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Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1420: Singing on the job

Write a song for or about any profession. Plus fresh ink from a passel of earlier contests.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers

Jan. 21, 2021 at 9:45 a.m. EST

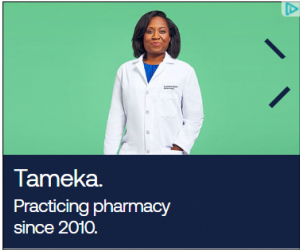
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(Click [here to skip down](#) to this week’s retrospective winners)

If you’ve been scrolling through TikTok lately — or have been in the vicinity of someone who has, and tends to hum — you’ve likely encountered the unlikely fad of sea chanteys: rhythmic songs that old-time sailors would sing together while they worked to hoist that sail or winch that capstan. The chantey (or shanty) craze was randomly fueled by Scottish postman Nathan Evans, who just weeks ago posted [a video of himself singing a whaling ballad](#) called “Soon May the Wellerman Come,” complete with fine close harmonies provided by Nathan himself.

It’s delightful — as are thousands of replying posts of TikTokkers singing along with Nate’s #shantytok video.

This reminded the Empress that The Style Invitational is way overdue for a song contest. We’re not going to ask just for sea chanteys; instead: **Write a humorous “work song” for any job or profession**, either one that workers would sing to help their job along, or just one that tells about being a vaccine nurse or dog walker or policy analyst or president or Fox News “journalist.” **Set it to any well-known tune**—“Soon May the Wellerman Come” is certainly eligible — or your own tune. You can make a video as well (you *must* if you are going to win). So here are some entries, including a YouTube link, when ladies



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you use your own tune) as long as your entry includes a YouTube link plus lyrics.



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Submit up to **25 entries** at wapo.st/enter-invite-1420 (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday, Feb. 8 (you get an extra week!)**; results appear Feb. 21 in print, Feb. 18 online.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a plush **screaming flying monkey**, whose arms are lined with rubber cords; you hook the hands over your fingertips, pull back, and let it go flying forward and emit a scary electronic scream. See a video, if you dare, at bit.ly/monkeyslingshot. Donated by Loser Steve Smith.

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 “Wry Try-Agains” is by Chris Doyle; Jesse Frankovich wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. This week's contest was suggested in part by Alex Blackwood and earlier by Duncan Stevens. 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; and follow [@StyleInvite](https://twitter.com/StyleInvite) on Twitter.



“If you look at the results upside down and backward through this periscope, Trump definitely won!”
Wendy Shang, Falls Church, Va., Week 1392

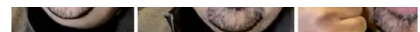
(Cartoon by Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

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UPDATE: In last week's "joint legislation" contest, the Empress dopily left **Alex Padilla** (pa-DEE-a), Vice President Harris's replacement in the Senate, off the list of newbies. If you've already sent in 25 entries for Week 1419, you may [send in](#) up to two more featuring Sen. P.

The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week's, published late Thursday, Jan. 21, at wapo.st/conv1420.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

Wry try-again: Our year in redo, Part 2

[Week 1416](#) was the second half of our annual retrospective; you could enter or reenter any of 25 of our varied contests from this past June through November.

4th place:

Week 1409, drop letters from a song title or lyric

I FALL TO PIE[ce]S: The heartbreak of cheating . . . on your diet. (*George Thompson, Springfield, Va.*)

3rd place:

Week 1412, rearrange the letters of a song title

Stairway to Heaven *anagrams to I Vote, He Rants Away*

There's a lame duck who's sure

His election was "stole"

And he's crying at volume eleven.

Though he rages he knows

That his hopes are foreclosed:

In a word, he can't get what he aimed for . . . (*Mark Raffinan, Reston, Va.*)

2nd place

and the [dumpster-fire-motif face mask](#):

Week 1388, an organization's name that includes an anagram

ACADEMIC DEMI-CACA: This department offers a doctoral degree that's piled just a little higher and deeper. (*Ann Martin, Brentwood, Md.*)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Week 1402, new terms whose letters total 14 Scrabble points


Maganetic: Exerting a force so powerful that ordinary citizens can lose their marbles, and senators can lose their morals.

(*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

The agony of repeat: Honorable mentions

Week 1388, a business combined with its anagram

"Hip One" iPhone: It beeps, chimes, and buzzes for no reason so everyone thinks you're popular. (*Frank Mann, Washington*)



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Ruins a Secured Pandemic Manicures and Pedicures: Because what could be more essential than toenail beauty? (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

O That Pesto Toothpaste: It leaves your mouth garlicky fresh and your teeth gleaming green! (*George Thompson*)

Week 1390, compare two items on the list supplied

Murder hornets and a DIY haircut: Both involve ominous buzzing. (*David Peckarsky, Tucson*)

Week 1391, new words/phrases that don't contain C, O, V, I or D

Sargasm: That shudder of pleasure from shooting off a perfectly snide zinger. (*Jon Gearhart, Des Moines*)

Unaugurate: To remove from power, possibly kicking and screaming. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

Aunt Yermama: Pancake syrup with twice the fat of competing brands, but everyone seems to use it. (*Mark Raffinan*)

Week 1393, better descriptions for non-inking anagram names from Week 1388

Credit Naggers Greeting Cards: Wishing you a happy 50th anniversary of your student loans! (*Dottie Gray, Alexandria, Va.*)



