

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Badder up: Week 1295 winners

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1295** we asked for signs of some unfortunate thing, paired with a *really* unfortunate thing.

4th place

Sign that your husband is unfaithful: He has sex with a movie star named Stormy.
Sign that your husband is REALLY unfaithful: He has sex with a movie star named Lassie. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

3rd place

Sign of an out-of-control food fad: Before Labor Day they're selling pumpkin spice latte.
Sign of a REALLY out-of-control food fad: Before Labor Day they're selling pumpkin spice sushi. (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

2nd place and the notepad that looks like a bitten-off chocolate bar:

You might be "out of the mainstream" if you think Alex Jones is on the level.
You might be REALLY "out of the mainstream" if Alex Jones thinks you are on the level. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Sign that you're too old to pick up young women: When they see you, they cross the street.
Sign that you're REALLY too old to pick up young women: When they see you, they help you cross the street. (Brian Allgar, Paris)

Direr straits: Honorable mentions

Sign that your brakes are going: An annoying chirping sound.
Sign that your brakes are really going: An annoying crashing sound. (Dave Airozo, Silver Spring)

Sign your country is in trouble: An unstable, race-baiting moron is the president.

Sign your country is really in trouble: Half the country says, "So?" (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Sign you might be a cheapskate: You shop at Dollar Tree.

Sign you might really be a cheapskate: You haggle at Dollar Tree. (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

Sign things aren't going well with your girlfriend: She dumps you.

Sign things really aren't going well with your girlfriend: She dumps you in a landfill. (Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)

Sign your kid's in trouble at school: Teachers describe him as "disturbed" and "out of control."

Sign he's really in trouble: They call him "presidential." (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Sign you're on edge: Your wife's singing is driving you crazy.

Sign you're really on edge: She's singing to Robert Mueller. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Sign there was a terrible mistake and you should immediately quit your new job: After your orientation, you realize you have no applicable skills, and don't even understand the list of your job responsibilities.

Sign there was a really terrible mistake and you should immediately quit your new job: After your inauguration . . . (Dallas Baker, Arlington)

Sad: The combined ages of the Beatles is currently 154.

Really sad: There are only two of them. (J. Larry Schott, West Plains, Mo.)

Sign you're getting old: You can't stand your kids' music.

Sign you're really getting old: You can't hear your kids' music. (Melissa Balmain; Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

Sign you might be in legal trouble: Your business partner agrees to testify against you.

Sign you might really be in legal trouble: Your lawyer agrees to testify against you. (Mark Raffman)

Sign you are a bit anal: You neatly fold your underwear as soon as you take it out of the dryer.

Sign you are really anal: You neatly fold your underwear before putting it in the dirty-clothes hamper. (David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

Sign you should be suspicious of your doctor: He always makes you put your feet in the stirrups.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 1299: OK, hivemind! A contest with new Scrabble words

ARANCINI (rice balls) > rice > Condoleezza > condo leaser > Scott Pruitt > EPA > creepy A > "The Scarlet Letter" > Puritans > witch hunt > his latest tweet > FACEPALM (an "oh, no" gesture)

Three weeks ago, Merriam-Webster announced some of the words it had just added to its online dictionary, and we asked you to write poems featuring them (see the results of Week 1296 next week). Now, this week, M-W has announced additions to its Scrabble dictionary — including the strategically important "ew," "OK" and "zen" — 50 of which we list below. So what to do with them? Gaack, not poems again.

So the Empress polled the hivemind of the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook (without showing the words, of course) and went with the suggestion of Loser Hildy Zampella.

