

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

M-Wahaha with new dictionary words

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1413 the Empress once again asked our Loserbards for poems featuring words and phrases added recently to Merriam-Webster's online dictionary.

4th place:

Cryosphere, the part of Earth's surface where water stays frozen: Ice fields of Antarctica are disappearing quickly, and pretty soon the penguins could be looking kinda sickly. With global warming on the rise, our planet's cryosphere might first become a swimming pool, and next a dryosphere. (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

3rd place:

Iatrophobia, fear of doctors I have severe iatrophobia — Who knows what diseases they're carrying? But I think I can freeze my deep fear of MDs. When it comes down to whom I'll be marrying. (Jesse Rifkin, Arlington)

2nd place and the clam-flavored Clamdy Canes:

Impostor syndrome, persistent doubt about one's ability and fear of being discovered to be incompetent; "Bid your impostor syndrome adieu."

Said my therapist, Dr. Leroux. "You'll still feel like a fraud, but that isn't so odd, for, in your case, it's perfectly true." (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Useful idiot, a naive person who can be exploited politically I had a useful idiot; for years he kissed my bottom. I need a favor? Two or three? Well, every time I got 'em. But now he's on his way out and I'm feeling kind of miffed. Those millions that he's in my debt? I'm likely to be stiffed. — V.P., Moscow (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Bury 'em, Webster! Honorable mentions

Canna, as in cannabis Because his house calls cause such dread, My doc now brings me canna bread. For this, I am his biggest fan — a Touter of his bedside manna. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Most anything that's **canna**, I admit that I'm a fan a'. With "herbal" skin cream I anoint, But I like it better in my joint. (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)

Deepfake, an elaborately doctored photo or recording So what if this keepsake Is only a deepfake? A Photoshopped image that shows me in bed With a naked George Clooney Doesn't mean that I'm loony — A loon would've put him in PJs instead. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

When Trump starts conceding And stops his impeding, Reveals what he's hidin', Congratulates Biden, Accepts the results, Appeals to adults, You'll see how they make The perfect **deepfake**. (Frank Mann, Washington)

Greige, gray-beige A husband came back from the store:

"I've got greige paint you sent me out for."

"Are you some kind of dope? Can't you see this is taupe?" And she pointed him back out the door. (Hildy Zampella, Alexandria)

Iatrophobia, fear of doctors Urgency-flurgency, Virus-responding group — All of your meetings Trump Seems to omit. Could be a symptom of iatrophobia:

Fear that your docs will say "You're full of [alternative facts]." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Iatrophobia's my curse, My home I had to flee, For what location could be worse Than Baltimore, MD? (Mark Raffman)

Hydroxychloroquine can treat malaria or lupus. It's not a cure for covid, though our leader tried to dupe us. The drug has many side effects like headaches and depression.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1417: Dead letters, our obit poem contest

Linda Tripp (1949-2020), Clinton scandal figure
Linda Tripp, world-famous buttinsky,
Dropped a dime on M. Lewinsky.

So 2020 is behind us. And it may be hard right now to glance back on it, especially for The Style Invitational's traditional top-of-the-year contest. So many lives to commemorate — but our Loserbards' brand of wry, even funny wistfulness might be just what we need right now.

This week: Write a poem of no longer than eight lines (plus an optional title) about someone who died in 2020, as in the mini-example above by Washington Post Ewwlogist Gene Weingarten. Google "deaths 2020" and you'll find many lists of those who won't be joining us this week. (And if you're, say, thinking of writing an ode to The Late 2020, the Empress promises she won't narrow her eyes and hiss, "Is that a someone?") **Note:** The Invite is a humor/light-verse contest, so we don't want straight-out sobbers; the verses should be leavened with wit and even a laugh. But neither should they be nasty or gloating. We have enough hurt in our world right now.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1417 (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday, Jan. 11**; results appear Jan. 31 in print, Jan. 28 online.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. **Second place receives a face mask with one of those classic Judaica Fails**, like last year's menorah socks with seven candles. This one was supposed to say "NYC *shtark*" — "strong" in Yiddish — but someone placed the Hebrew letters left to right, giving them no Hebrew or Yiddish meaning, except that reading them right to left gives you the pronunciation "crotch." Donated by Loser Edward Gordon.

