

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Bee't poets: Spelling-word verses

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1445, we asked you to write a funny poem or Q&A-type joke, featuring one of the words in the later rounds of this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee.

4th place:

**Thanatophidia**, *poisonous snakes (a double dactyl)*  
Herpety-perpety,  
It'd be awesome if  
Samuel L. Jackson used  
Terms more arcane:  
"I've had a surfeit of  
Thanatophidia  
On this mephitic and  
Feculent plane."  
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

3rd place:

**Vrille**, *a maneuver in which a plane spins downward, nose first*  
**Pandemic Self-Talk**  
Ha ha, I'll be fine, I am healthy and whole!  
If I say I'll get through it, I will.  
My life isn't spiraling out of control —  
I'm, uh ... purposely doing a vrille.  
(Coleman Glenn, Huntingdon Valley, Pa.)

2nd place and the bathroom-scale 'stress reliever' toy:

**Argentous**, *containing silver*  
Second place! An achievement momentous!  
A feather this puts in my cap!  
But instead of a medal argentous,  
Pat sent me some lame piece of crap.  
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.) [Hmm, he sounds ... stressed.]

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

**Dysphotic**, *poorly illuminated*  
Dysphotic water's where to hide  
The bodies of the vics who died  
For disrespecting capos' wishes.  
Now they're sleeping with the fishes  
At the bottom of the Hudson,  
Down in zones that too much mud's in.  
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Bee-minus: Honorable mentions

**Gewgaw**, *a shiny trinket*  
**Bon Voyage**  
A trinket or a knickknack,  
an ornament, a kickshaw,  
a frippery, a gimcrack,  
a bibelot, a gewgaw ...  
Bring me back a souvenir,  
some cheap Parisian trifle,  
even if it's just a mere  
synthetic plastic Eiffel.  
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

**Thanatophidia**, *poisonous snakes*  
On the red carpet, a wardrobe malfunction:  
Medusa is vamping, without much compunction,  
Revealing the writhing of thanatophidia.  
For safety, I beg you, don't YouTube the video!  
(John Hutchins, Silver Spring)

Higgledy-piggledy,  
Rural Australia is  
Loaded with critters we'd  
Better beware:  
These include octopi,  
Thanatophidia,  
Spiders and dingoes, but  
Not the drop bear.\*  
(Stephen Gilberg, Silver Spring)

\*A mythical terror-koala

**Regolith** (*REG-uh-lith*), *loose deposits above solid rock*  
That county extension guy knows how to call it!  
He took a quick look at my garden and said:  
"Your regolith is of inferior quality.  
"Lose all those moon rocks — try soil instead."  
(George Thompson, Springfield, Va.)

**Q**. That farmer who damaged the soil — what did they charge him with?  
**A**. Regolith endangerment!  
(Jesse Frankovich)

**Nepeta** (*NEP-eta*), *the genus that includes catnip*  
Mumbled Smoky (light gray, neutered male),  
Whom the fuzz had just tossed into jail:  
"Yah, I guess it wuz nepeta,  
But m'job's justa schlepitta  
Other cats. Dawg, I didn't inhale."  
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

**Potiche** (*po-TEESH*), *a ceramic vase with a lid*  
Grandma's spirit to heaven's returned  
But her ashes, I've recently learned,  
Are inside a potiche  
(That's a vase — you capisce?)  
On our mantel, the spot that she's urned.  
(Mark Raffman, Reston)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1449: Let's have a get-together

**Heimlichtenstein: A small country firmly lodged between Austria and Switzerland.** (Sandra Hull, 1998)

**Robert Frosty the Snowman: Some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice. All I know is that if this hat goes, I'm a puddle.** (Rob Huffman, 2012)

**Rene Descartes Before the Horse: I am, therefore I think.** (Bob Dalton, 1998)

**Edgar Allan Popeil: Quoth the Raven, "Wait, there's more!"** (Pam Sweeney, 2010)

Here's a contest we've done in different ways over the decades, first inspired by the "Before and After" category on "Wheel of Fortune" (and later "Jeopardy!"): **Begin with a real name; append to it a word, name or expression so that they overlap; and finally define or "quote" the resulting phrase or name, as in the inking examples above.**

The spellings don't have to apply accurately to both elements — witness "Nicorette Butler," star of "Gone With the Winstons" (Chris Doyle, 2010) — but they should be pronounced the same or you're likely to spoil the joke.

**Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1449** (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday, Aug. 23;** results appear Sept. 12 in print, Sept. 9 online.

**Winner gets the Clowning Achievement**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a tiny and elegant (in its way) lapel pin with the iconic "Scream" character from the painting. Call it the Munchkin. Donated by Loser Dave Prevar.

