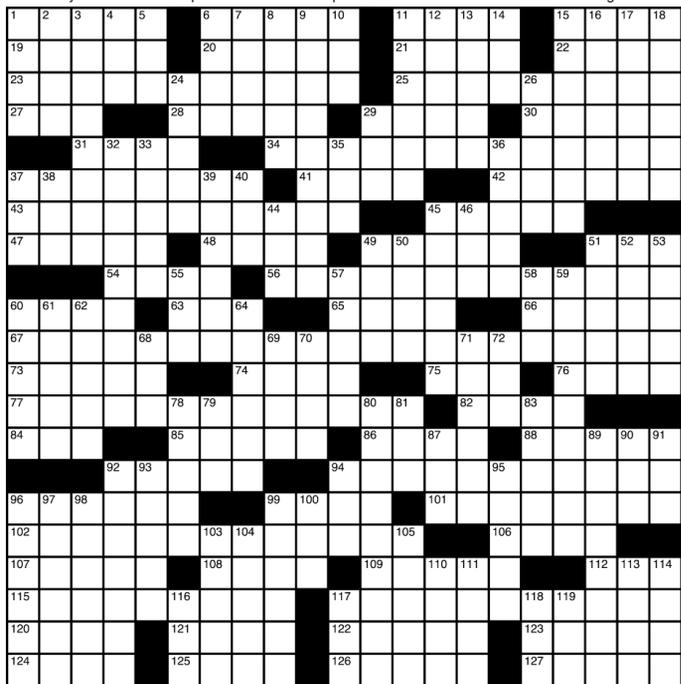
And Last: May you get just barely enough Style Invitational ink to keep you entering. (Peter Jenkins, Bethesda, who has won between one and three blots of ink for 15 of the past 16 years)

Still running — deadline Monday night, April 23: our contest to choose a line from Shakespeare and pair it with a question that the line could answer. See wapo.st/invite1275.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- "NUMBER ONE FAN" By VICTOR BAROCCAS**
- ACROSS**
- 1 Jennifer Saunders Britcom
- 6 Supporting structure
- 11 When tripled, "and so on"
- 15 Scandinavian language
- 19 PowerPoint unit
- 20 Greek goddesses of the seasons
- 21 K.C. Royal, e.g.
- 22 Snapchat co-founder Spiegel
- 23 Neighbor of Montenegro
- 25 Gaiety
- 27 Fleece female
- 28 Put up
- 29 Goalkeeper's success
- 30 Mournful melody
- 31 Fleece-seeking vessel
- 34 Knew unfavorable things about
- 37 Cabinetmaker's cylinder
- 41 Obama : Bo :: FDR :
- 42 Pre-riot state
- 43 Put the blame on
- 45 Bamm-Bamm's mom
- 47 Like Chichén Itzá pyramids
- 48 Harp constellation
- 49 Brought in
- 51 "Don't Bring Me Down" rock gp.
- 54 Comparison phrase
- 56 In the "Other" column
- 60 Knucker's lack
- 63 T or F, maybe
- 65 Astronomer
- 66 Japanese comics
- 67 Solving a problem boldly
- 73 Favorite's surprise
- 74 Learning method
- 75 Knee-injury initials
- 76 Uncle
- 77 Tony Gwynn, notably
- 82 Sailor's saint
- 84 U.N. worker protection gp.
- 85 Normand of silents
- 86 Part of Q.E.D.
- 88 Port near Sapporo
- 92 Holy, to Henriette
- 94 Ill-advised
- 96 "A Fish Called Wanda" actor
- 99 Important pipe
- 101 German state named for a river, with "the"
- 102 Complaint about monotony
- 106 Audible alert
- 107 Greek marketplace
- 108 Plot measure
- 109 "Swell!"
- 112 Caraway-flavored bread
- 115 Exam for intellectual property lawyers
- 117 Narcissistic trait exhibited perfectly by this puzzle's eight other longest answers
- 120 Medical suffix
- 121 Actress
- 122 Eatory freebies
- 123 Command to
- 124 Japanese PCs
- 125 Useless, battery-wise
- 126 Beginning
- 127 Imitation
- DOWN**
- 1 1975 Wimbledon champ
- 2 Botched
- 3 "Ask me anything"
- 4 Carpenter tool
- 5 Wax maker
- 6 "Ragnarok": 2017 superhero film
- 7 Meander
- 8 Robert of "Vegas"
- 9 Resident of America's highest capital
- 10 Coral
- 11 Piano brand
- 12 Adv'l alternative
- 13 Reduction of legal constraints, briefly
- 14 Part of ETA: Abbr.
- 15 With a touch of sweetness
- 16 Opposed
- 17 Tropical fruits
- 18 What manslaughter lacks
- 24 Composer
- 26 Words of denial
- 29 Mo.'s largest airport
- 32 Did some home maintenance
- 33 Narrow valleys
- 35 Supps
- 36 Surpass
- 37 Mil. award
- 38 Plant also called a New Zealand yam
- 39 Wuyi Mountains tea
- 40 It breaks in the morning
- 44 Play about Capote
- 45 Actress Vaccaro
- 46 Mind reader?
- 49 Anaheim baseball cap feature
- 50 Name dropped by TASS in 2014
- 51 Paperless periodical
- 52 Subpar car
- 53 "Waiting for Lefty" playwright
- 55 Earth tone
- 57 Not free-range
- 58 Fled on foot
- 59 Item gifted with a fountain pen
- 60 "Pardon me, Giulia"
- 61 Post-larval "problem"
- 62 "Dance floor" flasher
- 68 "Lord, is ___?": Matthew
- 69 What optimists don't give up
- 70 List-ending abbr.
- 71 Summer brew
- 72 Every one of
- 78 Roast host
- 79 Needlefish
- 80 Controlling
- 81 RN workplaces
- 83 "S.W.A.T." star
- 87 Crunch targets
- 89 Not for free
- 90 Toon canine
- 91 Grand Forks sch.
- 92 One looking ahead
- 93 City near Lake Nasser
- 94 Hamm of soccer
- 95 Neighbor of Cameroon
- 96 "Cat's in the Cradle" singer
- 97 Harry
- 97 Papal representative
- 98 Designed to light a fire?
- 99 Damaged
- 100 Iron
- 103 Triangular building feature
- 104 City including the former site of a Seminole War fort
- 105 Glowing signs
- 110 Entr
- 111 Evaluate
- 113 Flemish river
- 114 One of 11 for Julia Louis-Dreyfus
- 116 Texas senator
- 117 Moody rock genre
- 118 PreCheck org.
- 119 Swindle, in slang