Other runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "No 'Bility" or "Punderachiever." 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 "M-Wahaha" is by Chris Doyle; Beverly Sharp 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/inkofday](https://www.facebook.com/bit.ly/inkofday); and follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week's at wapo.st/conv1417.

The "You're Invited" podcast: Eight half-hour episodes, including dish from the Empress and the Czar, and tips from top Losers. See bit.ly/invite-podcast.



It's supposed to say "strong" but came out reading like "crotch."

It's rather like the president — so use it with discretion. (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

WFH, working from home WTF I WFH

Each and every day.

OMG IDK

How I can live this way.

IMHO FWIW

I'm sure I'll make it through.

OK G2G TTYL

My Zoom meeting's in two.

(Leif Picoult, Rockville)

Kids gonna **body-shame**, that's what they do.

So I have two heads, one more than you.

But I couldn't care less — what the hell do I care?

I got a good-lookin' head, and another to spare.

(Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Please keep **physical distance** — that's so

You'll be safer wherever you go.

Experts say that it's smart

To stay six feet apart,

Or you might end up six feet below. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

CV, coronavirus

At a job interview,

What you don't want to do

Is to give them your CV

By going "ah-chool!"

(Sarah Walsh, Rockville)

Melissophobia, fear of bees

"Melissophobia"! How glad I was to hear this word — to know, when folks avoid me,

It's just because they're frightened of my name:

My personality is not to blame! Oh how this knowledge comforted and buoyed me!

(Then, hearing "fear of bees," I lost my buzz.) (Melissa Balmain)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1417.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 4: Our retrospective in which you can enter any of 25 recent contests. See wapo.st/invite1416.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

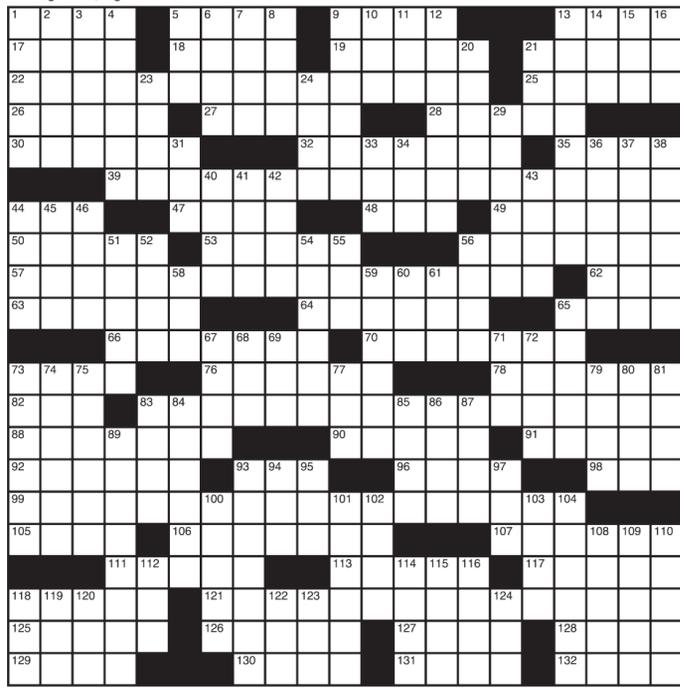
"CAREER COUNSELING" By TRENT H. EVANS

ACROSS

- Movers, but hopefully not shakers
- Hawkeye's title workplace
- Global warming word
- Stumbling block
- "Are you hurt?" response
- Soprano showpiece
- Far from clueless
- It's not a bear
- Advice to an aspiring preacher?
- Gives the boot
- Give a lift
- Finger-wagging word
- It's nothing to Caesar
- Star sometimes eclipsing Venus?
- Esteem to the extreme
- Support for wind energy?
- Advice to an aspiring organizer?
- NFL's Falcons
- Vatican farewell
- Messy place
- Fictitious
- Dalai Lama's former home
- China's Zhou
- "Watch me do this!"
- Advice to an aspiring journalist?
- Head of M16?
- 2020, for many
- "I know! I know!"
- Philly Ivy
- Middle schooler, probably
- Prairie howlers
- Collars, as a perp
- Zoom lens?
- Seyfried of "Big Love"
- "We ___ Farmer's, bum ba dum bum bum ba dum bum"
- Advice to an aspiring ballet dancer?
- Salts, say
- Govt. security
- Unexpected mug shot feature
- Bring into harmony
- Exec concerned with hacking
- "_ girl!"
- First name in supervillains

