

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Rhythm & news: Top song parodies

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1287 was one of our contests for songs about the news, set to familiar tunes. As always, the Empress was deluged with crazy-brilliant lyrics to songs ranging from nursery rhymes to medieval carols to long raps to a full-length reworking of "American Pie." Here in the print version of the Invite, I'm using songs that I hope are familiar to most readers; online you can click on a link to the tune and listen along to these and many other parodies. **And we have video!** See a brand-new one from Sandy Riccardi, who with husband Richard performs parodies in clubs around the country, but is a First Offender in Loserdom. And more! See wapo.st/invite1291.

4th place

Maria Butina (I)

To "Maria" from "West Side Story"

Marial I fell for a spy named Marial
With hair of flaming red,
A tiger-cat in bed, oo-weee!

Marial I didn't have any idea
That Putin pulled your strings!
What if tomorrow brings a plea?

Marial
Now my hair's prematurely graying!
For a pardon from Trump I am praying.

Marial . . . I'm done NRA-ing, Marial
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

3rd place

Maria Butina (II)

To "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?" from "The Sound of Music"

How do you solve a problem like Maria?
What do you with Russian meddling nigh?

How do you find a term that means "Maria"?

An enemy agent? An operative? A spy?

Many's the things you know you shouldn't've told her,
Now that she's compromised the NRA,

'Cause when she was there in bed,
she heard all the things you said,
Now how do you strike a deal with DOJ?

Oh, how do you solve a problem like Maria?

How do you keep those Putin goons at bay? (Duncan Stevens, Vienna)

How do you solve a problem like Maria?

How do you keep those Putin goons at bay? (Duncan Stevens, Vienna)

2nd place and the squeeze toy of a shark with a foot in its mouth:

To "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me"

Praise me! Praise me!
Lavish me with kudos that amaze me, raise me

Up above my foes and then just praise me, praise me,
Make me think that I'm the greatest prez.

Laud me! Laud me!
Lay out all the ways that folks applaud me, applaud me,
Cite Rasmussen polls until you've awed me, awed me,
Show me how I'm loved, like Rudy says.

They told me, "Be sensible in the White House.
This job's not the easiest you will find."
But they didn't know I'd have the right House

To give me what I want and drive the nation out of its mind.

Back me! Back me!
Defend me from the flak when folks attack me, smack me
So I can bigly win again in 2020,
And turn this country back to '52.
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

To "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do"

My FBI is mean to me,
Ever since we sandbagged Hillary.
They won't screw who I tell them to,
And coverup is hard to do.

So I installed the Keebler Elf
To be loyal, not recuse himself
And eschew my cagey coup!
Oh, coverup is hard to do.

I sold them all a big-league beautiful tale;
Fixed Junior's mail to cover our trail.
Pulled rabbits outta my . . . hat
To keep the feds from getting at my trillion-ruble laundromat.

My goons bought off the girls I sleazed;
Now my fixer's files have all been seized.
That just grew into deeper poo;
Yes, coverup is hard to do.

To send my kids to jail would be very sad!
I'm their dad, but what about Vlad?



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1291: Film flam — movie anagrams

Batman anagrams to **Tab Man**: In the sequel, the Caped Crusader switches to diet soda to slim down for his leotard.

Wonder Woman —> **Nerd Moan**: "Wow!" Socially maladjusted guys have a hard time accepting their powerful new female friend.

The Hunger Games —> **He Hung Gamerster**: A narcissistic autocrat tries to punish athletes who don't observe patriotic rituals to his liking.

This week's contest was suggested by Seriously Funny Loser Duncan Stevens, who wins yet another free milkshake from the Empress. It's a simple concept: **Rearrange the letters of a title of a movie or play to make a new title, then describe the new work**, as in Bob Staake's and Duncan's own examples above. Even though there are bajillions of movies and plays out there — or at least 1.2 bajillion — there's an excellent chance that someone else will come up with the very same anagram that you do. And so a funny description will be paramount. Perhaps a line of dialogue could help.

Submit entries at the website wapo.st/enter-invite-1291 (all lowercase). Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives two new rolls of Who Gives a Crap "premium" toilet paper made entirely of ecologically correct bamboo fibers. Donated by Loser Barbara Turner, whose name only coincidentally anagrams to Rear-Burnt Arab.