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | April 22: This year, you refuse to be held back by negativity or insecurities. If you are single, you are likely to meet someone after the summer who could knock your socks off. This person could be in your life for a long time. If you are attached, the two of you really feel at home together, no matter where you are. You don't let others interfere with your dialogue and actions. Leo could play a significant role in encouraging you to be more open and visible.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You might be dragging in the morning. Don't worry — later in the day, your energy will return. Your mischievous personality and willingness to let go emerge in the evening. You finally will hear the full story about a confusing mix-up.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You might not want to reveal everything you know just yet. By the evening, you'll gain a better understanding about a recent mix-up. You are likely to find that you are less tense about a certain matter.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) You could be in a situation that might seem impossible to explain. Your smile creates compassion and support, which others receive loud and clear. Do not allow yourself to be boxed into a corner by a loved one who has manipulative traits.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You suddenly might have an attack of the green-eyed monster. Everyone feels insecure sometimes, which can trigger jealousy. Ask yourself where you feel you don't meet the grade. Understand that you probably can change the situation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You perk up by the end of the day. You might feel as if you are unstoppable. Be more forthright about what is on your mind. You can deliver bad news in way that the other party does not fully register until days later. If you need to use that skill, do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You might want to cocoon and make it a day of rest. If you had 24 hours free to spend however you'd like, what would you do? That is the issue you face, and now is your time to follow through.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You are full of energy and excitement, especially after making plans and hearing from a friend. Don't let a roommate's or family member's demanding behavior get to you. Know how controlling this person can be.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Take a stand about an important matter that could affect your career. You usually take strong stands, but perhaps you might opt to be more laid-back at the moment. Recognize that someone close to you is on the warpath.

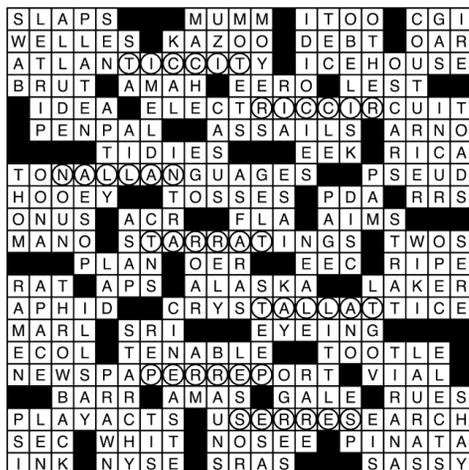
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Do not back down in a disagreement about funds, yet try to stay open-minded. If you can, distance yourself from the other party involved for a while. You do not want to play into this person's all-or-nothing behavior.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You might be much more challenging than you realize. A power play could be tiring, no matter what end you are on. Pulling away isn't likely to work. Consider being authentic and having a direct conversation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Others seek you out; they have a lot to share. Are you ready to be more open with a loved one? Give up power plays or trying to win. The more authentic you are, the better the results will be.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) You'll want some time to recharge, catch up on sleep and get down to the basics. If you have a friend you can relax with, schedule some time together in the afternoon. A loved one could become difficult at the last minute, and you might feel challenged.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



4/15/18