

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Multi-asking: Winning questions

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1246, as we do about once a year, we invited you to choose any sentence in The Post that to week (and this year we extended it to other publications), then write a question that the sentence might answer (if it were, say, used in a humor contest).

4th place

Sentence from The Post: **Blasting will be done during the day and “very rarely” at night or on weekends.**
Question it could answer: How will the Purple Line construction differ from the president’s use of Twitter? (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

3rd place

A. Two people walk by, speaking Swedish.

Q. What is a sure sign that my wife picked the movie we are watching? (John Hutchins, Silver Spring)

2nd place and the little foam balls that turn into spiny mittens:

A. “We cannot acknowledge every submission.”

Q. Hey, Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan, why don’t you tally how often legislators kowtow to the president? (Mark Raffman, Reston)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

A. “I would say I don’t usually love red and browns together.”

Q. What Donald Trump comment got the U.N. Security Council meeting off to a terrible start? (Steve Honley, Washington)

No-thank Q: Honorable mentions

A. Sooner or later, Mueller is going to have to start dropping shoes.

Q: Is it just me or is this the lamest striptease you’ve ever seen? (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

A. The finale was simply a parade of short dresses exploding with feathers.

Q: How did Chief of Staff Kelly revise the traditional morning briefing in order to hold the president’s attention? (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

A: It’s harshly worn, as if eroded over millennia, yet it retains strength and grace.

Q: Why do you still have that ratty bra? (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

A. Prepare to make lots of friends in the coming days.

Q. Now that you’ve won the Powerball jackpot, what are you going to do? (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

A. We’re going to find out really quickly where the bars is.

Q. What’s the first thing that new residents of Topeka say? (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

A. “It’s like looking at the sun.”
 Q. What did the president say after viewing the eclipse? (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

A. Each hard check drew a collective “ooh” or “aah.”
 Q. What was the reaction among Republican lawmakers when the Koch brothers visited Capitol Hill? (Mark Raffman)

A. A year later, they moved into a 300-square-foot studio in Manhattan.
 Q. When did the Joneses realize they’d made it into the 1 percent? (Mary Kappus, Washington)

A. There is not \$1 trillion of federal money available.
 Q. Why did several Cabinet members recently change their vacation plans? (Jesse Frankovich)

A. “What is your impression of President Xi Jinping?”
 Q. What question strikes terror in the hearts of Chinese comedians? (Steve Honley)

A. We do not tire. We do not take sick days. We do not unionize. We cost \$7 an hour.
 Q. What lines did President Trump add to the oath for new U.S. citizens? (John Hutchins)

A. If you don’t feel up to digging all that out, that’s reasonable.
 Q. What would be a polite but ill-advised thing to say to your cancer surgeon? (Duncan Stevens)

A. “That’s a tribute to how hard our guys are playing.”
 Q. Dean, what’s your response to the charges that your college is a party school? (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

A. The short answer is yes.
 Q. Do politicians often give long,



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1250: Poems of the year(s)

1917, by Gene Weingarten:

A sociopathic columnist from Nowheresville, America, Was prone to violent topics that would make his readers wince, Like mustard gas and ack-ack guns and other esoterica. But “cooties” got him fired, and he’s not been sighted since.

This week’s contest focuses on Time Traveler, a fascinating new online feature from Merriam-Webster, the dictionary folks. If you go to merriam-webster.com/time-traveler, you can search on any year (or era) from “before 12th century” to 2010 to see a list of words and phrases whose “first known use” in writing occurred that year. (Of course, the Empress checked out her birth year and was surprised that terms as old-sounding as “short fuse” and as new-sounding as “hive mind” both were babies when the E was.)

This week: Write a humorous poem incorporating three or more terms from a particular year or era listed on Time Traveler, as in the example above by The Washington Post’s Joke Poet Laureate, who managed to get six words from 1917 — no, that’s not his birth year — into four lines. Note, however, that the humor and readability of the poem are more important than cramming it with words from the list. As always with Style Invitational poetry contests, longer entries have to merit the space they take up; shorter is often better, though we’ll probably run a mix of lengths. **Because our entry form won’t show boldface, please CAPITALIZE your year-words. And, duh (first known use: 1943), tell us what year.** As always, you may enter up to 25 poems, any of them from any year.

Submit entries at this website: wapo.st/enter-invite-1250 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our new Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives some genuine swag: a Merriam-Webster tote bag, part of the company’s new line. The bag is labeled with the hashtag #BringBackFortnightly; below it are the M-W definitions for “biweekly”: 1. Occurring twice a week. 2. Occurring every other week, a.k.a. “fortnightly.” In other words, “fortnightly” is a word we need because we ruined “biweekly.”

