

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

The diviner comedy: 2020 visions

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1361 was our annual contest to tell us some events that will (not really) occur in the coming year. Some of the inking entries in the timeline below contradict one another. But, hey, we didn't say we'd make sense of this world. **First, a milestone:** With his honorable mention in the air-quotes contest of Week 1363, **(Kevin Dopart, Washington)** became the fourth member of The Style Invitational Triple Hall of Fame with his 1,500th blot of Invite ink, joining Chris Doyle, Russell Beland and Tom Witte. Kevin, who heads up the Transportation Department's research on automated vehicles, started Inviting in 2005 and quickly became the contest's top scorer for seven years running, and still blots up almost 100 inks each year. Meanwhile, Kevin isn't hearing footsteps; No. 5, Brendan Beary, is more than 400 blots of ink behind at 1,083.

4th place:

April 23: Focusing on players who will be seeing the most action, the Redskins draft punters in the first three rounds. *(Mike Gips, Bethesda)*

3rd place:

Aug. 19: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has double knee replacement surgery after spending day after day praying for the president. *(Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)*

2nd place and the 'Good All Things to Be Happy' shirt from South Korea:

Sept. 8: "Amazon founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post" appears for the 1 millionth time in The Washington Post. *(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)*

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

May 16: Concerns about covert pressure on Ukraine flare up anew when President Volodymyr Zelensky, reading from a script, calls Elizabeth Warren "Pocahontas." *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

Prophe-C's:

Honorable mentions

Jan. 7: Members of the National Pedantic Society wrap up a week of reminding people that the next decade technically doesn't start until next January. *(Chuck Helwig, Centerville)*

Jan. 20: To prove he is not prejudiced against people of color, President Trump invites this year's winners of all five major beauty pageants to the White House for a meet-and-grab. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond)*

Feb. 2: The New England Patriots win another Super Bowl, aided by a mind control device surreptitiously implanted in the opposing quarterback's helmet. *(Mark Raffman, Reston)*

Feb. 2: Stephen Miller sees his shadow, realizes too late he's exposed to sunlight, and turns to dust. *(Gary Crockett)*

Feb. 9: Emilia Clarke brings her dragon to the Oscars and commands it to set the stage ablaze as revenge for not getting a Best Actress nomination for "Last Christmas." *(Lee Graham, Rockville)*

Feb. 17: Following his annual physical, President Trump reports that he weighs 180, has a BMI of 23 and had a "perfect" Pap smear. *(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)*

April 8: Exactly one year after his song reached No. 1, Lil Nas X discovers that he can't no more. *(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington)*

April 14: Attorney General William Barr travels to Albania, Paraguay and Burkina Faso as part of his evolving strategy to investigate the investigation of the investigators of the investigated. *(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)*

April 21: Instead of putting Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill, Trump announces his plan to issue a \$3 bill featuring his own visage. *(Bert Freiman, East Amherst, N.Y.)*

May 8: On V-E Day, the Justice Department reveals that the Nazis were based not in Germany, but in Ukraine. *(Gary Crockett)*

June 18: The Republican National Committee buys 300,000 copies of Donald Trump Jr.'s new book,



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1365: Dead Letters, our obit poem contest

ROSIE RUIZ (1953-2019)

The Boston Marathon cheater is dead (No, we needn't build a shrine). So now it can be officially said That she's crossed the finish line.

As the Empress has taken to doing each January, we welcome the year with a backward glance, and with the degree of taste and propriety that has brought The Style Invitational its renown: by making joke poems about newly dead people. **This week: Write a poem of eight lines or fewer (plus an optional title) about someone who died in 2019**, as in the example above by the father of our feast, the deposed Czar of The Style Invitational. Google "deaths 2019" and you'll find all manner of lists of recent mortal-coil-slipppers. **Note:** The Invite is a humor/light-verse contest, so the Empress is not looking for flowery elegies. But neither do we want to be cruel, to do a verbal jig over the grave, to predict a residence in hell (who do you think we are, the president?).

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1365 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, Jan. 13; results will appear Feb. 2 in print, Jan. 30 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives something called **Sneekum Pet Pranksters**. It's a little box about the size of a pack of cigarettes, out of which suddenly pops (you can set it with a timer) a little monkey-monster head. What a big hit it would be on a first date! It doesn't even need batteries. Donated by Dave Prevar. (You can see video of this thing in this week's Style Conversational.)

