

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Rhymes & misdemeanors: Winning scolds in verse

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1124, the Empress sought short poems of advice in five matters. See more words to the wise (from the wiseguys) in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1128.

4th place

Don't recline your airplane seat:

I snore, I pass gas, I rattle;
My row-mates have fled — it's me only;
They said they could not stand my prattle,
So please do lean back — I'm so lonely! (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

3rd place

Don't chew with mouth open:

Thy beauty causeth every head to turn.
Thy comeliness could launch a thousand ships.
But suitors will be few till thou dost learn
To masticate with firmly closed lips. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

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2nd place and the zombie garden gnome: Use your parking brake:

If you drive all the girls at school wild
With your daredevil ways and they've smiled
At your fast-moving pace,
Use your "parking" brake, ace,
Or your "accident" might be a child. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Don't recline your airplane seat:

Though the flight attendants are quite rude,
Their nastiness is outdone by their food;
We're packed in like sardines but with less room
In cabin air that's piped in from a tomb,
Our bags have been mishandled by their handler,
The inflight feature features Adam Sandler.
This flight has lots of things you can put down;
Your seatback isn't one of them, though, clown.
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

The versed advice yet: honorable mentions

CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING

To light one match is better than
The darkness just to curse.
But if that match should light the rest,
You're gonna need a nurse. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

How do I love thee? I've counted the ways:
One less now you've set my apartment ablaze.
You're a smokin' hot mama, but not all that bright,
And I kick myself now, having asked for a light,
For you kindled the match with the cover untucked,
And my roommates and I are now royally homeless.
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

DON'T RECLINE YOUR SEAT

Do not recline your airplane seat.
It's risky;
You're apt to spill the guy-behind-you's whiskey.
If you're appalled by road rage on the highway,
Just wait till you're a victim in the skyway. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

You have a pair of tonsils but don't know it
Until they get inflamed, and then they'll show it.
All an appendix ever does is fail,
And use an ashtray, you could go to jail!
Regard your seat-back button the same way,
A useless vestige of a bygone day.
Its only purpose is to cause a fracas,
Till planes evolve with pallets that can stack us. (Frank Osen)

If you are seated in the seat
That's currently before me,
Do not recline or else I'll scream
Invective loud and stormy.
(This rule, of course, makes perfect sense.
But please do not remind me
Of the rule's existence if
you're seated right behind me.)
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

DON'T CHEW WITH YOUR MOUTH OPEN

Last night, good buddy, as we dined,
This thought, unspoken, crossed my mind:
"What makes you think that I've a wish
to see the way saliva
In your mouth combines with



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1128: Drone for a loop

A swarm of CICADAS: the perfect birthday gift for people who could use a little discreet help in blowing out the candles.

Geography classes in Cleveland would have international CICADA contests: Who can drop a micro-drone into Kim Jong Un's bed?

If you're impressed (a.k.a. creeped out) by the prospect of having your porn-book order delivered directly to your front porch from the sky, now there's something that can impress you even more: A few weeks ago, the Pentagon's Naval Research Lab showed off its latest cool gadget: a micro-drone that can fit in your hand yet can be dropped — by the thousands — from 57,000 feet up, undetectable by radar, to deliver "payloads to precise waypoints."

Described by Phys.org as basically "a paper airplane with a circuit board," and named pseudo-acronymically for a swarming insect that seems to appear from nowhere, the CICADA currently is outfitted with just a few sensors. But of course it won't be long until the little bugsters — already costing only a few hundred dollars — can carry cameras, deliver micro-packages . . . what else?

This is what Longtime Loser Jeff Brechlin was wondering. The eternally childlike Jeff, whose obit promises to name him as the author of the Style Invitational-winning and wildly viral Hokey Pokey Sonnet, suggested this contest: **Give us some novel uses for a CICADA micro-drone, assuming that anyone can get one, and that it can have a micro-camera, micro-grips, etc.** Entertaining scenarios may be described in up to 75 words.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, in the vein of this week's contest, our Micro Twofer, consisting of a keychain with a little plastic piece of sushi (brought back from Japan by Cheryl Davis) and an inch-tall white ceramic coffee mug, advertised as Squirrel Coffee Cup (from Bruce Alter).

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet designed by Bob Staake: either "The Wit Hit the Fan" or "Hardly Har-Har." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, June 22; results published July 12 (online July 9). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1128" in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Brendan Beary; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jon Gearhart. 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.

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.



PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

This week's micro-prizes for micro-drone ideas: Full-size Post mug is there just for scale.

chicken
When it's chewed? It makes me sicken."
But some things simply can't be said,
And so I wrote this poem instead. (Robert Schechter)

Beside the sight of mangled munch the last half-hour I've spent:
When I suggested "seafood lunch," that wasn't what I meant. (Nan Reiner)

USE THE PARKING BRAKE

If you should use your van for "something" other than just driving,
Remember now this little tip to guarantee surviving:

Make sure the parking brake is pulled, 'cause ultimately your goal is safety first — in other words, to rock and not to roll. (Frank Mann, Washington)

Pull up your brake
When parked on a hill.
If you don't stop your car
Trust me, something else will. (Ellen Ryan, Rockville)

On My Failure to Use the Parking Brake in the Swiss Alps
When I stopped and we yodeled
My poor Audi got totaled.
(Mike Gips)

STOP TO SMELL THE FLOWERS

A rose by any name would smell as fine;
That (more or less) was Shakespeare's famous line.
But all the rose's scent is in the flower;
The roots have no such aromatic power.
So take my counsel, friend (it wouldn't hurt):
Get sniffing while you're still above the dirt.
It's pointless smelling roses, it's been found,
When you, like them, are planted in the ground. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Better stop and smell those posies,
'Ere they tag one of your toesies. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

More honorable mentions at bit.ly/invite1128.
Still running — deadline Monday: Our TV series spinoff contest. See bit.ly/invite1127.

POST PUZZLER

BY BRUCE VENZKE © 2015 CROSSYNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

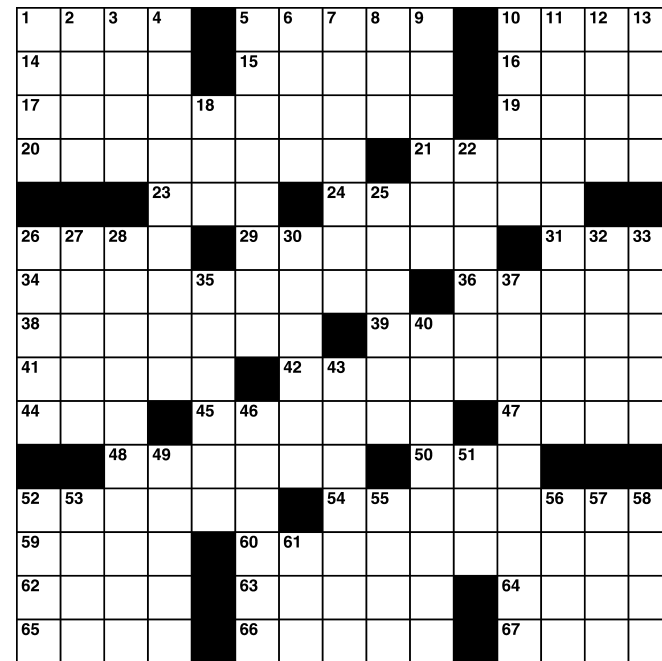
ACROSS
1 Chow's chow
5 "The Dancing Class" painter
10 E-nuisance
14 Tournament advantages
15 "___ Mio" (Italian song standard)
16 Siege city of note
17 Point-and-shoot camera of old
19 Mythical nymph
20 Discourse opening
21 Source of a draft
23 Romanian tennis figure Tiriaco
24 Touch off
26 Platter of sorts
29 Rations
31 Skip over water, as stones
34 Like a crooked cop, perhaps

63 Baseball Hall of Famer Satchel
38 Acted as coxswain, e.g.
39 Bake
41 Demagnetize, maybe
42 Don Juan, for one
44 A DiMaggio brother
45 Corvette and Tahoe, casually
47 Animated blockbuster of 1998
48 Its median score is 100
50 Original Dungeons & Dragons co.
52 Look over
54 Not merited
59 Frail sci-fi race
60 Mom-to-be's discomfort
62 ___ trap

63 "Keep your ___ the ball!"
64 Prefix for China
65 Tracy's Trueheart
66 Schoolroom items
67 Glengarry girl

9 Trigonometry ratio
10 Steinbeck's "___ Thursday"
11 Finished for the day
12 Longing
13 Synthesizer pioneer
18 Hullabaloo
22 Daffy Duck, e.g.
25 Passes
26 Injected, maybe
27 Brief opening
28 Clothes cleaners' appliances
30 Tureen utensils
32 Mole
33 Cuban bandleader Prado

35 Puts up
37 Church rite site
40 "Maverick" and "Bonanza"
43 ICU hookups
46 Followed closely
49 Steps down
51 Schlemiel
52 Trapper's quest
53 Fashion designer Tahari
55 Dinette locale, often
56 One of a famed trio
57 Terminals
58 British military awards (abbr.)
61 Sailor's affirmative