**Other runners-up** win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grossery 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](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline "Bee't Poets" is by Mark Raffman; Jesse Frankovich and Beverley Sharp both submitted the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev); "like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](http://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, in which she'll share the sometimes now-obscure topical humor of our previous portmanteau-names contests, at [wapo.st/convo1449](http://wapo.st/convo1449).

**The "You're Invited" podcast:** A new episode featuring one of the Invite's greatest and funniest Losers, Brendan Beary. Hear it and 14 other half-hour eps at [bit.ly/invite-podcast](http://bit.ly/invite-podcast) or most other podcast platforms.



MOMA.ORG

**Call it the Munchkin: The lapel pin that's this week's 2nd prize.**

**Trophalactic**, *sharing regurgitated food, as ants and bees do*  
Met her on a dating website,  
Hoped she'd fill my lusty thirst,  
Thinking we should meet in person;  
Fortunately, she asked first.

"Won't you come and share a meal?" So I rushed over, rang her bell;  
Turned out she was trophalactic  
And the date did not go well.  
(Rob Cohen, Potomac)

**Bathyal**, *relating to the deepest seas*  
The bathyal depths of the ocean  
Hold creatures that will never see the sky.  
And yet these poor light-deprived critters  
Care more about Kardashians than I.  
(Craig Dykstra, Centerville)

**Paramimia**, *misuse of gesture in expressing thought*  
Paramimia Pete offers words that seem sweet,  
But his hands leave impressions that linger;  
It's quite disconcerting: One moment he's flirting,  
Then he suddenly gives you the finger.  
(Duncan Stevens)

**Paramimia** is gesturing, it's said,  
That [arms open wide]

May confuse [*push*] one instead.  
[*Face palm*] Come hither!  
So hot in here! [*shiver*]  
[*Eye roll*] Please hug me!  
I like you! [*shakes head*]  
(Frank Mann, Washington)

**Sloe**, *a plumlike fruit used to make gin*  
Candy is dandy  
And liquor is quicker,  
But is that still so  
If the liquor is sloe?  
(Jesse Frankovich)

**Saxicolous**, *growing on rock*  
A rock climber, known only as Nicholas,  
Fell and landed on something saxicolous.  
Now his imprint, in lichen,  
Can be seen by those hikin' —  
Mountaineers say the crowds are ridiculous.  
(Frank Osen)

And Last: **Dysphotic**, *poorly lit*  
The Washington Post gives this word to the wise:  
In conditions dysphotic, democracy dies.  
(Jesse Frankovich)

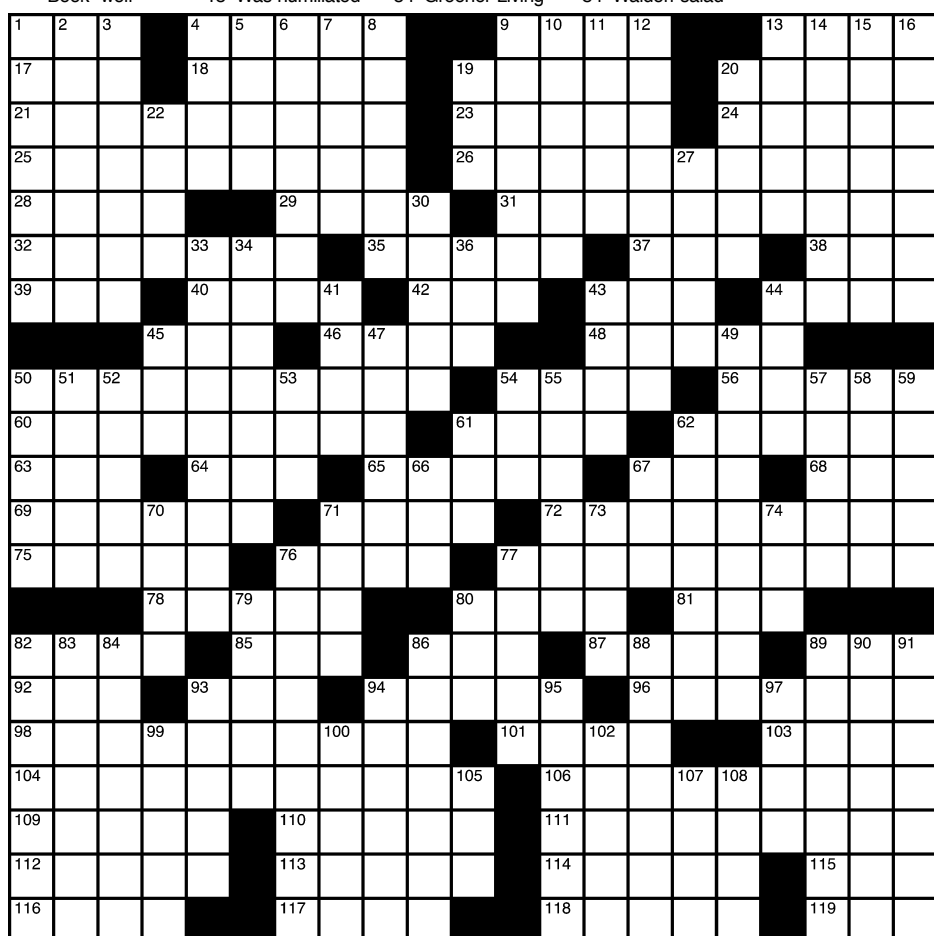
More honorable mentions in the online Invite at [wapo.st/invite1449](http://wapo.st/invite1449).