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| aquafaba | conlang | mulloway | sriracha |
| arancini | cotija | nutjob | substorm |
| beatdown | emoji | nubber | truther |
| bestie | ew | OK | twerk |
| bibimbap | exome | onboard | upcycle |
| bitcoin | facepalm | papasan | vape |
| bizjet | farro | pizzazz | wayback |
| bokeh | frowny | puggie | wordie |
| botnet | gamify | rootkit | yowza |
| cankle | hivemind | santoku | zen |
| captcha | judgy | schneid | zomboid |
| capcom | listicle | sheeple | |
| chyron | macaron | sho | |

This week: Choose any two of the words in the list above as the beginning and end of a humorous word chain of 6 to 14 words or phrases, linked by subject matter, by synonyms or by punning, as above. The online Invite has links to the Scrabble dictionary's mini-definitions; my Style Conversational column (wapo.st/conv1299) has a list of all the definitions so you won't have to click on each one; or you can look them up at scrabble.merriam.com.

Submit entries at the website wapo.st/enter-invite-1299 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a genuine **snapping-turtle skull**, found in a swampy area near Richmond by Loser Jeff Shirley, who may have used his skills as a dentist to clean and polish it to an attractive semi-shine. It's surprisingly large, at least as big as the Empress's fist, even though, lacking a jaw, it will not snap.

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, Oct 8;** results published Oct. 28 (online Oct. 25). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jon Gearhart; Chris Doyle wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/invdev). "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bitly/inkofday](https://www.facebook.com/bitly/inkofday); follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

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



PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

Don't worry: This snapping turtle skull is missing the jaw.

Sign you should be really suspicious: He's your eye doctor. (Rick Haynes, Ocean City, Md.)

Bad: A naked man appears at your window.

Really bad: You're in the confessional at the time. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

Sign you have bad breath: The person next to you edges away.

Sign you really have bad breath: The turkey buzzard next to you edges away. (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

Sign you have man-boobs: When you go shirtless, guys make jokes about you.

Sign you really have man-boobs: When you go shirtless, guys stuff singles in your shorts. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis)

Sign you are a lazy proofreader:

You don't notice that autocorrect changed several words, distorting your intended message.

Sign you are really lazy: You don't notice that autofocus Chang several words, thereby distracting your intense meshugah. (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring)

Sign your glory days are over: You get injured playing basketball.

Sign your glory days are really over: You get injured watching basketball. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

You have a bad commute into D.C.: You're starting to think biking would be faster.

You have a really bad commute into D.C.: You're starting to think the Red Line would be faster. (Duncan Stevens)

Sign you love The Style Invitational: You clear a place on your mantel for the day you win the Lose Cannon.

Sign you really love The Style Invitational: You returned your fancy new refrigerator because the doors weren't magnetic. (Kevin Mettinger, Warrenton, Va.)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1299.

Still running — deadline Monday, Oct. 1: our contest for things that can be abbreviated GHI, HGH, etc. See wapo.st/invite1298.

