

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Pun(ch)lines: Winning 'feghoot' tales

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1493 we asked for feghoots — absurdly contrived mini-stories that end in a wordplay on some phrase. The Empress puzzled through more than a thousand entries, and more than a few alleged punchlines left her brow so furrowed that her tiara tilted. Want to guess at some that didn't get ink? See this week's Style Conversational at wapo.st/conv1497.

4th place:

The famed Hollywood costume designer Edith Head suffered from a severe phobia of frogs. When she was assigned to a film starring Liam Neeson, little did she know that he'd bring his collection of pet amphibians to costume fittings, letting them jump around his dressing room. The headline in Variety: "Head Shudders: 'Neeson's Toads!'" (Fran Ludman, Baltimore)

3rd place:

My roommate Erica keeps borrowing my stuff without permission. Last week she took one of my combs, not realizing I had just used it to dye my hair purple. I'll admit I laughed a little to see purple streaks show up in her hair — and if she doesn't learn her lesson, I may comb Erica grape again. (Hannah Seidel, Alexandria)

2nd place and the What's That Smell? party game:

Many people know Harry Belafonte as a staunch Democrat, but few know of his deep grounding in Chicago-style politics. For decades, through the many mayoral administrations of father and son, he would celebrate each election night by standing outside Republican headquarters and singing his famous refrain: "Daley come and we won. Go home!" (Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Rex was a very stupid dog, except for one thing: he could play the kazoo. His owners exploited him shamelessly with several performances a day, but Rex just wagged his tail and kept tooting. Finally, the SPCA filed a complaint against his owners: "The heels star a live witless hound of music." (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Beaten to the punchline: Honorable mentions

As The Post's aquatic-fashion critic, I have long bemoaned the lack of originality in men's swimwear, and the trunks from the latest shows were so banal I wanted to scream. Alerting my editor about the review I was about to write, I texted: "Damn the four Speedos! (full screen ahead)" (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

BoJo held on for the longest time at 10 Downing Street, but even his biggest Conservative Party supporters finally agreed to stop heeding a dead Boris. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Many credit taxonomist Carl Linnaeus for biology's binomial nomenclature, but few mention the Bauhin brothers, Gaspard and Johann. Without their work nearly two centuries earlier, Linnaeus would have been forced to develop his own governing system for naming species. One could say it was the very model of the modern major genera. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

At a glitzy Hollywood gathering in the early '80s, the hosts planned to announce the names of all the attendees, but couldn't decide on the order. When one suggested that Mark Hamill should precede Yul Brynner, another was horrified: "Luke before Yul? Eep!" (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

President Clinton hit on another intern, but this one set certain limits: Clothes, but no cigar. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

A young father was changing his son's diaper when suddenly the baby let forth a fountain of pee that arched high in the air and landed on the seat of the rocking chair. The father just smiled at him and said, "That's okay, little guy — after all, life is just a bowl of chair wees." (Lee Graham, Reston)

Now that they're in their own new house, Barack and Michelle can finally decorate to their own tastes: Sweet home, all Obama. (Jesse Rifkin, Arlington)

To serve a summons on the ex-president, Merrick Garland sent agents to Fifth Avenue,



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New for Week 1497: The if-word

What if M.C. Escher had designed the entrance to the Philadelphia Museum of Art? Rocky would still be climbing those steps. (Jesse Frankovich, 2018)

What if there were an alternate universe where your cat did not follow you to the bathroom? You'd just sit there and talk to yourself, I guess. (Robyn Carlson, 2018)

What if the 1972 Democratic Party headquarters had been in the Mayflower Hotel? Journalists would add "flower" to the end of any scandal: Iranflower, Whitewaterflower, Monicaflower, Flowersflower ... (Jerry Pannullo, 1998)

We last did this contest four years ago, but it's not as if we exhausted the pool of All the Situations and Events in the Whole World Ever. This week: Give us a "what if" scenario and its humorous result, as in the examples above from similar previous contests. Your entry doesn't necessarily have to begin with "what if," if you have a funnier way to structure it. You know the Empress — it's all about the funny.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1497 (no capitals in the web address). Deadline is Monday night, July 25; results appear Aug. 14 in print, Aug. 11.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives an eensy blue triangle of fabric — smaller than the Empress's mini-size hand

— that you'd think was a face mask, perhaps for a child, but is actually a Brave Person brand men's thong swimsuit. We usually ask winners of garments — funny hats, socks, etc. — to send photos of themselves wearing them. This time we forbid it. Donated by Not So Brave Steve Smith. (Thank you,

Amazon algorithm, which informed me: "Based on purchases by customers who wear your size, Large will fit you best.") (Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

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, "A Small Jester of Appreciation" or "Close, but Ceci N'est Pas un Cigare." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviteFAQ. The headline "Pun(ch)lines" is by Tom Witte: both Kevin Dopart and Chris Doyle submitted 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; 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/conv1497.