DOWN

- Tools with jaws
- Quite big enough
- Musical deficiency
- Got by on one's reputation alone, perhaps
- Red Warhol subject?
- Canine chorus
- Evil sci-fi order
- LOL, verbalized
- Used what was available
- Sheep related to you?
- Head of M16?
- Holy threesome
- The one
- "Old Town Road" rapper Lil X
- PC shortcut key
- Teslas don't need it
- "My Fair Lady" lady
- Japanese garden fish
- Lotto cousin
- Gulf States bigwig
- Ram's protection
- Mandela's org.
- Painful sequence
- Illuminated
- For a bit
- Vietnam War hot spot
- Mogul
- Cake level
- Drink mix made famous by NASA
- Tiger's target
- Harp relative
- Big name in footwear
- Son of Odin
- Touch down
- Dance moves
- Nowhere close
- Right this minute
- Olympic skating medalist Midori
- Kamit's greeting
- Praise for a torero
- "You can't be serious"
- 21 Japanese garden fish
- Seek the affections of
- Rob
- One of a biblical
- Jefferson bills
- "OMG, a mouse!"
- Ease up
- Eastern "way"
- Birds that boom and grunt
- Channel that provided coverage of the New Horizons Pluto flyby
- Respectful singer?
- Taken down
- Back on the boat
- Scientist deGrasse Tyson
- View from a hill
- Top of a hill
- Like the Texas flag's star
- Baby's outfit
- Crowd eruption
- Rock ending?
- Mountain legend
- "You betcha!"
- Take over or take in
- Hypotheticals
- Yes, to Yves
- "Your point is?"
- Chilly
- Finger-wagging sound
- Four Corners state
- Skye of "Say Anything..."
- Fishes, in a way
- On, as Sherlock's game
- Sanjay of CNN
- Häger's dog
- Film director's challenge
- Gym set
- "May I have some tuna, please?"
- "My Way" lyricist
- Wander (about)
- Big name in nail polish
- Slithery
- Squeezer
- Bio or chem
- Frenemy of Lando
- Lab coat checker?



1/3/21

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY MADALYN ASLAN

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Jan. 3: Responsible, trustworthy and service-oriented, once you commit, you are in 100 percent. If in a team, not everyone will be as committed as you are. Put your personal stamp on it, and it will be an astounding success. If single, your year's off to a wonderful beginning. Let it unfold. If attached, you communicate nonstop, and it will be bliss. You don't always have to win. Taurus is as stubborn as you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) A competitive feeling develops with a project. Use caution in adopting something new. Make certain before making a commitment. You reach your goals today by fitting in with the crowd.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You have a craving for rich, delectable desserts. Today could steer an acquaintanceship into a more intimate bond. You recover from old heartaches and discover new sources of delight. Consider getting involved with a community theater.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Take time to clean and organize your living or workspace. A good spring cleaning might be enough, but a move is also a distinct possibility. Be diplomatic if bringing up sensitive issues with a family member or tenant.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Today adds eloquence to your communication. It's easy to sell your ideas to others. Writing, advertising (your own business, for example) and speaking will be a success. This promises a productive cycle.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Today brings an insight into your unique talents. There is a clarity about long-range priorities. There is a harmony between spiritual and material values. You will see how services performed reward you on many levels.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) The new year begins with a fresh breath of change and promise. A move, a different job or even a new love can make you feel reborn. Others shower you with attention and involve you in their plans.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You're thinking kindly and

charitably about a certain decision you have to make. Legal and ethical issues are emphasized. Listen to what your heart and instincts tell you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) New types of associates are included in your online social circles. This generates refreshing new goals. Helpful, supportive people offer encouragement. Your world widens, promising tremendous growth.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You will find your choices in friendships in flux. Avoid those who seem too possessive or overly demanding. Patiently cultivate new contacts. You may be intrigued by new gadgets and technologies.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) It's a great day to make long-range

plans and to attend online workshops. Your mind is sharp and your tongue quick. There is an awareness of how big the world is and how much it has to offer.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You will probe beneath the surface of events and companions. It's a day when puzzles and mysteries are clarified. Be very honest with yourself. It's not a time to practice denial. This ushers in a more uplifting, expansive time for the future.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Charming and charismatic individuals impress you. Enjoy companions, but cherish your own accomplishments and identity as well. Share your philosophical concepts and make appointments.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



12/27/20