

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Merch Madness: Product reviews

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1321**, we once again asked for humorous reviews for various boring products listed on Amazon.com. Many Losers noted that the "blemish remover" included on the vegetable peeler did not improve their complexions.

4th place:

12-pack of men's white cotton handkerchiefs:

Who would have guessed that carrying my mucus in my pocket all day could be so stylish? (David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

3rd place:

Flat shoelaces, 5/16-inch wide:

Three stars — not as good as spaghetti, but better than zoodles. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)

2nd place and the pods of David Fahrenthold's own Trump Select coffee:

Velveeta Original Pasteurized Recipe Cheese Product, 64 oz.: Cheese slices are so last week — this time I tossed the whole 64 oz on my baby's face at once! Soooo many page views! Next time I'll take it out of the box first. Like and Subscribe! (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

60 binder clips, assorted sizes: Binder clips. Yawn. . . until I saw the French on them: "pines relieuses variées," and suddenly I wasn't in my cubicle ordering office supplies. I was waltzing to accordion music down the Champs-Elysees, drinking Bordeaux, and helping mustachioed, beret-wearing mimes binder-clip elegant French documents as the sun set over the Arc de Triomphe. "Take me away!" I cried as I clicked "Buy Now." Anyway, they're binder clips. (David Hammond, Vienna, Va., a First Offender)

Yucky stars:

Honorable mentions

12-pack of men's white cotton handkerchiefs: Now I have one for every month of the year! Livin' the good life! (Deb Stewart, Damascus)

I got these reusable handkerchiefs to impress my zero-waste, natural-living girlfriend, but it turned into a heated "conversation" about the cotton industry's ties to slavery. She was too snotty for me anyway. (Maddy Vieth, Washington, a First Offender)

Great "filler" to add extra lift to your cleavage. Smooth contours with none of those lumps you get with sweat socks. (Robyn Carlson, Keyser, W.Va.)

I can't understand why items like this are still sold. Don't they realize that handling cotton is an anxiety trigger for those coping with America's abhorrent history? — Virginia first lady Pam Northam (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Flat shoelaces, 5/16-inch wide:

My doctor told me to get a neti pot, but these were way cheaper! The plastic on the end hurt, though, so only 4 stars. (Todd DeLap)

I just stuffed these flat laces with dryer lint, and now they look just as good as the round laces at half the price! (Deb Stewart)

The description says these are "great for all types of shoe." Well, they fell right off my horse's hoofs. And let's not even discuss brake shoes. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

Velveeta Original Pasteurized Recipe Cheese Product, 64 oz.:

I'm sick of all the snotty snark about this product. Velveeta is quick, easy and affordable, and it works better than many of the much more expensive spackles. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

I take the Velveeta out of the box, put in my bottle of wine and put it back in the fridge. No one has ever found my stash! Five stars! (Robyn Carlson)

I think they changed the recipe — doesn't taste anything like the real thing. I finally finished the 32-ounce block I purchased in 1953 at the A&P, and it was sooooo much better than this crap. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

Back me up here: Cheese comes from a cow. Leather comes from a cow. The third anniversary is the "leather" anniversary. . . (Todd DeLap)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1325: Stand up and jeer

"Of course, Trump isn't here. . . . I would drag him here myself, but it turns out the president of the United States is the one p---- you're not allowed to grab." — comic Michelle Wolf, at the 2018 White House Correspondents' Association dinner

"Yo, Barry, you did it, my n---a." — comic Larry Wilmore to President Obama at the 2016 dinner

Welp, there's not going to be a comic performing at this year's WHCA dinner. After a three-decade tradition of hiring a comedian to tease the gussied-up media types as well as the celebs and politicians — usually including the president, who then takes his own turn at the mic with a gentle standup routine — the embarrassed press association announced that this year's speaker, on April 27, would instead be historian Ron Chernow, who'll "make the case for the First Amendment." President Trump, who refused to attend the past two dinners, has not yet said whether he'll be showing up at the Washington Hilton to mix with the Enemy of the People and listen to Chernow, author of the Alexander Hamilton biography that inspired Lin-Manuel Miranda to write the musical about the Founding Father.

But we're here. This week: Give us some original standup jokes that would have been good at this year's White House Correspondents' Dinner; they can assume that the president (or someone else) is in the room, or not. You can even suggest some material for Chernow, who insists that "while I have never been mistaken for a stand-up comedian, I promise that my history lesson won't be dry." The contest results publish online two days before the event, so he could revise his bit. And we're extending the entry deadline to April 15 so that your jokes can be a week fresher. This contest was suggested by Obsessive Loser Jeff Contompasis.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1325 (all lowercase). Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy.