My Amusing Gymnasium: "Time for . . . [loud fake belch] BURPEES! Ha, ha, ha!" (*Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.*)

Nice Chefs Ruin French Cuisine: We put "oui oui" in every dish. (*Erika Ettin, Washington*)

Week 1394, a line of dialogue or description that would work for two different movies

"Napoleon Dynamite" and "The Silence of the Lambs": "You gonna eat your tots?" (*Jon Gearhart*)

How you could describe both "The Irishman" and "Gilligan's Island": It was only supposed to be three hours. (*Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.*)

Week 1395, a 'plus-one' to something known by a number

The Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse: War, Famine, Death, Pestilence, and Zeppo. (*Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.*)

Week 1396, limericks featuring a word beginning with "ha-":

Peter's dad said, "You need to discard
The Viagra — ED's a canard!
As your grandpa told me
When I turned fiftv-three:

‘Son, it’s *absinthe* makes Fondas grow **hard.**’ ” (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)



Week 1397, a fresh idea for any of several old cartoon tropes

Psychiatrist to young woman on couch: “Well, It’s quite normal to hate your father, Tiffany. I hate him too.” (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

Trope: Man on desert island: Bedraggled castaway is playing solitaire. A man with a spyglass on a passing boat yells: “Play the red eight on the black nine!” (Jon Gearhart)

Week 1398, metaphors for 2020

If 2020 were an anniversary gift, it would be a used Peloton bike that once belonged to your husband’s mistress. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Week 1400, ‘breed’ Triple Crown nominees and name the ‘foal’

Talkin Malice x Poe = Rantin’ and Raven (Laurie Brink, Mineola, N.Y.)

Cool Runnings x Mr. Kringle = Jamaican a List? (Jon Gearhart)

Telephone Talker x Explosive = ATNT (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)



Villainous x Fancy Liquor = Evil-Dewars (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Believe Now x Disc Jockey = Cult 45s (Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.)

Week 1401, haiku “so” jokes

Your Mama’s so thin,
Smart and morally upright
I can’t make a joke
(Terri Berg Smith, Rockville, Md.)

Week 1402, 14-point Scrabble words

Conspirits: Liquor that mixes perfectly with Kool-Aid. (Kevin Dopart)

Rerererereruns: What my kids have been watching over and over since we got Disney Plus.
(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

Gronavirus: The pathogen that causes dads to tell such awful jokes. (Jesse Frankovich)

Week 1403, update a TV series with a current plot

“Marcus Welby, M.D.”: The pandemic forces Dr. Welby to take the bold new step of treating more than one patient at a time. (David Shombert, Harrisonburg, Va.)

“Seinfeld”: In the episode “The Great Mask Debate,” Elaine tries to get Kramer to enunciate

the “k” in that phrase. (*Stephen Litterst, Newark, Del.*)

AD

Week 1404, we give the answer, you give the question

A. A Mazel Tov Cocktail: Q. What’s a euphemism for the drop-of-wine anesthetic at a bris?

(*David Peckarsky*)

A. Alex Tribeca. Q. Whose departure in 2020 left the world a Bleecker place? (*Greg Dobbins, Boynton Beach, Fla.*)

A. The New Cabinet Department We Need. Q. What is The Department of Calmers? (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

A. The New Cabinet Department We Need. Q. What is Help in Zoomin’ Services? (*Chris Doyle*)

Week 1405, breed two foal names from Week 1400 and name the grandfoal

Arraign in Spain x House of Flusher = Law and Odor (*Howard Walderman, Columbia, Md.*)

Nitro Dame x Belle of the Bald = Wig Out (*Kathy El-Assal, Middleton, Wis.*)

Mad Don and Child x Drool Runnings = Don Dripper (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)

Puttin’OnTheWrits x Goo-Google = Puddin’OnTheWrist (*Tom Witte*)

Week 1407, ads set in space, the White House or other unlikely venues

At the White House: Stains on our democracy might never come out. For everything else, there’s OxiClean. (*Jonathan Jensen*)



Week 1409, shorten a song title

MR. [Tambo]URINE: Now nearing 80, Dylan has different thoughts in the jingle-jangle morning. (*Noah Meyerson, Washington*)

BUTTONS AND B[ow]S: Life on the campaign trail. (*George Thompson*)

F[eels] LIKE THE FIRST TIME: This song lasts 15 seconds. (*Mark Raffman*)

Week 1411, bad novel endings

As he led her past the sparkling Christmas tree and out onto the porch, strung with twinkling white lights, she realized she had been waiting for this moment for years. He took her hand, looked intently into her eyes, and said, “I ate the gingerbread house. Can you make another one?” (*Francesca Huemer Kelly, Highland Park, Ill.*)

Week 1412, rearrange all the letters in a song title

Won’t You Be My Neighbor? > Big Horny Women? You Bet! (*Kevin Dopart*)

[La Vie en Rose](#) > A Seine Lover

When you walk along the Seine

You'll meet a lot of men
Who want to be your lover.
Trust me, dear, I know Paree,
You'll fall for their esprit
As round you they will hover.
By the Seine I met Pierre,
He said to me, "*Ma chère* ,
Ah, voulez-vous diner?"
Oh, what a night of enchantment and bliss!
But came the dawn, and my lover was miss-ing.
With a girl I saw him then,
That vile Parisienne,
Down by the Seine. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 25: our biennial “joint legislation” contest. See wapo.st/invite1419.

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0 Comments



Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. Follow [Twitter](#)

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