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. 30; results published Nov. 19 (online Nov. 16). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week’s results is by Jon Gearhart; Jesse Frankovich wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. 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/conv1250.



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This tote bag is our 2nd prize. Use it two times a week or every two weeks — your choice.

rambling responses to simple questions? (Duncan Stevens)

A. My hope was it would attract that piece of the population that’s ambivalent.

Q. Who on earth would join the Whatever Society for the Advancement of Apathy? (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

A. Just go easy on the poor soul who thought they could fool you.

Q. What advice is a grammar pedant not likely to listen to? (Chris Doyle)

A. The first thing to consider is whether you want privacy in that area.

Q. What should you keep in mind when buying yoga pants? (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

A. They’re a must-order, especially after being dunked in the restaurant’s slightly sweet ponzu citrus soy sauce.

Q. Why does that new sushi place

charge diners for towels? (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

A. The models emerged wearing enormous court dresses with panniers and hoops.

Q. How did the Miss USA contestants guard against unwanted advances? (John Hutchins)

A. “He might get ran over a little bit.”

Q. What might happen to a guy who’s texting as he walks in front of the hay wagon? (Beverly Sharp)

A. Press the stem end, and if it’s soft to the touch, it’s ripe.

Q. “I’m impressed with our new applicant, sir, but I’m not sure if she’s ready for the job. What do you think?” (William Kennard, Arlington)

A. The collection wasn’t surprising or delightful or even wildly bewildering.

Q. Why don’t hipsters ever last more than a day or two as garbagemen? (Brendan Beary)

A. You find it in you because that’s what you signed up for.

Q. How did you suddenly end up with a microchip implant after updating your iPhone? (Kevin Dopart)

A. Whatever the actual number is, we know it’s in the trillions.

Q. How many hours did Losers waste reading articles for this contest? (Jesse Frankovich)

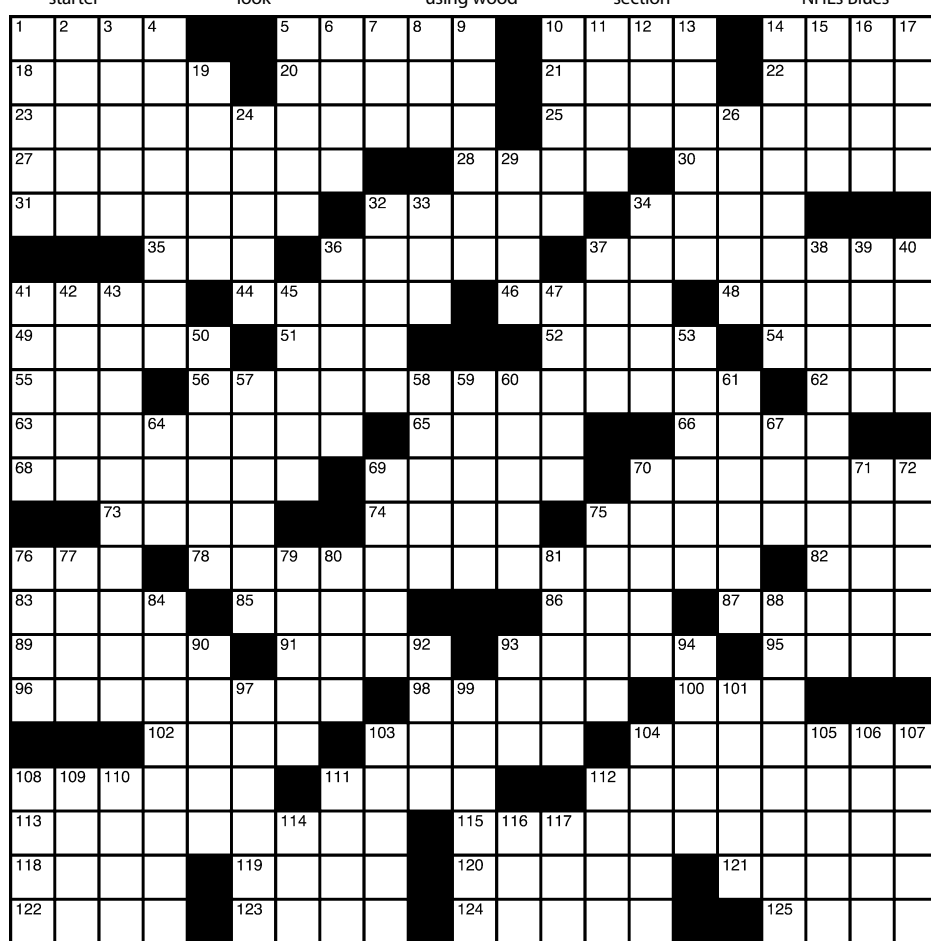
More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1250.

