

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Comedy of eras: Then/now jokes

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1242 we asked for then-and-now comparisons. The results fall into two categories: humor about how times have changed (or, sometimes, haven't changed) and humor about getting old. Both yield some classic results.

4th place

Then: Bell-bottom jeans. Now: Bell-bottom bottoms. (David Garratt, Silver City, N.M)

3rd place

Then: A 16-ounce large Coke. Now: A 16-ounce small Coke. (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

2nd place and the lanyard-hung Pizza Pouch and wingglass holster

Then: Houston, we have a problem. Now: Houston, you're gonna need a bigger boat. (Frank Mann, Washington)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Then: Mayberry and Opie. Now: Mayberry and opioids. (Bruce Carlson, Alexandria, Va.)

Memory lame: Honorable mentions

Then: U.S. foreign policy: detente. Now: U.S. foreign policy: daily taunt. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Then: We're going to see the Who! Now: We're going to see who? (Mia Wyatt, Ellicott City, Md.)

Then (after 9 p.m.): "Sorry for calling you so late." Now (at 4 a.m.): "whyd it take u 2 hrs to like my photo? r u mad at me?" (Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park, Md.)

Then: Getting rid of your 5 o'clock shadow. Now: Maintaining your 5 o'clock shadow. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh)

Then: Disco in the '70s. Now: Disks go in your 70s. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Then: Defending FLOTUS's fashion choices. Now: Attacking FLOTUS's fashion choices. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Then: Arguing with your parents about where you're going. Now: Arguing with your GPS about where you're going. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Then: Driving your off-road vehicle. Now: Driving your vehicle off the road. (David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

Then: CREEP got the president into the White House. Now: A creep president got into the White House. (Kevin Dopart, Washington; Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

Then: Studying fallout predictions to see how a nuclear strike on D.C. would impact the suburbs. Now: [Sigh.] (Stephen Litterst, Newark, Del.)

Then: Getting past the SAT. Now: Getting past the TSA. (Chris Doyle)

Then: Getting your \$%^ & together. Now: Sharing your poo emoji. (Joanne Free, Clifton, Va.)

Then: "Super-size me!" Now: I'm Super-Size Me. (Marni Penning Coleman, Falls Church, Va.)

Then: "There are Russian sympathizers at high levels of the U.S. government!" Now: There are Russian-sympathizers at high levels of the U.S. government. (Duncan Stevens)

Then: Bill Cosby was hilarious. Now: You want to throw up for thinking Bill Cosby was hilarious. (Peter Jenkins, Bethesda, Md.)

Then: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Now: Not. (Randy Lee, Burke, Va.)

Then: Assessing the damage caused by an ozone hole. Now: Assessing the damage caused by, um, a disagreeable fellow. (Duncan Stevens)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1246: Questionable journalism

Sentence in The Post: Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope take the stage in clown makeup and douse their fans with cheap Faygo-brand soda. Q. So, Maestro, what's your plan for the symphony's "Welcome, Millennials" program?

A. "No one is going to grip-and-grin." Q. Ambassador, will the Secret Service be making sure the president keeps his hands to himself during this trip?

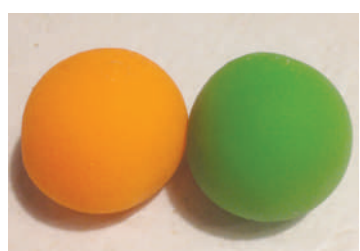
This week we summon up one of our most reliable contests, one we've done at least 12 times with great results, but not for a year and a half. This week: Find any sentence (or a substantive part of a sentence) that appears in The Post or another publication, in print or online, dated Sept. 21-Oct. 2, and pair it with a question it might answer, as in the examples above from the Sept. 17 Post. In the Empress's experience — in 10 of these contests, she's read well over 10,000 entries — the humor tends to work better if a reader can grasp the original context of the sentence without an explanation. You may use headlines if they're written as sentences that could just as easily be in text. Include the date and page number of the print edition, or a link to an online page (please don't embed the link right into the text of your entry; attaching a screen shot is also okay).

Submit entries at this website: wapo.st/enter-invite-1246 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy — one of the last few before we officially announce the new design that we've been going to recidivist winners. Second place receives these two soft, rubbery balls, about the size of golf balls, that turn inside out into... wow, soft-spiny mittens! They're modeled here by Loser in Training Simon Stevens, 4-year-old son of Duncan, at a recent Loser Brunch (the very stretchy things also fit at least the Empress's hands). The ball-mittens were donated by Dave Prevar; you can't have Simon.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "No Childishness Left Behind" or "Magnum Dopus." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Oct. 2; results published Oct. 22 (online Oct. 19). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; the honorable-mentions subhead was submitted both by Jesse and by Nan Reiner. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.



Now: Shop during class. (James Kruger, Rockville, Md.)

Then: Tiger Woods, driving long. Now: Tiger Woods, driving high. (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

Then: Unleaded gas. Now: Unleaded water. (Chris Damm, Charles Town, W.Va.)

Then: Using your thumb to get a lift. Now: Using your thumbs to get a Lyft. (Jesse Frankovich)

Then: Hiding my confusion about algebra from my teacher. Now: Hiding my confusion about algebra from my kids. (Stephen Litterst)

Then: Spring break. Now: Fall; break. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

Then: Our kid depends on us. Now: They kid us about our Depends. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Boomer: Used a pencil to rewind a cassette. Gen X'er: "What's a cassette?" Millennial: "What's a pencil?" (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

And Last: Then: Your brilliant entries were foolishly rejected by the Czar. Now: Your brilliant entries were foolishly rejected by the Empress. (Jesse Frankovich; Steve Glomb, Alexandria, Va.)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Sept. 25: our contest for silly complaints about the paper. See wapo.st/invite1245.



PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

Simon Stevens, 4, models this week's second prizes (inverted).

Then: Scoring well on your ACT. Now: Scoring well on your A1C. (Tom Cary, Hollywood, Md.)

Then: "The President's Plane Is Missing." Now: The president's brain is missing. (Chris Doyle)

Then: "We Are the World." Now: We bar the world. (Duncan Stevens)

Then: No bars? Calling it a night. Now: No bars? Calling nobody tonight. (Kevin Dopart)

Then: Giving the finger to the world. Now: Getting the finger from the doctor. (Jon Gearhart)

Then: Shop class.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- "ENCAPSULATING" By MATT MCKINLEY 88 "That's surprising" 123 Hires competitor 17 PC speed unit 18 Suggestive message 24 Took back 26 Shannon's county 30 Yamaha user 31 Extreme 32 What to click in response to an offensive tweet? 33 Fight (for) 35 Writers 38 ICU personnel 39 Infomercial urging 40 Completely surrounding 42 Insufficient medley? 43 Calm 44 Like green salads 46 Time for una siesta 47 Down From A 54 Title name that "Every little breeze seems to whisper," in a Chevalier song 16 Personal assistant 17 PC speed unit 18 Suggestive message 24 Took back 26 Shannon's county 30 Yamaha user 31 Extreme 32 What to click in response to an offensive tweet? 33 Fight (for) 35 Writers 38 ICU personnel 39 Infomercial urging 40 Completely surrounding 42 Insufficient medley? 43 Calm 44 Like green salads 46 Time for una siesta 47 Down From A 54 Title name that "Every little breeze seems to whisper," in a Chevalier song 56 One may be exposed by an expert 58 Iowa State city 59 Spring time 61 First got acquainted 63 Serious foe 64 De Matteo of "The Sopranos" 67 Do film editing work 68 Program with steps 69 Green eggs advocate 70 Namibia neighbor 71 Author who wrote "Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life" 73 Two pills, perhaps 75 Cereal brand since 1955 77 49-Acrosses lead them 78 More than trot 80 "Archie Bunker's Place" co-star 81 Plains dwelling 82 Dublin-born poet 85 Nailed, say 87 Sound file suffix 91 Business baron 92 Cold War protest sign slogan 93 They don't play the field: Abbr. 96 Each 99 Floor covering 101 Two trios and a duo 102 Mazda sports car 104 Requirements 105 Shot in the dark 106 Floor covering 107 Krimono holders 109 Twosome 110 Mil. awards 111 Quart, say 113 Pack animal 115 '50s White House nickname 116 1995 Tony honoree for Excellence in the Theatre: Abbr. 117 Sound of reproach

Grid for the L.A. Times Sunday Puzzle with numbered starting points and black squares indicating non-letter cells.

9/24/17 xwordeditor@aol.com ©2017 Tribune Content Agency, L.L.C.

Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Sept. 24: This year you will experience a lot of excitement as well as some confusion. Learn to ask questions before jumping into a chaotic situation. If you are single, many admirers would love to be your sweetie. The problem for you is setting down when you actually enjoy the dating scene. If you are attached, the two of you are often trying to learn something new. Scorpio likes that you demand details.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You wake up with your mind on overload. As a result, you'll choose to share more of what you are thinking with a loved one. You know how to shake up the status quo and probably will do so unintentionally.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You might want to avoid certain people today. You could feel as if someone close to you is telling tall tales. As a result, you'll want to distance yourself from this person. A loved one is likely to pick up on your change of attitude.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) You'll eye a situation and wonder whether you can make a difference. Why not give it a shot and see what happens? A friend could be difficult or unpredictable. When the inevitable occurs, think carefully about your decision.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Your creativity takes the lead, regardless of whether you already have plans. You might wonder how much more you want a certain bond to develop. A child or loved one could play a significant role in your plans.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You want to change direction and revise your plans. What is stopping you? If you feel as if this possibility can't happen now, decide to plan for it in the near future. Do more sharing with a loved one, if possible.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Your intentions are positive. You are more aware of someone in your life, and you might want to get to know them better. Laughter surrounds a close friendship, despite an argument or misunderstanding.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You feel happiest when you're out and about with friends and loved

ones. In a situation involving a stranger, you may feel your anger rising. Try to remember when you last felt this way, and you are likely to find a connection.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) To some people, you might seem quiet and restrained, but your imagination seems to wander everywhere. Focus on a special person in your life. You could discover that you are not seeing this person completely.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You might be holding back your thoughts and ideas. Those around you might not be sharing as much as usual, either. Root out the source of the problem. You could be emotional about a personal matter involving your domestic life.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You have a lot on your mind, and

may feel as if you cannot share your thoughts in the present atmosphere. Wait until you are in the right mood to open up. Others seem busy and not ready for a discussion quite yet. Give people some time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You may not be in the right mood to visit with an older relative. You could look for a valid excuse, but the best you will be able to do is to point to a work project. Remember, you could be preventing a problem by proceeding in this way.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) You'll opt to relax to a favorite piece of music. You may not want to be involved in entertaining others. If nothing else, head out the door and go to the movies. As a result, you will feel refreshed and ready for the workweek.

Answers to last week's puzzle.

Grid of answers to last week's puzzle, with words placed in the grid cells.

9/17/17