Answer to last week

C	H	O	M	P		L	A	M	P		P	A	N	E
R	U	R	A	L		O	L	A	Y		E	N	O	S
A	R	E	N	A		W	A	R	T		A	C	E	S
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J	E	S	S		N	O	M	E		C	A	L	M	S
A	R	E	A		O	N	E	S		A	D	E	P	T
B	O	D	Y		R	A	D	S		S	A	S	S	Y

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | JUNE 14: This year you show unusual creativity and mental acuity. Others admire your strengths and often come to you for advice. Many people might want more from you, but you'll need to set some boundaries; you will avoid hurt feelings that way. If you are single, your charisma attracts admirers like honey attracts a bear. If you are attached, make more time for your sweetie, as he or she easily may feel left out. Remember the importance of sharing.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You might be too energetic for others this morning. Don't be surprised if you get a strong reaction. Someone near you may seem down. You can't change this person; any change must be his or her decision.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

You suddenly might feel a lack of support from someone you count on. Fatigue on both your parts might result in a tiff. Go out to a favorite spot and relax together.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You'll beam in what you want, perhaps to your own surprise. A loved one or associate who has been difficult might lighten up if you ignore his or her mood. Make calls.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

You see a situation differently

from how your contemporaries do. Don't feel as if you have to convince others of your point of view. They will pick up on it on their own.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Do what you can to create your perfect Sunday. A family member might start to act up. Clearly, this person needs more time with you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You'd feel much better if you could just kick back and let an older relative or friend call the shots. Be sure to make time with a loved one later in the day.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Your ability to see past the obvious and encourage a loved one to do the same will emerge. Be honest with yourself about what you want. Tonight, you have reason to celebrate!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Follow through on a responsibility. You might start to feel overwhelmed, but don't worry so much. Revisit a decision you have made in the past to help you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Stay upbeat. You can trust a dear friend or loved one to make the right choices, especially as this person's decision will affect only his or her plans. Lighten up.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Defer to a loved one. You are likely to see a change in a friend. This person can be overly serious, but he or she needs and appreciates your advice.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Your playfulness is extremely seductive. Recognize that you might be stirring the pot. Someone you look up to may be difficult later in the day. Observe rather than inquire.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You might find that a mellow day in the country or at the beach will be exactly what you need to relax. You need to stop the hectic pace that marks your daily life.

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Can sharing boss's bed be innocent?

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: My wife occasionally has to travel with her boss overnight to operate

technology at meetings. She makes the travel arrangements. I noticed a couple of years ago that she booked one room with two beds. When I asked her about it she said it was for the purpose of cutting costs. She says this is a way that he is able to give her a pay raise each year. She claims she would never cheat on me, nor would he cheat on his wife of 33 years. He is a frugal man, so I accepted that explanation. However, I recently came across an e-mail that showed a room reservation for a single king-size bed. When I asked her about it, she said it was the only room type available, and that there is nothing going on between them. She said there is plenty of room for them to stay on their own side of the bed. Apparently it wasn't the first time this happened. Should I accept her explanation? Your thoughts?

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I hate to introduce another note of doubt into your relationship, but I cannot imagine this situation being

benign.

I suggest you find out what your wife really means by "operating technology." She should be willing to give up her raise in order to book two rooms.

Dear Amy: A few weeks ago I ran into an acquaintance who has been fighting breast cancer for the past year. We had a lovely conversation. She is very forthright about her diagnosis, and her spirit is admirable. I mentioned I was midway through a book that I knew she'd love. I promised to share it when I finished it. As it turns out, the last quarter of the book is devoted to the protagonist's own cancer diagnosis and his eventual death. Should I still give it to her?

The book is very good. I know she'd appreciate how this character evolves, but I don't want to be insensitive. Then again, if you eliminate books with people dying in them, the library shelves would be bare. What do you think I should do? Literally Unsure

You should give your friend a different book that you also love but does not stress your acquaintance with an intense dying scene.

Dear Amy: Your response to "Concerned Friends," the couple whose once-active friends have become frail and homebound, was right on the money.

My father and stepmother were increasingly homebound the last two years of their lives. They were also dreadfully bored and cruelly lonely. Visits from friends and family were like water in the desert.

I'd like to urge readers to please visit the homebound as often as you can. Also, please realize that the homebound may not have much to say. There's not much stimulation in their lives. Their mental abilities may be compromised. This means that you, the visitor, must supply stimulation. Can you sing or play an instrument? Describe a cultural or sporting event? Tell jokes? Bring a grandchild who is learning to walk/talk/count to 10/do a magic trick?

Your friends may not respond the way they used to. But please, never doubt that your visit made their day and may have prolonged their lives. Grateful

Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribpub.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.