Other runners-up win one of our new "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mugs or our "Whole Fools" Grossery 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). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "The Diviner Comedy" is by Tom Witte; Jesse Frankovich wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" the 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 reviews each new contest and set of results. This week, remembering the Invite's brush with the late Don Imus. Check it out at wapo.st/conv1365.



From a little box in your pocket, BOING up pops a monster. This week's second prize.

"Nepotism for Dummies." *(Mark Raffman)*

Jan. 27: President Trump officially declares his son a baron, because somebody said he couldn't. *(Dottie Gray, Alexandria)*

July 3: Donald Trump announces that, in lieu of the U.S. Olympic team, the United States will be represented in Tokyo by Rudy Giuliani. *(Duncan Stevens)*

July 4: Trump's "greatest fireworks show in the history of the world" concludes with nuclear detonations offshore from Mar-a-Lago. *(Kevin Dopart, Washington)*

July 7: George and Kellyanne Conway leave each other for Mary Malin and James Carville. *(Steve Honley, Washington)*

July 16: Phase 2 of Metro's Silver Line finally opens, but the first train tragically collides with some low-altitude airborne swine. *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)*

Aug. 13: In Chillicothe, Ohio, the first recorded use occurs of a surly eighth-grader saying "Okay, millennial" to his mom. *(Jesse Rifkin)*

Sept. 8: Justin Fairfax is forced to

resign as Virginia's lieutenant governor after yearbook photos show him wearing whiteface at a party while dressed as Michael Jackson. *(Gregory Koch, Falls Church)*

Oct. 2: Having brought peace to the Middle East, Jared Kushner moves on to finding a cure for cancer. *(Art Grinath, Takoma Park)*

Oct. 11: Mike Pence acknowledges that he is gray. *(David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)*

Oct. 15: Variety announces that Tom Hanks will star in the new biopic about Tom Hanks. *(Jon Ketzner)*

Oct. 21: Mike Pence, accompanied by his wife, has a conference with Nancy Pelosi. *(Selma Ellis, Rolling Meadows, Ill.)*

Nov. 13: In an ad for Weight Watchers, Sir Mix-a-Lot admits that he can and was lying. *(Bruce Alter, Fairfax Station)*

Dec. 8: Trump fatally shoots a Macy's Santa on Herald Square. But the stock market hits a new high the same day, so Republicans say that while regrettable, it's not an impeachable offense. *(Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)*

Dec. 12: In the fourth quarter of the Army-Navy Game, President Trump pardons the Army middle linebacker for unnecessary roughness. *(Frank Mann, Washington)*

Dec. 26: Press secretary Stephanie Grisham reports that, for the fourth year in a row, the White House menorah has stayed lit for 16 days. *(Bruce Alter)*

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1365.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 6: Clues in our reverse-crossword contest. See wapo.st/invite1364.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"INITIAL OFFERINGS" BY DAVID KWONG