**Still running — deadline Monday, Aug. 16: our contest for lim-ericks with words starting with "he-."** See [wapo.st/invite1448](http://wapo.st/invite1448).

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- "JUST DESSERTS" By DYLAN SCHIFF**
- ACROSS**  
1 Defeat  
4 Miniature vehicle that uses a remote, briefly  
9 1956 hot spot  
13 Seafarer's direction  
17 Biker's ride  
18 "roll!"  
19 Cavalry weapon  
20 Provide an address  
21 "Poet who influenced T.S. Eliot  
23 Hold-up man?  
24 Brought down  
25 "Flattering words before a request  
26 "90s nickname for pop's Mel C  
28 Regarding  
29 Cut  
31 "Pre-TV performance genre involving arias  
32 Of course, in Cannes  
35 Swerved at sea  
37 "Sister Act" role  
38 Fa follower  
39 Terminus  
40 To boot  
42 Seriously outrun on the track  
43 Price-qualifying word  
44 Packaging meas.  
45 Bath tissue packaging word  
46 Santa Monica landmark  
48 Class assignment  
50 "Pancake order  
54 Baker's dozen?  
56 '50s TV innovation  
60 "Fish that doesn't taste like its name suggests  
61 Numbered work  
62 "Fantastic Four" villain, briefly  
63 Brown brew  
64 Row of seats  
65 Joltless joe?  
67 AFL—  
68 GOP org.  
69 Unidentified flying radar blips  
71 Salsa order  
72 "Killjoy, in modern lingo  
75 It may take a licking  
76 Went down  
77 "Kraft offering, casually  
78 Old Turkish title  
80 Blubber  
81 Hip
- 82 Stuns  
85 Common URL ending  
86 Spot for suds  
87 Very little  
89 Twin, say  
92 Here, in Jalisco  
93 "As \_\_\_ to breathe were life!": Tennyson  
94 Silently understood  
96 "Encore!"  
98 "Sushi fish  
101 Formally surrender  
103 Novelist Waugh  
104 "Fruity fountain offering  
106 "Drywall material  
109 Busy  
110 "101 Dalmatians" protagonist  
111 "Dessert literally represented in six pairs of answers to the starred clues  
112 Soda measure  
113 Solo  
114 "The Jungle Book" wolf
- 115 "M\*A\*S\*H" set piece  
116 Highlands miss  
117 Arguments  
118 Fresh  
119 Blasting stuff
- DOWN**  
1 1992 baseball biopic  
2 Enters slowly  
3 Like many Pixar movies  
4 Kelly of morning TV  
5 "Let's go!"  
6 BYU team nickname  
7 Make part of a larger state  
8 "To Kill a Mockingbird" recluse Boo  
9 Course for H.S. exam takers  
10 Empty, as a U-Haul  
11 Digital greeting  
12 Zing  
13 "The Sound of Music" name  
14 Least distinct  
15 Was humiliated  
16 Handed out fresh cards  
19 Head for Vegas?  
20 Director Welles  
22 Presently, quaintly  
27 Letter closer  
30 Destructive creature  
33 "Push It" hip-hop trio  
34 Tennyson work  
36 Target of some Bob Dylan songs  
41 Birthstone after sapphire  
43 Cribbage pieces  
44 Long-distance swimmer Diana  
45 MLB player, e.g.  
47 Trapped, in a way  
49 Scottie in Hitchcock's "Vertigo" for example  
50 Concrete hunks  
51 Spartan serf  
52 \_\_\_-3 fatty acids  
53 Pull behind  
54 Greener Living  
55 Hearty laugh  
57 Conveyed  
58 Years (for)  
59 Run from a stage?  
61 Med. condition with repetitive behavior  
62 Old Sony CD player  
66 Lodge member  
67 Anderson  
68 Cooper's network  
70 Little devils  
71 Polite address  
73 Mayim Bialik alma mater  
74 Voluminous ref.  
76 Has a mediocre round ... for a pro  
77 Copperfield field  
79 Neutral vowel symbol  
80 Tampa Bay NFLer  
82 Shipping document  
83 South Pacific region  
84 Waldorf salad  
86 Speaks badly of  
88 Stereotypical ingenue facial feature  
89 Beyoncé, since 2002  
90 "S'pose so"  
91 "Waiting for Godot" playwright  
93 Cosmetics liquid  
94 Up to this point, informally  
95 Model 3 autos  
97 "Walking in Memphis" singer  
99 Cuts with a beam  
100 Ohno on skates  
102 Bangladeshi capital  
105 Low digit  
107 Snaky swimmers  
108 Cafeteria fixture



