

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Merriam jesters: New-word poems

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1350** we asked you to write a poem featuring one of dozens of terms added in the past year to Merriam-Webster's online dictionary.

4th place

They called up Ukraine's president; A **skeazy** deal was floated. The transcript tells us how it went, 'Cause Trump was quid pro quoted. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

3rd place

Rhotic (pronouncing the R in a word, rather than with a British or Boston accent): My man from the States is hypnotic, (Hope that, this time, it won't end in farce.) Love his humour, and consonants **rhotic**: There is nothing as firm as his R's. (*Michelle Christoforou, Guildford, England*)

2nd place and the dashboard bobber of the Orioles mascot in a hula skirt:

(Financial) haircut Economists fear a recession looms soon. We'll all take a **haircut** should stock prices swoon. So much for Trump's claim he's a great fiscal whiz. Let's just hope our haircut does not look like his. (*Bob Kruger, Rockville*)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

This **escape room's** the worst, everybody agrees; We feel trapped, with a lingering sense of unease That we'll never get out of here, try as we may — We get sullen or spiteful, our nerves start to fray Till at last we're released, overjoyed to survive . . . And we come every weekday, 8:30 to 5. (*Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.*)

Underdoggerel: Honorable mentions

"A profit? Well, you didn't net one," Frowned my broker. "A **haircut**, you'll get one." All I managed to say Was "A haircut's okay — Just not a Marie Antoinette one." (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

Cross-sell (as in "you might also like" . . .)

Once upon a midnight creepy, while I purchased, feeling sleepy, Somewhere online a quaint and curious item I'd been looking for, As my checkout started ending, suddenly they're recommending, For a bit of extra spending, other items from their store. "No, no thanks," I clicked to say, "cross-selling I shall just ignore — I'm buying this and nothing more." (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)

Free solo (mountain climbing without safety equipment)

I was certain some free solo action Would deliver me peak satisfaction. But I found only dopes Don't use harness or ropes, Which is why I now lie here in traction. (*Stephen Gold, London*)

On a **free solo** climb, you must not be a dunce — If you make a mistake, it will just be that once. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

Swole (super-muscular)

So, massive muscles are your goal? Use steroids and you'll end up **swole** Like me and all my weight room besties. (Too bad about our shrunken testes.) (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)

On New Year's Day I set a goal: "I'll join a gym and get real **swole!**" But see me now, and there's no doubt: My plan (and I) ain't working out. (*Brendan Beary*)

Stan (superfan)

Gushed a guy at the gate, who seemed loopy, I'm their greatest of stans — like, a groupie — Though I love all the crew And the cast of "The View," For today, I've come here to make Whoopi." (*Frank Osen*)

Fatberg (huge blob of fat that clogs sewers) Sewery gooery, What is that slimy mon-

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
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3	M	A	U	Z	U	D	K	U	M	L	K	I	N	M	Z	W	Y	D	G	M
4	I	I	B	O	J	A	I	D	W	Y	T	P	S	R	K	Q	Z	E	K	B
5	P	E	Y	Y	E	N	E	R	B	T	Z	B	T	A	J	N	X	N	M	B
6	A	O	M	Q	O	U	T	V	T	S	X	P	M	N	I	A	X	T	K	M
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10	J	E	N	G	R	N	T	N	T	R	K	E	Y	B	D	N	N	Q	I	R
11	T	Q	Y	B	U	W	I	A	Y	L	E	G	L	L	O	E	Y	E	Y	P
12	E	B	R	D	D	I	G	R	A	S	O	B	I	Z	N	O	O	D	Q	N
13	A	R	N	D	K	I	Y	N	E	L	O	P	B	I	O	P	H	P	P	Q
14	J	Y	D	G	T	R	C	A	O	T	O	M	L	Z	O	O	A	O	N	D
15	R	Y	N	S	R	E	W	I	N	M	U	E	T	V	I	E	L	O	L	
16	A	Z	A	Q	J	S	V	O	L	H	A	A	E	K	N	K	C	Z	T	
17	U	C	N	L	J	Y	L	E	D	P	I	M	R	I	L	W	B	D	I	D
18	Q	P	A	D	H	N	A	W	E	D	O	B	D	T	B	E	Y	J	R	A
19	A	T	W	P	K	G	D	N	B	N	Q	P	R	N	Y	Y	B	D	Y	
20	E	G	B	J	Z	Y	Q	P	O	V	Q	R	K	Y	J	I	V	M	N	D

Not your standard word search puzzle: (1) You can snake around the grid in every direction; (2) you can make up the words, like "kiddburger" and "pharmy." Just tell us where your word starts.