Second prize, apropos of this contest, receives a genuine first-(only-?) edition of "Collected Speeches of Spiro Agnew," comprising the crooked pol's public proclamations during the first two years of his veeppish — a couple of years before he resigned after pleading nolo contendere over those pesky kickbacks. Dedicated by its original owner, who inscribed the title page "Elden Carnahan, Boston, 1971." The 48-year-old mass-market paperback is, fittingly, rather sullied, with a slightly off odor.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. 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 15** (what, you have something else due that day?), results published in print April 28 (online April 25). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; Bill Dorner wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdec. "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. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

5-pound dumbbell:

This item is aptly named! I hit it 20 times with a hammer and the only sound I got was a miserable clank! (George Smith, Frederick)

If you want biceps like Barney Fife and are willing to do the work, here is all the gym equipment you'll ever need. (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland)

I lifted this thing like 10 times and I still don't look like the guy in the picture. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

5 stars! Superior in every way to the 239-pound one! (Tom Gleason, Lawrence, Kan.)

60 binder clips, assorted sizes: (Can't say how these work in the long term, but the right wing of our boss's executive jet is still there. (Frank Mann, Washington)

These are perfect for executing just about any intricate updo. And when strategically placed, they can also pinch a tiny bit of scalp — presto, instant facelift. Way cheaper than Botox. (John McCooley, Rehoboth Beach, Del.)

Bought them years ago in anticipation of promotion that never came through. Never buy in bulk unless you really, really need that many. @MittRomney (Dinah Rokach, Silver Spring)

Good, but nearly impossible to open once the handles fold forward. Then you need a screwdriver to pry it open — terribly inconvenient. (Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.)

60 binder clips, assorted sizes: Five stars! Binder clip squeezes are an essential part of my fingerbuilding regimen. My pinksies are RIPPED!! (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

Amazon Basics standard toilet paper holder: I'm so glad to have one of these at last! My older brother has been making me stand in the bathroom and hold the toilet paper for years. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

This product is thoroughly unsatisfactory! My husband insists the paper should hang over the roll, while I rightly hang it under, and your product DOES NOT PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS!!! (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1325.

Still running — deadline Monday night, April 1: Our contest to sum up a Bible story or folk tale as someone else would write it. See wapo.st/invite1324.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"PARDON MY YIDDISH" By ED SESSA

ACROSS

- 1 Tricks that treat
- 6 Dali contemporary
- 9 Shame
- 14 Corp. bigwigs
- 18 Raspy-voiced Cooper
- 19 Protein provider
- 21 Evergreen bean
- 22 Road division
- 23 Bar mitzvah celebratory drink?
- 26 "Roots" author Haley
- 27 Current gauge
- 28 Body wrap venue
- 29 Jed Clampett, for one
- 31 Sault Ste. Marie's — Locks
- 32 "That ___ fact!"
- 33 Ring ruling
- 35 Two in a canoe
- 36 Incompetent drivers?
- 44 Seaweed product
- 47 Howard of old comedy films
- 48 Hereditary ruler
- 49 Thumbs-up letters
- 50 Where decent people buy decent clothes at honest prices?
- 55 Lay idle
- 56 Light sparkling wine
- 57 Lodging with a "keeper"
- 58 Bank job
- 59 Collectible print, briefly
- 61 Dark marks
- 62 Stranger things Officer
- 64 Kalakaua's group, familiarly
- 65 Rainforest vine
- 66 Cream cheese promotion?
- 70 Sapling support
- 72 Coordinate (with)
- 73 Traffic warning signal
- 77 Means of access
- 78 Trouble from all sides
- 79 Gumbo thickeners
- 81 Label for some Elton John albums
- 82 Son of Seth
- 83 Web address letters

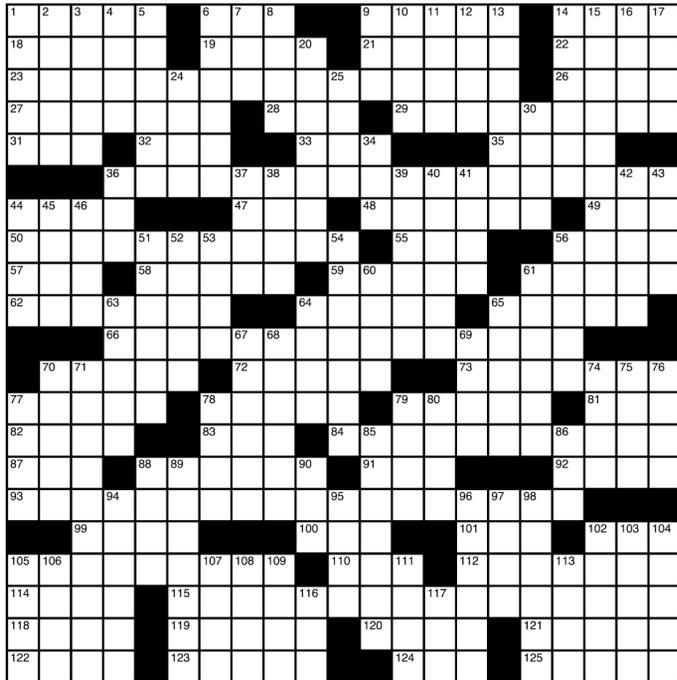
DOWN

- 1 Some baby rockers
- 2 Legendary mission
- 3 Rube Goldberg device, e.g.
- 4 Brand written in frosty letters
- 5 Irish musical ensemble — Woman
- 6 Unprincipled counterpart
- 7 Short spin?
- 8 D.C. fundraisers
- 9 "That's awful!"
- 10 Whole or half home unit
- 11 Smoothie berry
- 12 Wind catcher
- 13 Valleys
- 14 Danes of "Homeland"
- 15 When many TV shows debut