Still running — deadline Monday, Oct. 23: our Ask Backwards contest. See wapo.st/invite1249.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- "MENDING THINGS" BY GARRY MORSE
- ACROSS
- 1 "Take...!"
- 5 Follower of Zeno
- 10 Revelatory moments
- 14 Concert site
- 18 Gives a shine to
- 20 Conveyor connected to a pump
- 21 Norse trickster
- 22 Mayberry redhead
- 23 Result of failing to catch a wascally wabbit?
- 25 Viral video about Dre's headphones?
- 27 Ultimate
- 28 Barak of Israel
- 30 Victim of Casca
- 31 Litany from a lying perp
- 32 Pasta wheat
- 34 Ad hoc gp.
- 35 ISP alternative
- 36 "C'mon, bro!"
- 37 Landlocked African land
- 41 "Are not!" evoker
- 44 Holiday seasons
- 46 Underwater stabilizer
- 48 Embellish
- 49 Tops off
- 51 Zip
- 52 Seriously hurt
- 54 StubHub parent company
- 55 Young Darth's nickname
- 56 "I'm the best on the runway," e.g.?
- 62 Hang-thread link
- 63 Inviting words
- 65 Risk it
- 66 Like some R-rated films
- 68 Took an arduous trip
- 69 "Sexy" Beatles woman
- 70 Pathetic
- 73 Walk obediently
- 74 Biceps exercise
- 75 "You're not done talking, are you?"
- 76 Soccer phenom Freddy
- 78 Herb served only on trains?
- 82 Wore (away)
- 83 NASA vehicles
- 85 Court entry
- 86 Barrel contents
- 87 Any of three Ottoman sultans
- 89 Beef recall cause
- 91 Poetic foot
- 93 Mideast capital at 7,380 feet
- 95 Hefly refs.
- 96 Toyota compacts
- 98 Somewhat high
- 100 Not cloudy; Abbr.
- 102 Tidy the garden, in a way
- 103 Charge
- 104 It precedes some hockey games
- 108 Creativity result
- 111 Hall of Fame catcher Carlton
- 112 Sweater type
- 113 Floral stench?
- 115 Poor prompt to a friend who's been asked what the capital of Alaska is?
- 118 A risk might be taken on one
- 119 Rickey flavoring
- 120 ... nous
- 121 Half a '60s-'70s pop duo
- 122 Poker game starter
- 123 2000, for one
- 124 Poker game betrayals
- 125 Where Nike has no "i," briefly
- DOWN
- 1 Suit material
- 2 Cut in two
- 3 Corporate heavies
- 4 Young star
- 5 They go on for generations
- 6 Turnpike fee
- 7 Medalla de victor
- 8 Skater Midori
- 9 Smartphone feature
- 10 "Dark Sky Island," e.g.
- 11 Did some gardening
- 12 Alias preceder
- 13 Without ads, it's usually about 21 or 22 minutes
- 14 Like much jam
- 15 Copies
- 16 bean
- 17 Inappropriate look
- 19 Sp. lasses
- 24 2016 film subtitled "Miracle on the Hudson"
- 26 Latin dance
- 29 Eye-opener at the gym
- 32 Live
- 33 Uncertain sounds
- 34 Eyelashes
- 36 Not from around here
- 37 Enthusiasm
- 38 British cop's heartthrob?
- 39 "King Kong" (1933) actress
- 40 "Dark Sky Island" musician
- 41 "It's...!"; "True!"
- 42 Bouncer's concern
- 43 Some "Ghostbusters" jokes?
- 45 Reversed
- 47 Host
- 50 Barbecue equipment using wood
- 53 Sister of Moses
- 57 Swimmer's unit
- 58 Panhandle state
- 59 Gymnast Comaneci
- 60 Tedious work
- 61 Kathy of country
- 64 Barely get, with "out"
- 67 Co. in Cannes
- 69 "Get lost!"
- 70 Kingdom subdivisions
- 71 "¿Cómo está...?"
- 72 ... United: English soccer team
- 75 Sniveling
- 76 Smart guy?
- 77 Art ...
- 79 Homeric epic
- 80 Beethoven strolled in them for inspiration
- 81 Done for
- 84 Highway hazard
- 88 Interfere with
- 90 Intestinal section
- 92 A/C measure
- 93 Day or nail follower
- 94 West African capital
- 97 Uncork, so to speak
- 99 Laser alternative
- 101 ... man
- 103 "Star Trek: TNG" first officer
- 104 Refreshment spots
- 105 Extreme pain
- 106 Condemns
- 107 In the blink of ...
- 108 Beatles nonsense syllables
- 109 ... Bator
- 110 Battery, e.g.
- 111 Low-cost home loan org.
- 112 Bottom row PC key
- 114 Turn often prohibited, slangily
- 116 French article
- 117 Home of the NHL's Blues