Week 1354: As the Word Turns 5: Taking our vowels

Starting at J-17: PHARMY: A brigade of drug company reps on a mission to infiltrate doctors' offices and ethics.

E-13: KIDBURGER: Ground goat on a bun.

Here's the fifth of our neologism contests based on a computer-generated word search grid. SuperLoser Jesse Frankovich, reminding the Empress that we hadn't done this contest in more than a year, also noted that last year's grid was notably short on vowels for our purposes. So this time, instead of using an online word generator to form the basis for the grid, the E found a Web page of "words heavy in vowels," chose some more while paging through a dictionary, and went back to the generator for the last few. There are 24, including "aureolae" and "eleemosynary," but it doesn't really matter; we're not asking you to find those words. We want you to find ones that you invent.

That job is actually pretty easy because you can snake your word through the grid, in every direction, rather than the usual straight line. **This week: "Discover" a word or multiword 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. Don't trace back over the same letters. You may also give a novel definition for an existing term. And you may use the word in a sentence, if that makes your entry funnier; several people will inevitably come up with some of the same words, so it may well be the description that wins the ink.**

You MUST begin each entry with the coordinates of the first letter of your term (e.g., C12) as above; the Emp can trace it from there. If you don't give me those coordinates, I'm going to skip your word. Please **make those coordinates the first characters of each entry**, so I can sort what will surely be thousands of words.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1354 (no capitals in the Web address).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. And speaking of tracing circuitous routes, second place receives the book **"Where Underpants Come From,"** in which New Zealand-based author Joe Bennett follows the production path of his five-pack of skivvies all over China and Southeast Asia. Hand-delivered to the Empress by Kiwi Loser Andy Bassett when he visited Washington this past summer.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Too-Weak Notice" or "Certificate of (de) Merit." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday, Oct. 28;** results published Nov. 17 in print, Nov. 14 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Merriam Jesters" is by Jesse Frankovich; Jesse also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/invdev). "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofiday](https://www.facebook.com/bit.ly/inkofiday); 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/conc1354.

Strosity clogging the Pipes like a cork?
Fatbergs are famous for Impassability; Therefore, fugehdabout Flushing New York. (*Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)
Screen time I saw the meltdown on its way, But held the line: "No more today! You've stared at pixels quite enough!" All done!" He stomped out in a huff. My job (I'm trained as toddler-sitter) Is keeping Donald Trump off Twitter. (*Duncan Stevens*)
Sesh (session) "I need therapy, doctor, and how!" "Book a **sesh**," she said, wrinkling her brow. "Doc, I know it seems risible, But I'm feeling invisible!" She replied, "I just can't see you now." (*Frank Osen*)

I know our stock portfolios are prone to rise and drop. And sometimes market jitters take "a little off the top." But lately talk of tariff wars has added to our fears. Our stocks may get a **haircut** — and it's Trump who holds the shears. (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)
Coulrophobia (aversion to clowns) If you suffer from **coulrophobia**, You must treat this as a tenet: For your mental health, I beg you please, Eschew the House and Senate. (*Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.*)
More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1354.
Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 21: our contest to change a word in a movie title to its opposite. See wapo.st/invite1353.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

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| 40 Stubborn critter | | | | | 116 Word of reproof |
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| 48 Tiny toiler | | | | | |
| 49 Fall collection? | | | | | |
| 51 More consequence? | | | | | |
| 52 Poetic adverb " ... & Basie": | | | | | |
| 54 1963 jazz collaboration | | | | | |
| 55 "True Detective" actor McNairy | | | | | |
| 56 Bump from the schedule | | | | | |
| 60 Peacock's pride | | | | | |
| 64 QVC sister channel | | | | | |
| 65 Shot in the arm | | | | | |
| 66 Wall St. trader | | | | | |
| 68 Awesome hobby? | | | | | |
| 70 Awesome hunting dog? | | | | | |
| 72 Bit of legal advice | | | | | |
| 73 Lose control | | | | | |
| 74 Chicken dinner choice | | | | | |
| 75 Support | | | | | |
| 76 Gullivant | | | | | |
| 78 Sound | | | | | |
| 80 Wine choice | | | | | |
| 81 Originally called | | | | | |
| 82 Tool in a kit | | | | | |
| 84 Shadowed | | | | | |
| 86 Low-tech note-taking aid | | | | | |

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