Bedminster and Mar-a-Lago, vowing, "I'll subpoena you in all the old familial places." (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Scientists have long known that talking kindly or cruelly to plants can affect their growth. In fact, speaking too harshly to a potato can make it shrivel and die — yes, it's possible to kill tubers with one's tone. (Coleman Glenn, Huntingdon Valley, Pa.)

A priest was seriously overburdened in his busy parish, as he had no other clergymen to assist him. So he began to delegate tasks to his congregation. As he often said: "When life gives you laymen, make laymen aid." (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

The Trump Organization tried launching a worldwide tour for "The Big Interregnum of the Once and Future Prez," featuring both Beatles music and MAGA conspiracies. But no part of the world agreed to this nonsense. As a relieved Paul McCartney said: "Isn't it good no region would?" (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

My friend has had to replace both her knees. But the world of electronic wonders has invaded the orthopedics field: Each of her implanted joints has a sensor that tells her when she should get off her feet and go to bed. Yes: The knees that say "night"! (Ted Remington, Marion, N.C.)

Guido the Brooklyn Pirate buried his pearl-filled chest in a grotto. To frighten off treasure hunters, he summoned a spirit named Victor from the vasty deep, and commanded it to haunt the cave. As the apparition dematerialized, Guido bid it farewell: "Toodle, Victah, ghost da poils!" (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park, Md.)

Back in the 1970s, the African tyrant Idi Amin learned that the

United States was about to supply Israel with advanced missiles. Amin contacted Henry Kissinger, asking that similar weaponry be supplied to his country as well. When Kissinger responded that Israel was a staunch strategic ally and Amin was not, Amin insisted, "What's good for the Jews is good for Uganda." (Michael Rosen, New York)

The Bengals needed only to stop the Rams one more time to win the Super Bowl. But with just seconds left on the board, the Rams overwhelmed Cincinnati's defense to take the lead and the Lombardi Trophy. A disgruntled Bengals fan cried out: "At long last, have you no D, Cincy?" (Mark Raffman)

Cajun chef Armand Boudreaux made food so good that people overlooked his odd ideas about light's effect on certain ingredients. Once, a new assistant complained, "Can we make it brighter in here? I can't even tell what I'm chopping." "Mais non!" replied Armand, holding up a few pods to the dimmed lightbulb. "Dem okra, see? Dice in darkness!" (Coleman Glenn)

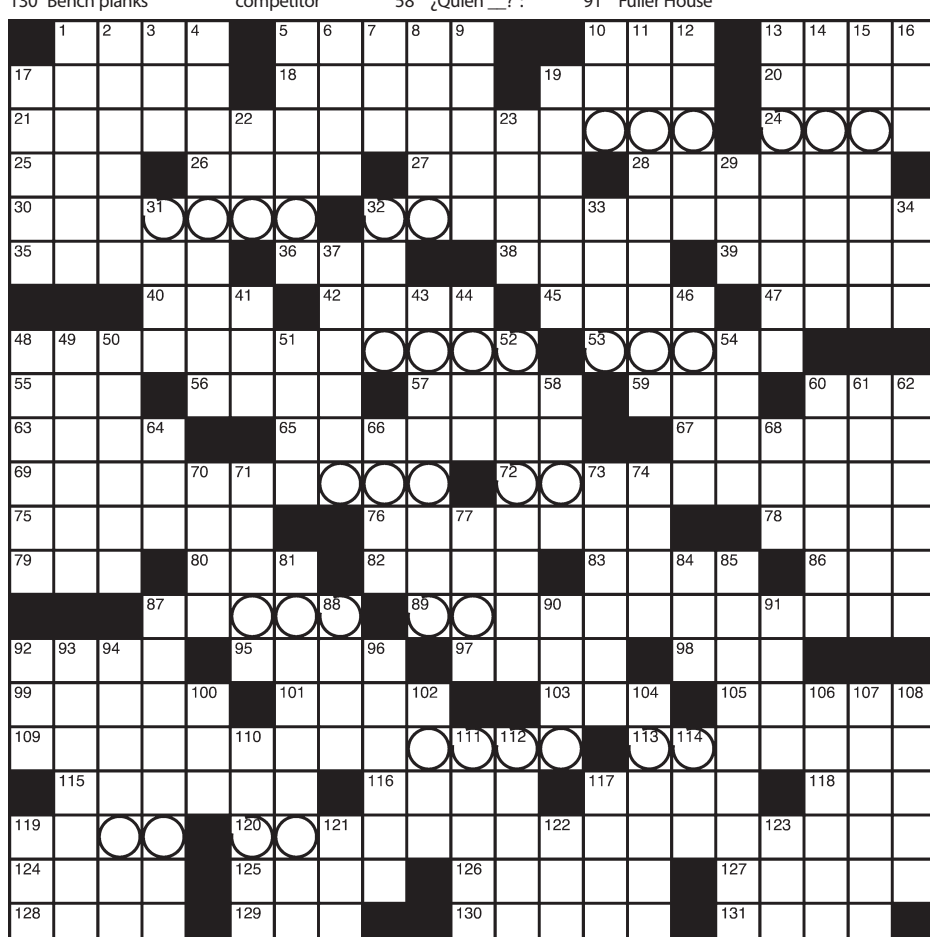
And Last: My late father won an old Style Invitational groaner contest, and he was so proud that he framed that page of The Post and displayed it in the family room. After he passed away, I decided he'd have liked it if I burned the column and added its ashes to his: A pun he saved is a pun I urned. (Gary Crockett)