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Aug. 15:** You are forever youthful because you have a playful, mischievous streak. You are intelligent and perceptive. You are also an excellent problem-solver. You are naturally versatile and talented in many fields. This year is a time of fresh, new beginnings, because it is the start of a new nine-year cycle for you. Be brave, bold and open any door!

**Moon Alert:** Avoid important decisions or shopping from 11 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Eastern time today. After that, the Moon moves from Scorpio into Sagittarius.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)  
Today you feel empowered when dealing with shared property and anything you own jointly with someone else. You see a way to improve the arrangement. You might feel glad to be able to be generous to someone.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)  
Today is a great day to socialize because a casual conversation might have a deep imprint on you. (It's amazing how we can all affect each other and yet we often don't know this.) Check your finances and try for a nice balance between home and socializing.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)  
This can be a productive day because you will see ways to be efficient and also better ways of doing things. Enjoy meeting with groups or individuals from different cultures and different backgrounds.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22)  
This is a fun-loving, playful day. You might be deeply moved by the creativity of others. Interaction with children will be meaningful. Romantic relationships will be joyful as well as deeply moving.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22)  
A family discussion might be surprisingly deep and profound; it will be meaningful and impacting. You might entertain at home or have a group meeting of sorts at your home. Expand your world. You will have a pleasant week with a focus on money.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)  
Casual encounters with relatives and neighbors will have a deeper meaning for you today. (Perhaps something that you say will have a deeper meaning for them.) Your interactions with others will be

important and joyful.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)  
Today you might see new uses or applications for something you already own. (Could that old Volkswagen be a floor lamp?) Be open to the ideas that occur to you. Likewise, some of you might even see new ways of earning money.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)  
Today the Moon is still in your sign dancing with your ruler Pluto as well as lucky Jupiter. Pluto will deepen any emotions that you have and help you see the subtext of things. Meanwhile, Jupiter will lift your spirits and inspire you.

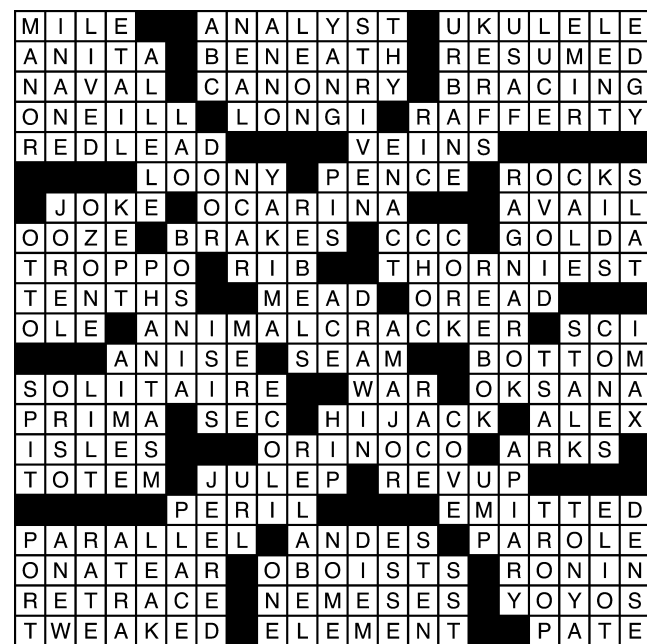
**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)  
You need to rest and take a break. You might do some serious, deep self-scrutiny; however, you also will feel uplifted and inspired by something. Be carefree. Travel and seek warm friendships.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)  
You might discover secrets today, because this is a kind of day where things are revealed. People can see beneath the surface of things. However, you will feel elated and happy to deal with groups. You impress important people. Explore travel options.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)  
You might have an emotional power struggle today, especially if you think someone is trying to manipulate you. Fortunately, this will be brief. Basically, you will use your own positive frame of mind to feel good about dealing with the world. Socialize and travel for pleasure.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)  
Don't let others coerce you in your way of thinking today, because you have the right to your own opinions and beliefs. Instead, be open to learning. Plato said, "Knowledge is the function of being."

Answers to last week's puzzle.



8/8/21