

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Loser-friendly: Winning 'helpful' hints

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1501, the Empress asked for "helpful" acts that are anything but. Several people noted how they thoughtfully straddle two parking spaces so they won't ding nearby cars when they throw open their doors.

4th place: For their birthdays, I give my grandchildren underwear I'd saved from when I was their age, so they can treasure the link between our generations. (Paul Brown, Silver Spring)

3rd place: When I have a full cart at the supermarket, I go to the express lane and break it up into multiple purchases of 12 items so people will see I'm not cheating. (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)

2nd place and the "(Butt) Head of the Household" men's socks: Nobody likes being told in public that their zipper's down, so I just walk up and discreetly zip it back up for them. (May Jampathom, Oakhurst, N.J.)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement: When I see tourist couples trying to take selfies, I always offer to take the photo for them because I have really long arms and they probably enjoy having a local in the picture. (Coleman Glenn, Huntingdon Valley, Pa.)

Ech support: Honorable mentions With so many of my neighbors working from home these days, I make sure not to disturb their Zoom calls: I do all my lawn mowing and leaf blowing before 7 a.m. (David MacGregor, Arlington) Around Valentine's Day, I make sketches of random people on the subway so they can give them as gifts to their special someone. And I depict them as I imagine they would appear naked. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

As a police officer, I recognize that we're all too often seen as the "bad guys." That's why I make a point of pulling drivers over on the road just to introduce myself. (Donald Norum, Charlottesville) Knowing how difficult the months ahead can be, I like to discreetly take a picture of the deceased at funeral viewings, then use it later to make a personalized Christmas card for the widow or widower. (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

At home, I always leave the toilet seat up so my wife can see at a glance whether she needs to clean it. (Jeff Hazle, San Antonio) When I see a woman trying to decide between two items at the grocery store, I pick one and throw it in her cart. — S. Alito (Ben Aronin, Washington) Believe me, I know how unfair it is to pay taxes, so I make sure my employees at Mar-a-Lago stay in a low bracket. (Neil Kurland, Ellicott City, Md.) Every time I take a sip from the Communion chalice, I always spit it back in to make sure there's enough for the next person. (Mark Wakefield, Frederick, a First Offender) "P-O-T-A-T-O ... Add one little bit on the end ... You're right phonetically, but what else ...? There ya' go ... all right!" — Vice President Quayle visiting an elementary school, 1992 (Rozi Slempp, Bariloche, Argentina) When I play golf, I scream "FORE!" at the top of my lungs every time I swing, just to be on the safe side. You never know



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New for Week 1505: Municipals

- The Keokuk (Iowa)-Chappaqua (N.Y.) Conference on Jazz Drumming Sounds (Phil Frankenfeld) The Marietta-Liddell-Lamm Children's Library (Brendan Beary) (Ga., N.C., N.C.) The Pray-Novice-Pilot-Cando-Landing Air Phobia Support Group (Russell Beland) (Mont., Tex., Va., N.D., N.J.)

Here's a contest the Empress ran when she was a wee little thing, just weeks into her Empressitude, and had never run again despite a deluge of entries. You know how two towns sometimes have a cultural or economic relationship as "sister cities"? Choose any two or more real U.S. or Canadian towns — they need to show up on a Google search — and come up with a joint endeavor they would undertake, as in the examples above from Week 546 in 2004. It's conceived as a wordplay contest on their names, but the E wouldn't rule out an idea based on the qualities of the actual places. Write the state/province names at the end of your entry so your joke is easier to read.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1505 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, Sept. 19; results appear Oct. 9 in print, Oct. 6 online.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a truly fabulous large-format (and out-of-print) album of "Literary Paper Dolls," which let you cut out and dress everyone from Shakespeare to Dickinson to Capote with appropriate accessories. For Kafka, there's a full-size bug with little tabs! Donated by Pie Snelson. 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 "Loser-Friendly" is by Duncan Stevens; Duncan also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev; follow 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/conv1505.