More honorable mentions at wapo.st/invite1497. Still running — deadline Monday night, July 18: Our contest to say why two items on our wacky list are similar or different. See wapo.st/invite1496.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- 'ALL-STAR BREAK' BY DOUG BURNIKEL & C.C. BURNIKEL
ACROSS
1 Lab warning
5 Provence city
10 Duolingo, e.g.
13 One in a onesie
17 Mystical glows
18 ___ kebab
19 Utter delight
20 Ohio border lake
21 Stopped suddenly
24 Makes public
25 Initials between names
26 Daia
27 "Black Dog" singer Parks
28 Avoided a deer in the road, say
30 Summons for a certain assistant
32 Medication warning
35 "Let's do this!"
36 New Year celebrated with bánh chưng
38 Bic Clic ___ pens
39 Truly bizarre
40 JFK alternative
42 Princess who yields a chakram
45 Place for a catnap
47 Statue bottom
48 "Marie Antoinette" director
53 Gets higher
55 Vietnamese soup
56 "I did it!"
57 Comfy slip-ons
59 Writer Anais
60 County fair animal
63 Stop on the Taj Express
65 The least bit
67 Jujitsu kin
69 Zen temple feature
72 Tide fluctuation
75 Work boot tip
76 Climbing needs
78 "Pretty please?"
79 Toss into the mix
80 "You hate to see it"
82 Attempt
83 Schedule info
86 Director
87 Browning
87 Thyme unit
89 Many a Pro Bowl player
92 Paul who plays the Riddler in "The Batman"
95 Cat costume part
97 "My goodness!"
98 "Who, me?"
99 Like some watches
101 Maasai Mara antelopes
103 School in L.A.
105 Author Evelyn Gogh
109 News program format
113 Dessert with a crushed cookie crust
115 President after Jack
116 Per person
117 Court plaintiff
118 Ohtani's team, on scoreboards
119 Glowing review names
120 Get an advantage over
124 Western Shoshone neighbors
125 Colonnade trees
126 Borden spookscow
127 Malt-drying kilns
128 Gets in a pool
129 Ginger paste amt.
130 Bench planks
131 Gumdrops brand
DOWN
1 Fried chicken container
2 Ordered displays
3 Issa of "Hair Love"
4 Persevering with
5 Barbecue receptacle
6 Seehorn of "Better Call Saul"
7 Kimchi jar top
8 "¿Cómo ___?"
9 Clambake locale
10 Pie ___ mode
11 Stabilizing appendage for a shark
12 Fizzle (out)
13 Grizzly youngsters
14 Short operatic piece
15 Cardinals' followers, say
16 "You betcha!"
17 Sapporo competitor
19 Cuts off contact with
22 Jam ingredient?
23 "What a shame!"
29 Fair-hiring letters
31 Recital high points
32 Sch. that hosts the Sun Bowl
33 'Adore
34 "Bessie" director
37 Open more stores, say
41 Obamacare, initially
43 Propose for an award
44 ___ tikki: potato patties
46 From China, e.g.
48 City-state known for its austerity
49 "Happy to hear it!"
50 Not natural
51 What hydrogen lacks
52 Feigned toughness
54 Oklahoma city
58 "¿Quién ___?"
60 "Jesus Christ Superstar" character
61 Emphatic denial
62 Miss a field goal attempt, say
64 "Best in Show" org.
66 Fish in Hamburg Aalsuppe
68 Largest fast-food chain in China
70 Sound of surprise
71 Not together
73 64-Down concern
74 "The Thin Man" dog
77 Glass artist
81 Bishop's paths
84 20s source
85 Bathroom fixture
87 Post-marathon feeling
88 "Suits" actress
90 Stretched tight
91 "Fuller House"
actress Ashley
92 Cable alternative
93 "Is there still time?"
94 Former Seabee, say
96 Cough drops brand
100 Not yet settled, briefly
102 "Get lost!"
104 Two-door cars
106 Bating ninth
107 Titans
108 Coin flip choice
110 Word often used as a synonym for "thesaurus"
111 Dull pains
112 Snail's home
114 "The Pioneer Woman" host
117 Rotisserie part
119 Tofu steak coating
121 Little rascal
122 Erin Jackson's Olympic team
123 "Ni ___," "Hello," in Hangzhou