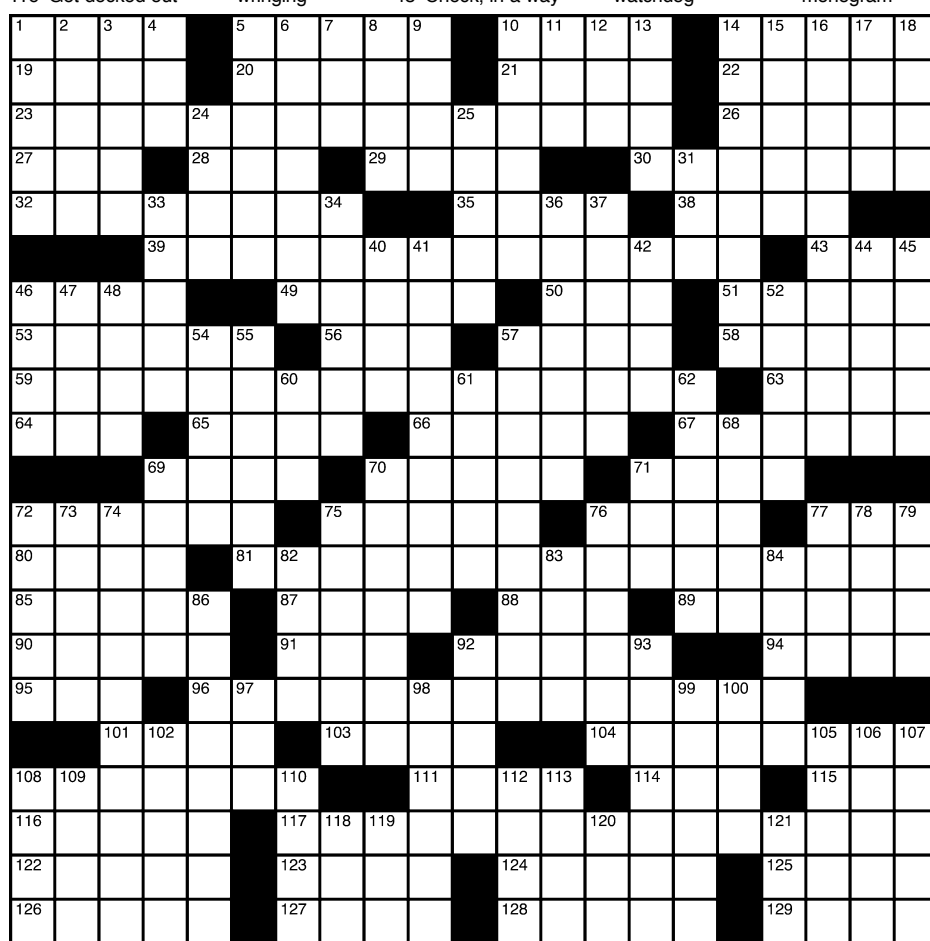
L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"POWER PLAY" By PETER KOETTERS

- ACROSS**
- Kick off the flight
 - Nixon in China
 - dispatcher composer John Underground invader
 - Fragrant wood
 - Goatee-stroking words
 - Bank built for a rainy day
 - Pal of Grover
 - It's pressed for oil
 - "Electric vehicle need
 - Stirred
 - Puppet extension?
 - Suffix with gymnast
 - Leveling wedge
 - Hot belt, with "the"
 - "God Bless America" landscape word
 - Punishment with a grounding
 - Many a Snapchat user
 - "Having a blowout sale
 - Long-nosed fish
 - 1977 medical thriller
 - From head ___
 - More than cool
 - A deal may be made under it, with "the"
 - Military order
 - Neatnik's possible condition, briefly
 - Crunched figures
 - Minute critter
 - "Fish story theme
 - Blackmailed
 - Green
 - Herd voices
 - Road crew worker
 - Became clear
 - Border
 - Source of a Pasadena parade aroma
 - "Little Beau" . . . 1952 loon about a skunk
 - Auto safety device
 - Asgard group

- DOWN**
- curls
 - Arena worker
 - Stiller's partner
 - Pricing word
 - "Tomb Raider" star Vikander
 - Most populous
 - DJIA part: Abbr.
 - hall
 - Third face of Eve?
 - Tool heading
 - Check, in a way
 - Bulldogs fan lyricist
 - Rock subculture
 - Stern warning
 - "How goes it, José?"
 - Split to be tied?
 - "Pressurized undersea compartment
 - Nice with?
 - Cherry and crimson
 - Birth announcement word
 - NBA exec Danny
 - Bus path: Abbr.
 - "Wicked Game" singer Chris
 - Tries to score
 - Disaster site procedures
 - Spoils recipient
 - Craving
 - Unreturnable, as a bottle
 - Blue hue
 - "Tiny Alice" dramatist
 - Fed. workplace watchdog
 - Red ___: spicy candies
 - Like neon
 - Bit of roller derby protection
 - Come after
 - Stalks in a pie
 - Slowly crept
 - Promise of dire consequences
 - Go ___ great length
 - Ad preceder?
 - Burj Khalifa's city
 - Endangered layer
 - Put the kibosh on
 - Ear decoration
 - Scintilla
 - Slipped ___
 - Cybernuisance
 - Genesis creator
 - Apt sports org. for this puzzle
 - In addition
 - House of Commons vote
 - Designer monogram