where that putt might go. (Scott Richards, Hollywood, Md.) I think that, like me, most people do these little acts of kindness. So they'll know their efforts are appreciated, I leave little anonymous notes where strangers will find them, saying, "I know what you did." (Daniel Galef, Tallahassee) My roommate is kind of a neat freak, so I make sure to keep all my toenail clippings on my side of the dorm room. (Mark Raffman, Reston) When the flight attendant passes my row, I always smile, point at my lap and poke my pelvis up so she can see my seat belt is fastened. (Drew Bennett, Rogers, Ark.) Sailing to Europe at last to bring those guys the goods they want! I figure we'll be back in the Crimea by 1347. Glad I have my pet rat Bubo to keep me company — wish he didn't have fleas, though. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.) I always keep candy in the car in case I want to offer a ride to

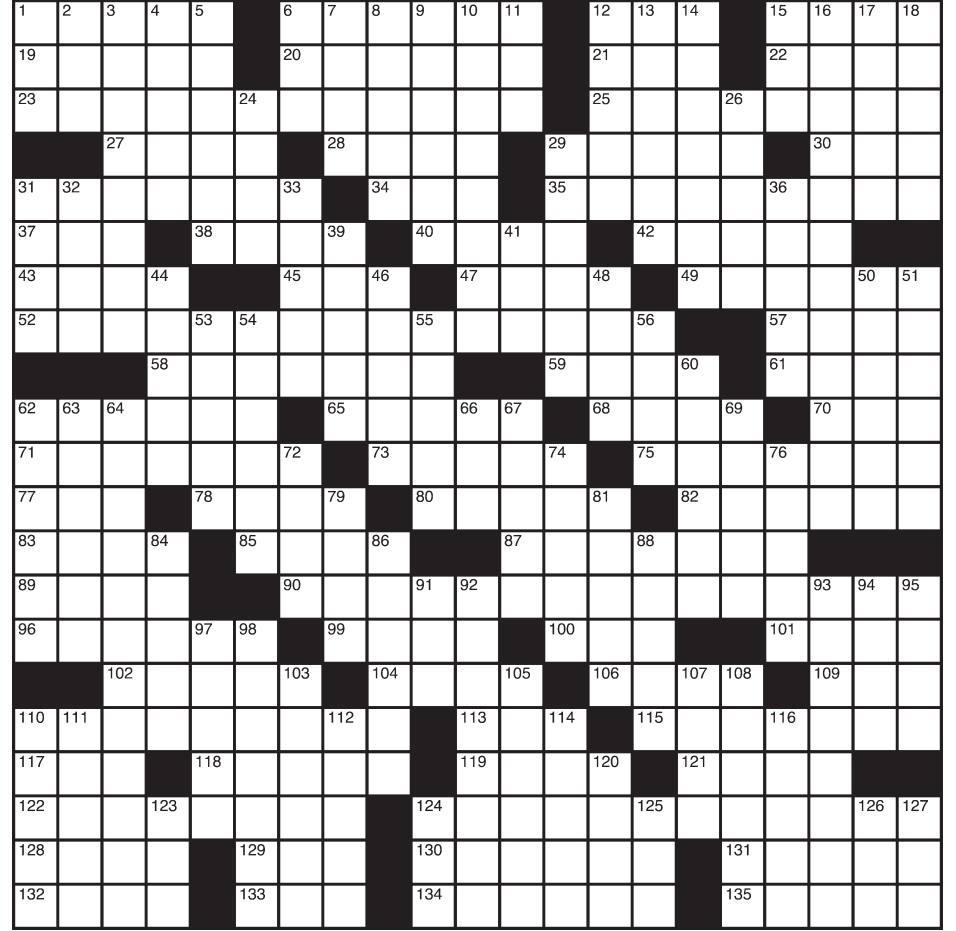
some poor kid walking home alone. (Terri Berg Smith, Rockville) When I get a 2-for-1 coupon for a good restaurant near my job, I always invite a co-worker to come with me so we can both enjoy some friendly conversation while I eat my free lunch. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn) As a proctologist, I try to keep my patients relaxed by putting smiley faces on the fingertips of my exam gloves. (Rob Cohen, Potomac) When I see someone parked in a handicap spot without the sticker, I help them stay out of trouble by spray-painting a little wheelchair on their windshield. (Mark Raffman) At classical concerts, I always applaud and cheer after each movement of a symphony to give the players that emotional boost for the rest of the piece. (Steve Honley, Washington) When I walk in the state park, I often see trees defaced with brightly painted rectangles. So I bring brown spray paint with me to cover up the ugliness. (Diane Lucitt, Ellicott City) When I'm alone in an elevator with another person, I subtly signal that I'm not a threat by intoning nursery rhymes under my breath. (Coleman Glenn) And Last: I KNOW THAT THE EMPRESS IS GETTING PRETTY OLD BY NOW, SO I HELP HER OUT BY SUBMITTING MY ENTRIES IN ALL CAPS. (Rob Cohen) More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1505.