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, "We've Seen Better" or "Idiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, Aug. 13**; results published Sept. 2 (online Aug. 30). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results was submitted separately by five people; Tom Witte 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. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

He's got me under his thumb;
Instead of being my best chum, he'd
slip me some polonium!

I can't keep track of every crime,
And pretty soon it will be Mueller
Time.
Low IQ is my Waterloo,
'Cause coverup is hard to do.
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Noise media: Honorable mentions

To "Eleanor Rigby"

Vladimir Putin
Picks up the phone with instructions
for President Trump.
"Go to it! Jump!
And don't you forget, Don,
All of the dirt that I've got on you
won't go away:
Do as I say."

Half-witted Donald
Has to obey him, whatever his
master may ask,
That is his task;
Sneering at NATO,
Treating his allies with scorn and
contempt is his scheme,
And Putin's dream.

All the stupid people
Who voted for the twit,
All those stupid people
Are now in deepest (trouble).
(Brian Allgar, Paris)

The Space Force Hymn

To the Marines' Hymn:
From the desert sands of Tatooine to
the icy planet Hoth
First our sanctions on the emperor
cut an economic swath.
Then we taunt, "Hey, Little Death-
Star Man, watch our Space Force win
this fight!"
Then we have a summit, then it's
fine, we can all sleep well tonight.
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Into the 'Woulds'

Into the "woulds" without the "nots"
Ignore the trolls, forget the bots
Everyone knows who called the
shots

When I was in Helsinki.

Into the weeds with every word,
The ones I said, the ones you heard,

Even the word I may have slurred
When I was in Helsinki

The jeers and gibes, the harsh
reviews
Are nothing more than more Fake
News!
I never back down, I never do wrong
(Except perhaps I shouldn't
Ever skip a "wouldn't.")

What are the words the world should
fear?

The secret words from Vladimir
When there was no adviser near
To hear us in Helsinki!

He vowed that I'd have hell to pay
if he released the dossier.
I followed each command he gave
And that's the only reason some may
call it treason.

Learn from the tale that I have told
Avoid the showers made of gold
Or you will see how you get rolled
When you go to Helsinki

But into the "woulds," into the
weeds,
Into the words, like Vladimir said —
And home before dark.
(Barbara Sarshik, McLean)

Donald's Favorite Things

Golfing and Big Macs and late-night
tweet rages.
Tax breaks for fat cats and babies in
cages.
Justices dancing like puppets on
strings.
These are a few of my favorite things.

Hounding reporters and calling them
traitors.

Pissing off allies and kissing
dictators.
Congress like bobbleheads mounted
on springs.
These are a few of my favorite things.

When collusion and indictments
Bring things to a halt
I go on TV and say you can't blame
me

For it's all Obama's fault.
(Thomas Vincent, Langley, Wash., a
First Offender)

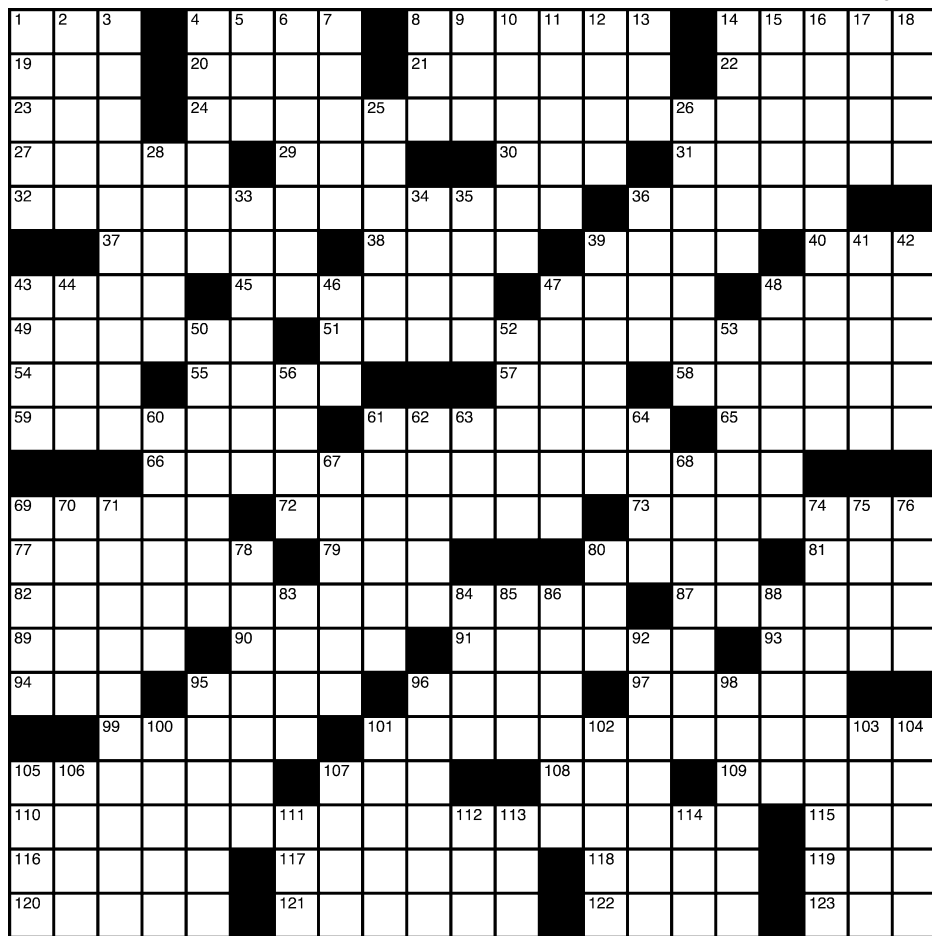
**Still running — deadline Monday,
Aug. 6: our Week 1290 neologism
contest. See wapo.st/
invite1290.**