- 16 Like Nash's lama
- 17 Steamy quality
- 20 Of the highest quality
- 24 "A Deeper Faith" musician
- 25 It's iced and sliced
- 30 Thai currency
- 34 Overused, jokewise
- 36 Yearbook gp.
- 37 Ambulance pros
- 38 Of no consequence
- 39 Bettor's strategy
- 40 After one bounce, in baseball lingo
- 41 Warsaw Pact
- 42 Host of, in slang
- 43 Slope gear
- 44 François's friend
- 45 Millennials' folks
- 46 A year in Caesar's time
- 51 Peepers
- 52 Anne of 1998's "Psycho"

- 53 "The King and I" kingdom
- 54 Brings out rye
- 56 Arkin and Menken
- 60 "Terrible" despot
- 61 No small favor
- 63 60-Down et al.
- 64 Given away
- 65 Fragrant shrub
- 67 Endless, in verse
- 68 Organized like big stores
- 69 Jimi Hendrix do
- 70 Drive-in with skating carhops
- 71 Sticks with the Swedish meatballs
- 74 Med. group options
- 75 Behold, to Pilate
- 76 Dirt smoother
- 77 Red fox holes
- 78 Possible result of swallowing air
- 79 "Didn't expect that"
- 80 Swiss painter Paul
- 85 Jewel case storage unit

- 86 Peter Pan rival
- 88 Editor's mark
- 89 "___ full of rye"
- 90 Archaeological site
- 94 Tiny portrait holder
- 95 Type of tide
- 96 In money trouble, say
- 97 It dropped "Cab" from its name in 2011
- 98 Document details
- 102 Diner freebies
- 103 Tied accessory
- 104 Game with a mate
- 105 '80s IBM flop nicknamed "Peanut"
- 106 Don Juan
- 107 Mariner's direction
- 108 Sound from a lynx's larynx
- 109 To-do
- 111 God with a bow
- 113 Poetic lowland
- 116 Slice of pizza?
- 117 Dandy



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | March 31: This year, life proceeds much more as you might like. You often become entwined with friends over an emotional concern. You will achieve a long-term goal with the help of a loved one. If single, you love dating and getting to know someone better. If attached, the two of you manifest what you want far more easily as a team. Aquarius helps point out subtle perspectives.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You might have made plans, and others will resort to nearly anything to get you going. Make phone calls reaching out to a close family member. This person might want to join you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Be direct in how you handle an older person or a supervisor, of sorts. Some of you might go to work to handle a key matter or decide to work on your taxes. You could be extravagant in some form if you are not careful.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Reach out for another person who you have not visited in a while. A loved one might start to irritate you. Perhaps you have been swallowing some frustration and anger. Work through those feelings first by rooting out the source.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Deal with finances if you want to get them under better control. Make sure you and another person are on the same page. If not, you might want to consider separate checkbooks. Each of you can be responsible for certain concerns.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You easily could take center stage, yet right now another person seems to dominate. Lie back. This person needs the attention. Support them, especially as they decide to bring some mutual friends together.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Others admire your practical and efficient manner. You take on a project that you would like to complete. Still, make time for an older relative or friend who loves to hear from and see you. You could be surprised at how warm or generous a friend might be.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You cannot hold back the child within, especially dealing with a favorite person. Laughter becomes a common sound around you. You see how contagious your good mood is. Others seem generous and might easily start giggling.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Stay close to home, especially if you sense a family member, loved one or roommate needs to speak to you, or you with them. You might need to run some errands. Use care with spending, which easily could go overboard.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Speak your mind and be clear about what is happening. A loved one, family member or dear friend reaches out for you. This person wants to spend time with you. They might have a surprise to share.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Be more conscious of your spending. Keep your budget even, with few expenditures. Charge your energy into some physical activity. You could work on the yard or get into a favorite game.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You feel great. Invite a friend or loved one to join you as you indulge in a favorite pastime. You suddenly might discover that a child or loved one might want to join in, too. You make the final call as to how many people join in.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Your mind could go into overdrive dealing with a problem. Make an effort toward someone you might want to visit with. They might not always be available to visit or might catch a case of the grumpies.

Answers to last week's puzzle.