ACROSS

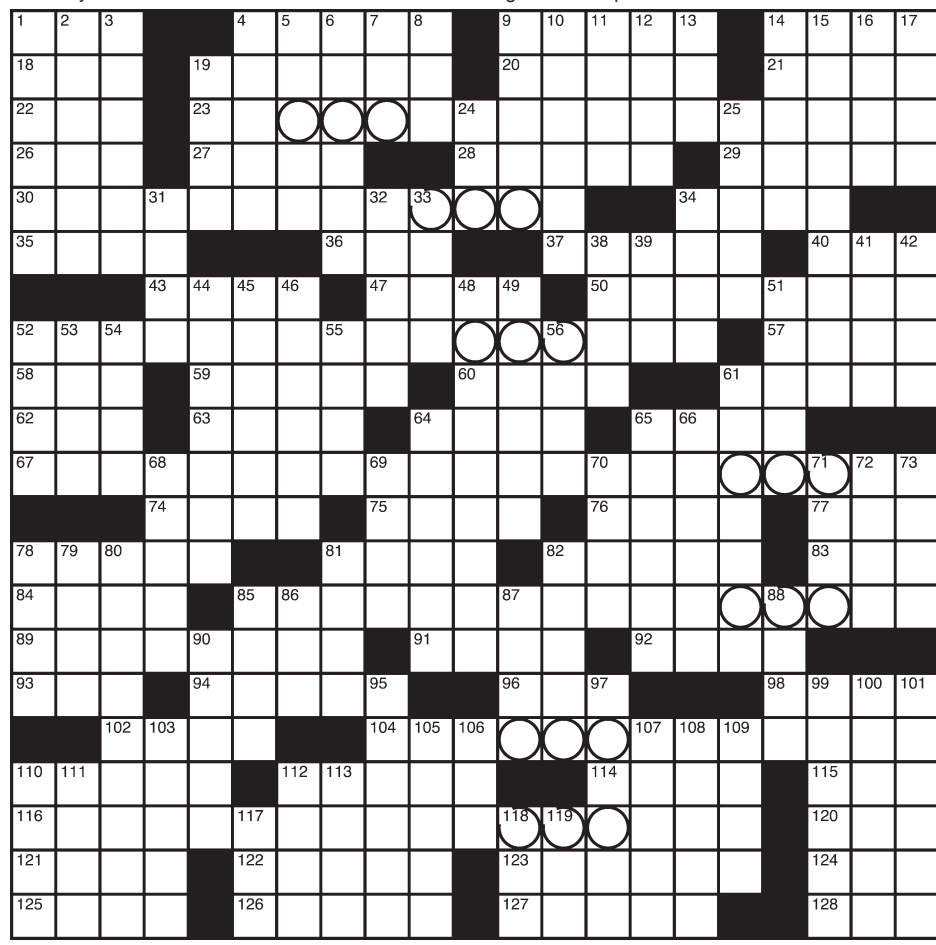
- 1 Extra NHL periods
4 Official order
9 Prefix suggesting savings
14 Weightlifting units
18 Like a nonexistent chance
19 Provides an excuse
20 Queen Amidala's "Star Wars" home
21 Rink move
22 Christmas buy
23 When the Commodore 64 computer was released
26 Clean Air Act org.
27 Eye drop
28 Looks for prints
29 Driveway hoops game
30 World capital since 1931
34 Bart Simpson's grandma
35 One might be sipped
36 California's Santa River
37 Character who said about her father, "Yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself"
40 Amigo of Fidel
43 Doctrines
47 Tennis great
50 Hood
52 1982 Physical Tour singer
57 Corrida participant
58 Bug
59 Novel makeup
60 Prey for a Hauskatze
61 Starchy roots
62 Card game shout
63 "Cotton Candy" jazzman
64 Defeat
65 Low-pH stuff
67 "Excuse me ..."
74 Son of Seth
75 "Gigi" playwright
76 Assures, as a win
77 Cal Poly campus site, initially
78 Zoo features
81 "Beloved" novelist Morrison
82 Lab dish
83 Give the chance to
84 Word on a bill

DOWN

- 1 Insult
2 National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall site
3 Soda shop supply
4 Architect
5 Saariinen
6 Alice's cat
6 Andorra's region
7 Op.
8 Half a fly
9 Ho-hum feeling
10 Type of salad
11 Parting words?
12 Quaffs with punch
13 Massage reaction
14 Ersatz silk
15 Tool for removing broken screws
16 Seats arranged in rows
17 Shrub with a purple fruit
19 Chip in a pot
24 Baseball Hall of Famer Roush
25 Beachwear for the immodest

- 31 Lowest multiple of CLI that fits in this space
32 Thunderstruck
33 Creator of the GOP elephant
34 "Death in Venice" author
38 Freudian topics
39 "Dilbert" cry
41 Subway fare?
42 God with a quiver
44 Drawing tools
45 First quarterback to exceed 5,000 passing yards in a season
46 Derisive sounds including gibbons
49 Makes into law
51 German town
52 "Movin' On"
53 "Smallville" character
54 Horror film helper
55 O.T. queen
56 Artful dodge