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"ANABRANDS" By BRUCE HAIGHT

- 1 Muppet chimp
- 4 "Patience you must have" speaker
- 8 Text for a promo
- 14 Unit of weight
- 19 Biblical priest
- 20 Steady
- 21 First name in the 2016 campaign
- 22 Informed
- 23 Track circuit
- 24 Company covering the ninth of Salinger's "Nine Stories"?
- 27 Spur on
- 29 White wine aperitif
- 30 TRS-80s, e.g.
- 31 ___ of interest
- 32 Company providing stimulation before a round?
- 36 Belief system
- 37 Robot arms don't have them
- 38 Camera lens feature
- 39 Like a D, gradewise
- 40 Sidway posting
- 43 Madame Bovary
- 45 Bankrolled
- 47 Acronymic
- 48 Leery of
- 49 Opening feature
- 51 Company for ones who love taking sides?
- 54 "___ got it!"
- 55 Fax button
- 57 Toss in
- 58 Look down on, figuratively
- 59 Brain areas
- 61 Green, in a way
- 65 Filike works
- 66 Company that bugs people?
- 69 "Real Time" host
- 72 Canadian site of the 1988 Winter Olympics
- 73 Tiny and shapeless
- 77 Timeless, in verse
- 79 '60s chic
- 80 ___ page
- 81 Acapulco gold
- 82 Company that moves a lot of cash?
- 87 Like some surveys
- 89 Card sounding like a platter
- 90 Christmas lot selection
- 91 "Little House" family name
- 93 Spent
- 94 Shirley MacLaine, to Warren Beatty
- 95 Ump's cry
- 96 Big heap
- 97 Cartoon genre
- 99 Trace of color
- 101 Company named for its product container?
- 105 Old marketplaces
- 107 United
- 108 Moll's limb
- 109 Grammy winner
- 110 Company dealing "frankly" with campaign issues?
- 115 Even a little
- 116 Overhead concern?
- 117 Emotionally out of control
- 118 Runs on message, stereotypically
- 119 Laugh starter
- 120 Author Theodor ___ Geisel
- 121 Helpful
- 122 Nobelist Wiesel
- 123 Not even
- 13 "Suh-weel!"
- 14 More than a job
- 15 Tony, for one
- 16 Pasted message, oil acronym
- 17 Oil acronym
- 18 Many a gamer
- 25 Three-horse carriage
- 26 Dislodges
- 28 Key of Beethoven's "Eroica"
- 33 Silky-voiced crooners they are not
- 34 One of the Weasley twins
- 35 Dog tag?
- 36 Italy's Lake ___
- 39 Whaml or Roxette
- 41 Elite crew
- 42 Blog series
- 43 Awesome
- 44 Formally propose
- 46 Support
- 47 Film noir hat
- 48 Serving no purpose
- 50 "Look Back in Anger" playwright John
- 52 "Nick of Time" singer
- 53 Software details
- 56 "Glee" actress
- 60 Get-up-and-go
- 61 They're rubbed when mingling
- 62 Calls for
- 63 DVD forerunner
- 64 Piece of cake
- 67 "Get Shorty" novelist ___ Leonard
- 68 Unequivocal refusal
- 69 Softens
- 70 '70s breakout gaming company
- 71 Toast for Mrs. Robinson
- 74 Capital south of a panhandle
- 75 "Dies ___"
- 76 How
- 78 Wipes out
- 80 Stamps of approval
- 83 Pfler
- 84 Whirled weapon
- 85 First portrayal of Obi-Wan
- 86 Meditative genre
- 88 Gin ___
- 92 Kind of cookie
- 95 Catches
- 96 Cold outburst
- 98 Actually existing
- 100 Most clubs in a pro's bag
- 101 Andean people
- 102 Scope
- 103 Like much
- 104 Focused (on)
- 105 Cookie monster?
- 106 Look steadily
- 107 Tools in locks
- 111 Early TV maker
- 112 Caught in the rain without an umbrella, say
- 113 Bouncer's requests
- 114 Ballpark fig.