Two contests still running — deadline for both is Monday night, Sept. 12: For Week 1503, write a song about food. See wapo.st/invite1503. And for Week 1504, write something that uses all 100 Scrabble tiles. See wapo.st/invite1504.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- "TRIPLE PLAY" BY ALAN OLSCHWANG ACROSS 1 Wii or Xbox aficionado 6 Tantalizes 12 Mop & 15 Persian Gulf capital 19 Moby Dick, e.g. 20 Hint at, with "to" 21 Long time 22 Unknown 23 Cherries jubilee? 25 Area that separates a nave from a sanctuary 27 Nixed, at NASA 28 Make less strict 29 Areas of human development "Macarena" band del Rio 31 Topped, in a way 34 French possessive pronoun 35 "I mean a different cereal box mascot!?" 37 Actor Holbrook 38 Swill 40 Warn with a horn 42 Brown in the kitchen 43 Spring flower 45 India's smallest state 47 "Trinity" novelist Leon 49 Ships with staterooms 52 Headline after the IT department fixes a bug on Hulu? "Law & Order: SVU" actor 58 All over the place 59 Headliner 61 Merrie England 62 Hold on to 65 Comedian Silverman 68 Scrutinized 70 All sudden 71 Tipped off 73 Neck parts 75 Sea nymph of Greek mythology 77 Junior 78 Roof with removable panels 80 Defensive trenches 82 Birch family trees 83 Check mark 85 Reggae great Peter 87 Plain 89 Sailing 90 Beer brewed by the Royal Family? 96 Security system component 99 Manitoba First Nations people 100 trip 101 North Carolina college town 102 Crook 104 "Yeah, right!" 105 Tight-fitting 109 Former owner of Virgin Records 110 Where NHLers serve penalty time? 113 Game with matchsticks 115 Fruit jam in Sacher tortes 117 Japanese IT services giant 118 Milla of "Bad Moms" 119 Useless, batterywise 121 Small fruit pie 122 Knight spot? 124 Wading bird that a girl can really look up to? 128 River in Tuscany 129 Before, in ballads 130 Changed into 131 Battery terminal 132 "Oh, shoot" 133 Leb. neighbor 134 "...if you know what's good for you!" 135 Repairs DOWN 1 Hudson Riv. crossing 2 Sushi-grade tuna 3 Official flower of two Southern states 4 grease 5 Rules 6 Schoolyard game 7 Dresden's river 8 Margaret Atwoods' Grace" 44 Ink mishap 9 Nightly show with free admission 48 Make full 50 Colorful timber whisker 11 "Catch my drift?" 12 Really bug 13 Golfer Ochoa 14 Winning steadily 15 Some govt. lawyers 16 Dolly the sheep, sitting all by herself? 17 Climb aboard 18 Nasty anagram 24 Yule tune 26 Tucci's "Road to Perdition" role 29 Lets loose 31 Gambler's marker 32 Almost unique 33 Religious doctrine 36 "Pagliacci" clown 39 Audre Lorde and Lord Byron, e.g. 41 NFL great Bobby 44 Ink mishap 46 Like most of the world's people 48 Make full 50 Colorful timber tree 51 Places 53 Travis of country 54 "BoJack Horseman" voice actor Will 55 "Get lost!" 56 BLT spread 60 Car manufacturer's woe 62 Many dreadlocks wearers 110 Early Peruvian 63 Plaza Hotel girl 64 Cheap perfume? 66 MIL mail drop 67 Fling with force 69 Street of mystery 72 Way in 74 whisper 76 Wise words 79 Tiny fraction of a min. 81 Catches 84 Golean cereal maker 86 Hound 88 Massey of old films 91 French article 92 Sven of "Frozen," for one 93 Kind of 94 Dallas quarterback after Bleedoe 95 Cross mood 97 Farmyard noises 98 Picture puzzles 103 Fancy duds 105 Intense 107 Until 108 "Gilmore Girls" actress Lauren 111 India's first prime minister 112 Compound in fireworks 114 Taj 116 Joliot-Curie who won a Nobel Prize in chemistry 120 Pils from blue states, usually 123 Brillo rival 124 "Succession" network 125 Food Network host Drummond 126 Out of the ordinary 127 Early video game letters