10/22/17

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Oct. 22: This year you have a lot of energy, and you focus on what you want. You might be more available to others than you have been in the past. If you are single, your magnetism attracts others to you. Make sure you want to be tied up with the sweetie of the moment. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from going out and joining friends. When you leave your pals, you recognize how fortunate you are to have each other. Sagittarius wants you around far more than you realize.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
 You might have a sudden bout of anger in the morning. You might wonder why. The remainder of the day, direct more positive energy toward a partner or loved one who adores being the center of your attention.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
 You might like the results of deferring to others just one more time. A dear friend or loved one decides to spend more time with you. Before you know it, the two of you are off indulging in a mutual hobby or favorite sport.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
 Enjoy yourself to the max. Make a point of going out to a favorite spot. Out of the blue, someone might need to confess their feelings toward you. Don't worry; you can handle it.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
 You might have had plans to join friends. Unless these plans involve an athletic happening in which you can participate, you are likely to want to change them. Don't allow anger to bubble up from nowhere.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
 Your imaginative mind could create a close-to-perfect day with friends and loved ones. You could find that a little attention opens Pandora's box. A friend who rarely discloses anything suddenly might spill the beans about everything.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
 Tension mounts as you attempt to spend some quality time relaxing at home. Some form of uproar seems to surround you. Maintain your sense of humor, or else you might be apologizing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
 Many opportunities and encounters with new people

become a possibility. Don't feel as if you need to follow a routine, especially if a pattern is preventing you from actualizing a goal.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
 You cannot stand on ceremony with a friend who might be unusually angry. The cause of this person's emotions might not be clear. Don't allow this matter to go too far.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
 A friend could energize you with their unique style. You might even be triggered by a conversation about this person. The good news is that you finally are out of a negative cycle.

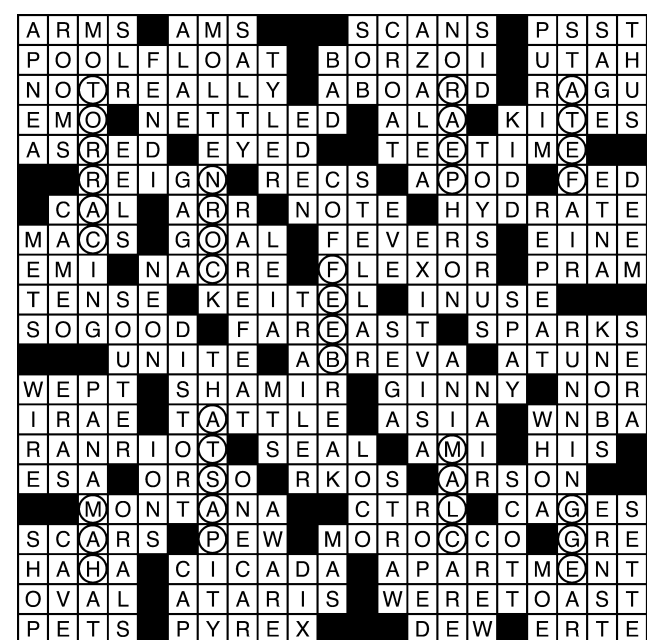
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 You have a lot on your mind, yet you want to spend some time with

friends. A friend makes it clear that he or she wants to see you. You might sense some irritation from this person and want to find out why.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 You could feel that it is important to follow an already designated schedule. A loved one could turn up out of the blue. Change your plans and spend time with this person. Sometimes you lose sight of your priorities.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
 You could be overwhelmed by a loved one and a sudden barrage of requests. You need to be responsive, especially as what is being requested and the tone might be quite different. This person needs to know that you care.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



10/15/17