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Aug. 5: This year, you often accept responsibility at work or within the community. As a result, you can be found among the crowds or in late meetings. You might want more downtime at home, so be sure to schedule some. If you are single, you will meet many interesting people, one of whom could be of particular interest. If you are attached, the two of you will enjoy a great sense of involvement with your community. You prefer to work or volunteer together when involved with a cause. Taurus helps you network.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
You might be weighing the pros and cons of an expenditure. You want to say yes, but you need to be careful with your budget. Once you start spending, it could lead to more of the same. Use caution and good sense, and you'll come out on top.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Though you are as stubborn as a bull, you have the flexibility and intelligence to know when you need professional knowledge and advice. You will get a better grasp on the issue at hand as a result.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You could be tired and withdrawn most of the day. Your mind is working overtime as you attempt to sleuth through a problem. A partner or a loved one who might be tied to a financial matter with you is likely to adapt and accept a new viewpoint.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
When surrounded by your friends, you experience a lot of happiness. You treat your inner circle like a second family. In a sense, they are even more important to you than your blood relatives because they are chosen by you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You smile wherever you go, and others respond accordingly. Though a close friend or loved one assumes that you are expressing everything that is in your mind, that is not the case. You might feel cornered by a personal situation. Give it time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Your ability to look past the obvious and get to the root of a problem is highlighted. Your understanding of where others are coming from and what they really want is a skill that is continually evolving.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

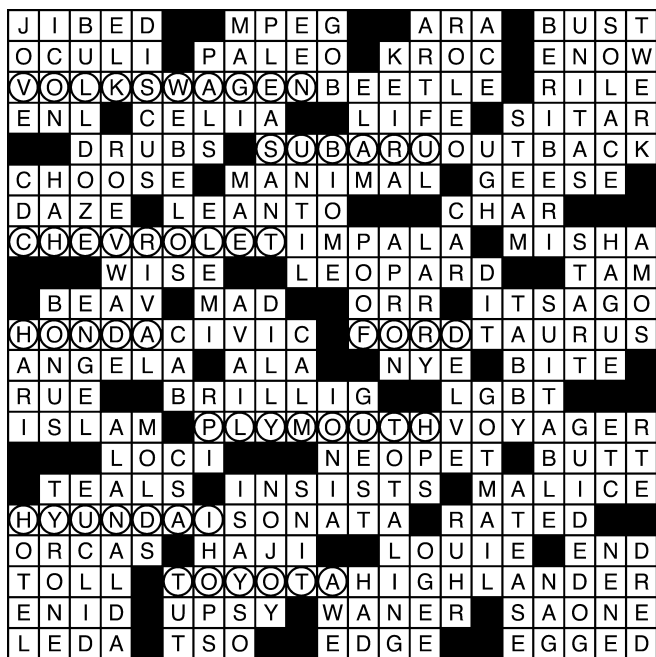
Your strength emerges when relating to those around you. A discussion that could be touchy and difficult proves well worth it, as you finally see eye to eye with the other party. Do not deny what this person means to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Deal with a partner, even if you seem to land in a situation that involves a power play. Express your concerns, but try not to play into this person's control game. The best strategy would be to walk away and do your own thing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You plunge into a project and get a lot done quickly and efficiently. A money matter could be changing right in front of you, and you might feel as if you can get it under control. Do not hesitate to ask questions, but wait for the right timing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Answers to last week's puzzle.



7/29/18