- 61 More under the influence
64 Soccer great
65 Inverse trig function
66 Big name in tequila
68 Thinker
69 SpaceX CEO
70 Nothing, in Nantes
71 Madonna's "La Bonita"
72 Cassini of fashion
73 Reference book
78 Verge
79 "Lonely Boy" singer
80 Testing subject
81 Palm smartphone
82 World leader who's a judo black belt
85 Long times
86 Pertinent
87 See 128-Across
88 Frost-covered
90 Kind of pneumonia
95 Benefactor
97 One of two in a crash
99 Recovery place
100 Overdue debt more commonly pluralized
101 Quite a bit like
103 Shiny, in product names
105 Butcher shop cuts
106 choy
107 Is closer to reaching
108 Run the show
109 Bowl-shaped pans
110 "I'm ready to come in now"
111 John's first partner on American TV's "The Avengers"
112 Clearance item caveat
113 Highways: Abbr.
117 Bus sched. letters
118 FRA neighbor, to the IOC
119 Onetime Beattie Sutcliffe



1/5/20

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Jan. 5: How you deal with others will reflect your true essence. You might be unusually open this year as you are about to cross into a new 12-year life and love cycle. If single, some people might respond to your generosity, but not to you. Use your sixth sense here. On the other hand, many of you will meet your life mate. If attached, the two of you move in a new direction you have often spoken of. This year will prove to be unusually significant to your bond. You will speak of this period often. Taurus helps ground you but adds to your creativity.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Curb a need to be possessive or in control. You can control only yourself and no one else. Once you recognize this truth, you will be on cruise control, tossing manipulation in the garbage.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
See and understand the possibilities that have opened up. Many people might not be able to look at a situation as positive if they are stuck in the status quo, which you seem to be able to let go of.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
One-on-one relating takes you down a new path without realizing it. You might enjoy the excitement of the moment and not see the implications, but others will. Be more direct with a close loved one.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
See what is happening with a loved one. This person might be acting self-centered but could be overwhelmed by recent events. Your presence makes all the difference.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Do not make a big deal out of what is going on right now. You might want to try another approach to calm down a friend or family member. What is happening simply does not work.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Your creativity emerges, allowing you to make some interesting decisions. A child or loved one goes out of the way to make you more easygoing and content, and you do the same for this person.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
One-on-one relating turns a situation around. You need to be sure that you want what you are creating. You might find it difficult to move away from something.

Recognize a family member for their efforts.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Your ability to relate deeply to another person emerges. You seem to ask the right questions. You also know how to answer and when. A sense of well-being forms between you and another.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Keep reaching out for a loved one at a distance. You could be questioning what is happening with your finances. What looks promising very well could be. You still need to be careful with investments.

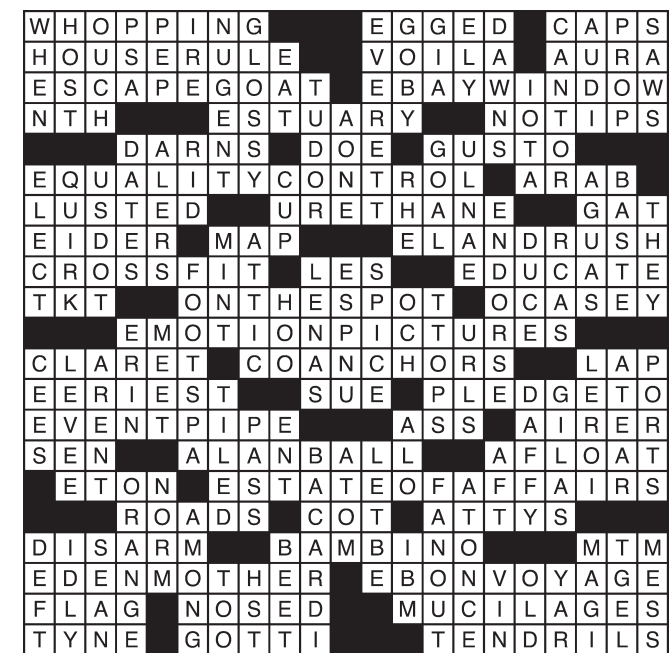
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
You could be too tired to continue on your present path. Ask for more

support in how you handle an unusual opportunity. Ask a loved one for some help to cover all bases.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Reach out for someone you really care about and have a long-overdue discussion. You cannot help but be aware that a lot of undercurrents surround you. What appears hush-hush is a special opportunity.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Speak your mind. Know what it is you want. Clearly, you do not have all the needed answers. Be sure you are heading in your chosen direction. Friends surround you and want to celebrate — any excuse works for you.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



12/29/19