9/11/22

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

Happy Birthday | Sept. 11: You have high standards and you work hard. You're observant and do your homework, which produces top results. This is a winning year for you. Expect recognition for your past efforts. You might get a promotion, an award, kudos or a prize. You deserve this.

Moon Alert: There are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions. The Moon is in Aries.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) This is a lovely day. You feel happy, which is why you are sociable and friendly with everyone. In turn, others want to be with you because it is obvious that you are concerned for their welfare and their benefit. This is because the Moon is in your sign lined up with Jupiter. You rock.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You are more aware of the deeper aspects of life. This is why you feel compassionate toward others and you have a genuine concern for their problems. You also want to pursue your own peace of mind by working with your own inner code.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) This is a great day to schmooze. You will love to be active with groups as well as friends because you have a warm energy and a genuine interest in the welfare of others. You also will find it rewarding to work with an organization that wants to help those in need.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) People admire you. You look successful. This is also why you will be successful if you are dealing with groups or you have to be in the public eye.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Your sense of adventure is aroused, which is why this is a great day to travel or explore new territory. You'll find it energizing to meet new faces and see new places. Whatever you give is what you will get back.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) This is an excellent day for business and finance. It's also a good day to discuss how to divide something such as an inheritance or to explore the details of shared

property or anything that you own jointly with someone else. All parties will be fair-minded, and you will benefit.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) This is a wonderful day to schmooze. People will respond to you because they sense that you have a genuine interest in them. And you do.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Work-related travel will be adventurous. It's a great day to deal with groups, because you will have a strong rapport with everyone.

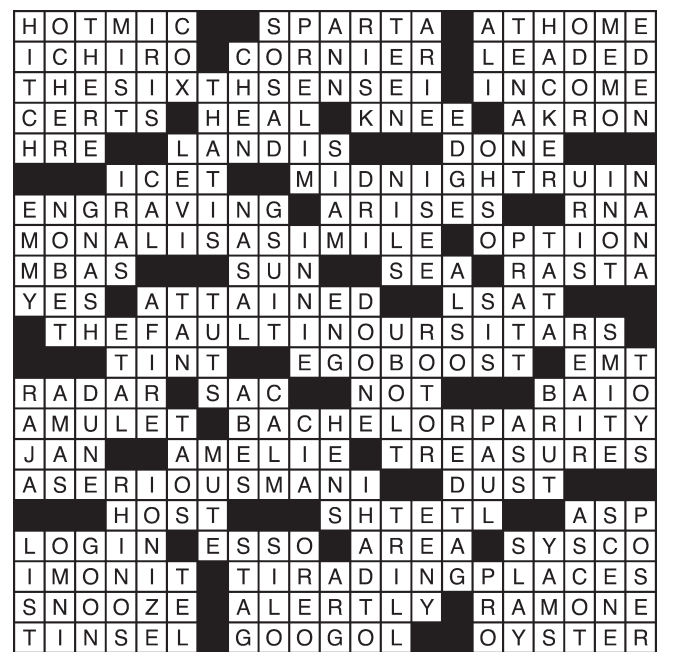
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) It's a playful day. All your relations with others are upbeat and friendly. Because everyone is enthusiastic and up for a good time, accept invitations to party. Enjoy sports events and entertaining times.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Invite the gang over for barbecue, because it's a great day to entertain at home. People will be happy and mutually generous. This same positive influence will attract profitable real estate opportunities to you as well.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Because you are upbeat, all your interactions with others will be warm and friendly. You've got big ideas. Enthusiasm is contagious, so people will be attracted to you. Enjoy this good press.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) "There's gold in them thar hills!" This is an excellent day to boost your earnings. Or you might make a pleasing purchase. You will be generous to others. What goes around, comes around.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



9/4/22

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