9/30/18 xwordeditor@aol.com ©2018 Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Sept. 30: This year is especially exciting. At times, you choose to respond impulsively. You seem ready to take off at the drop of a hat. You also will learn a lot, as you naturally seem to absorb information through osmosis. If you are single, you will want to be with someone who is willing to take risks and great adventure with a smile. If you are attached, the two of you enjoy each other's company more than ever. Gemini cheers you on and encourages you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Speak your mind, and allow more creativity into your life. Others appreciate your authority. You could be overthinking a conversation. Relax more. Use some of your innate charm and wit, and success is likely to follow.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You might be close to someone who feels as if they are quite the authority figure. This person can get stubborn and stuck on having their way. Walk away from controlling people, and you'll be much happier. Curb a tendency to overspend.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Reach out to someone you really care about but often don't make time for. Reverse that tendency, and you will be much more content and easygoing. You share many common interests with this person, yet you live different lives. Open up more.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You might want to make an effort to turn around a story that keeps repeating itself. You might be confused by what a friend says. Are you getting mixed signals? Understand what is needed to clarify the situation. A partner could become controlling.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You have the magnetism and energy to bring others together for a fun, spontaneous get-together. Do not hold back; instead, open up to new possibilities. You might be surprised at what the energy between you and a partner can create.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You could be in a pickle, as you deal with a problem regarding communication and a boss. You certainly don't look at life the same way. Rather than create a problem, decide to understand where this person is coming from.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Be willing to make an effort to break with some of your conventional ways. Those around you will enjoy witnessing this transformation. Conversations become easier as others realize that you are trying to understand them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Be more direct and more sure of yourself. You might not like what comes up for you when dealing with a partner. In some ways, you are very different from this person, yet this difference allows you to get to know each other better.

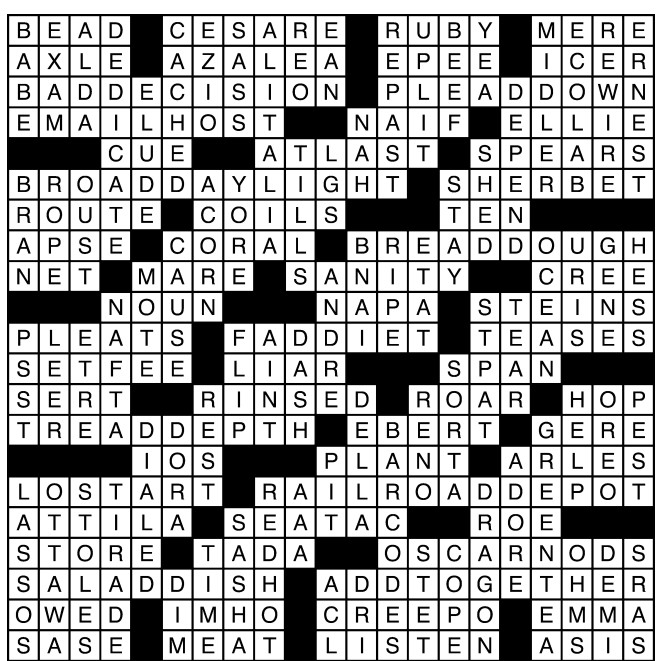
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Others seek you out before you can even get on the phone. Be appreciative that those around you are so assertive right now. You will have many choices to make. Do what you want to do, and don't be intimidated into doing what someone else wants.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You might need to adjust your plans so that you don't miss out on a fun time. Still, you cannot ignore your obligations. Enjoying some lightness and frivolous fun helps you energize. Worry less. You will get a lot done after your break.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You will enjoy laughter and being around lighthearted people; you also need an outlet for your high energy. Take a walk or get into a preferred hobby or sport. Consider a gym membership.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) If you feel anger bubbling up, take a break and head in a different direction. If possible, avoid expressing your strong feelings until you know where they're coming from. You might be surprised by the source.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



9/23/18