7/17/22

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

Happy Birthday | July 17: You are a realist who has a sympathetic view. You care about results. You are cheerful and have lots of common sense, perseverance and stamina. This is a fun-loving, happier year for you, with opportunities to socialize. Your increased zest for life needs to interact with others.

Moon Alert: There are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions today.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Invite the gang over for food and drink, because this is a lovely day to entertain at home. It's also a good day to tackle redecorating projects and home repairs or to enjoy family discussions. Your creative vibes are hot today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) This is a marvelous day to schmooze with neighbors, siblings and relatives. You also will enjoy meeting new people and seeing new places. In particular, you will appreciate who you are and what you have.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) If shopping, you'll be tempted to buy luxurious items. You might have creative, moneymaking ideas about the arts or how to market or sell beautiful things. Good news. You attract money in the next few weeks.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) This is a lovely day. The Sun, Mercury and now Venus are all in your sign. Make note that the next few weeks are the perfect time to buy wardrobe goodies for yourself. Meanwhile, today you feel sympathetic toward people who are suffering far away.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You'll be happy to work alone or behind the scenes because you need a breather. With Mars at the top of your chart, your ambition has been aroused.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Someone might ask you to work with them or to join a group activity. Your romantic notion of beauty is also heightened, which means artistic pleasures will delight you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) If you can use your influence to benefit a third party, you will do so. This is because you feel sympathy for those less fortunate. What is more rewarding than practicing kindness? (Maybe a martini.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) This is the perfect day to travel for pleasure. You want a change of scenery. You want to go somewhere beautiful with white sands and little drinks with pink umbrellas and a lavender-infused memory-foam mattress.

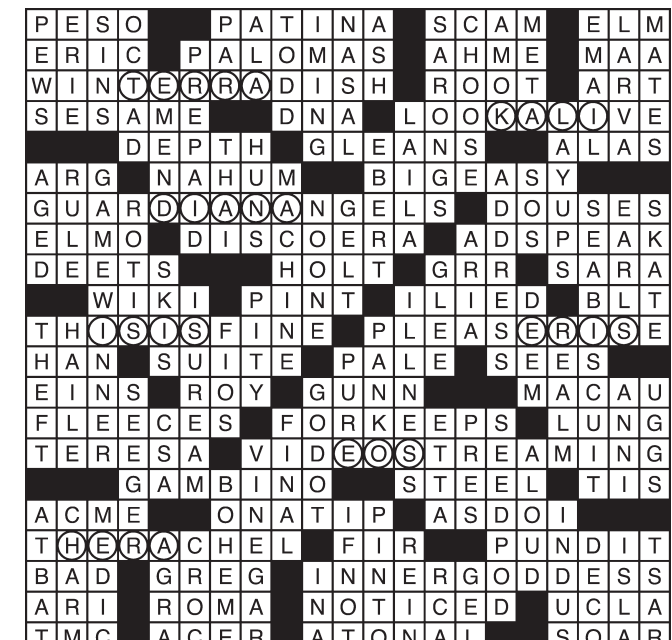
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) This is an excellent day for discussions about shared property, taxes, debt and inheritances, because people will be reasonable and generous to one another. In fact, quite possibly, someone will give you a gift or do a

favor for you today. CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You are in touch with your creative side, which is why you will enjoy discussions about how to make something look more attractive. You're interested in improving your home this year.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You will be happy to help someone because it will be rewarding and gratifying to make a difference in someone else's life. You might want to introduce improvements at home.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) You are in touch with your muse, which is why any kind of creative activity will appeal to you. This could range from gardening to the arts to dance and music — anything. Whatever you explore will be a rewarding experience.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



7/10/22