

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Herd inanity: Post-pandemic life

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1431 we asked for predictions (or "predictions") about how things will change after the pandemic. Many Losers lamented about how **we need new excuses not to visit the in-laws**; numerous others predicted a change in dress code to **pants-free Fridays**.

4th place:

Cardboard-cutout sports fans are repurposed into fake HOV passengers. (Frank Mann, Washington)

3rd place:

Dr. Fauci stars in three Marvel movies. (Daniel Galef, Tallahassee)

2nd place and the hand-shaped cookie cutter:

Finally! I can't believe it's been over a year since I licked a doorknob! (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Now it will be less awkward when Grandpa tells everyone how Pfizer saved his social life. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

Falling down on the job: Honorable mentions

I'll go back to wearing old nylons on my face when I go to the bank. (Chuck Helwig, Centerville)

"Oh no, not a snow day! Please, please, please let me go to school to see my friends!" (Richard Franklin, Alexandria)

40/30 jeans will now be called "slim-fit." (Rob Huffman, Frederickburg)

AA and WW will compete over who has more new members. (Ward Kay, Vienna)

After the schools reopen, Billy Wilkes, 14, of Kenosha, Wis., will be the first student sent to the principal's office for screaming "THIS IS SO BORING" after forgetting that he wasn't muted. (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

The cicada mating orgy after 17 years of buildup is dwarfed by the number of hookups on dating apps. (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

At rock concerts, groupies will toss only new, still-in-the-wrapper underwear toward the stage. (Leif Picoult, Rockville)

Cash-strapped arsonists are forced to ignite wildfires with leftover hand sanitizer, instead of the more traditional, but costly, Jewish space laser. (Frank Mann)

Coronavirus test nasal swabs can be donated to zoos as a lifetime supply of Q-tips for elephants. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Damn, there goes my excuse for not hugging those grubby little grandkids! (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Take Your Kids to Work Day will return to only once a year. (Jeff Rackow, Bethesda)

Everybody losing that "covid 15" weight will cause . . . just kidding, nobody will lose that covid 15. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

FEMA will hold a donation drive to get thousands of now-unwanted backyard fire pits to Texas in time for the next winter power failure. (Terri Berg Smith, Rockville)

For the 2022 elections in Georgia and Florida, all those unused masks will be repurposed as gags for voters. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

I'm going to hook my Peloton screen to my real bike so I can enjoy the outdoors! (Drew Bennett)

To preserve passenger safety, Metro will designate Red and Blue train cars for riders with different politics. (Greg Dobbins, Boynton Beach, Fla.)

In parks in Maryland and Virginia, people will take pictures of their friends posing on empty pedestals. (Kristin Braly, Baltimore)

We'll be able to eat bat tartare again! (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

You can score some genuine Gucci face masks for only \$49 each. (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

Americans rush back to family holiday dinners and suddenly remember why they used to skip them. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

To deal with excess toilet paper:

- Instead of lemonade stands, kids



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New for Week 1435: Who needs Peeps when we have CICADAS?

The Washington Post Magazine's beloved Peeps diorama contest is no more, alas. But with the arrival this month in the D.C. area — which after all has been hurting for visitors since the pandemic — of literally BILLIONS of the Brood X (as in No. 10) cicadas after 17 years of waiting patiently underground, The Style Invitational is here to revive the tradition of Making Cute Art Out of Disgusting Things. The difference is that we understand that cicadas are actually edible.

This week, at the suggestion of Invite fan Gail Wright: **Create a witty visual artwork that includes at least one real cicada or cicada casing (the body-shaped shell from which the insect emerges) and send us a photo of it.** Dioramas like the ones in the Peeps contests are certainly welcome but not required; there is no required size or shape, as long as it looks good in your photos — red-eye is a plus in this contest. Given The Style Invitational's tradition of wordplay, **clever titles and/or captions are welcome** as well (though not required). But as with the Peeps, impressive craftsmanship and a striking design can't hurt. Don't include others' copyrighted work in your work.

In a rare fit of benevolence, the Empress will suspend her usual rule of one entrant per entry; if you think up the clever idea and your collaborator makes little cicada bowler hats and another puts up cicada-wing wallpaper, I'll credit you all.

Also, you get half a month to do this, which should allow for you to find a few thousand ex-cicadas or casings. If you're not in a Brood X area, you're on Invite-vacation this week unless you can find someone to send you a few.

(If you're under 13, you might instead make a picture of a cicada and send it to KidsPost's Brood X Gallery at wapo.st/kidspost_cicada_art.)

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1435 (no capitals in the Web address). Please submit each entry on a separate form, or else the photos not transmit. **Deadline is Monday night, May 24**; results appear June 6 in print, June 3 online.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. The Empress went to a Korean supermarket for this week's appropriate second prize, **a can of boiled silkworm pupae**.

Runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "No 'Bility" or "Punderachiever." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Herd inanity" is by William Kennard; Chris Doyle wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. 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; and follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

The Style Conversationalist: The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week's, featuring some past winners of Invite art contests, at wapo.st/conv1435.

will have TP stands to reduce the household stockpile. (George Smith, Frederick)

• Parents encourage kids to TP the neighbors' house. (Richard Lorentz, Woodland Hills, Calif., a First Offender)

• Everyone dresses as a mummy this Halloween. (Chris Damm, Charles Town, W.Va.; Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

• Citizens save coastal cities by using excess toilet paper to soak up rising sea levels. (Gary Crockett)

• Employees will take toilet paper TO the supply closet at work. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

With social distancing relaxed, Washington Football Team defenders will stand only three feet away from the opponent's offense. (Jesse Rifkin, Glastonbury, Conn.)

The lifting of restrictions on Florida social gatherings lets Matt Gaetz attend his girlfriends' proms. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna)

Wuhan Tourist Bureau 2022 campaign: "Come See Where It All DEFINITELY DID NOT Get Started" (Mark Raffman)

When the economy fully reopens, restaurants will have waiting lines, roads will be clogged, and gas prices will rise. Republicans will blame Biden. (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

Want to avoid the next bridal shower or toddler birthday? Just mention your anti-vax views online, and no one will bother you. Ahhhh! (Ellen Ryan, Rockville)

With all the extra plexiglass, we can give every mime his own invisible box. (Brett Dimairo, Cumberland, Md.)

We can finally take essential workers for granted again. (Jesse Frankovich)

You no longer know what time it is at work by what TV show is on. (Jon Gearhart)

You'll see a neighbor in the street who looks vaguely familiar, but your "aha" moment will come only once you picture them in a mask. (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring)

That gas station near my house will go back to cleaning the restrooms every June instead of its pandemic regimen of once a month. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Beautiful women I don't even know will be able to spontaneously run up and kiss me as I walk the streets! It could happen. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

After the Biden administration's intensive vaccination campaign finally brings the spread under control, the ex-president will pop up and say, "See? I told you it would disappear." (Leif Picoult)

People will recover their sense of taste, except of course when it comes to The Style Invitational. (Bob Kruger, Rockville)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1435.

Still running — deadline Monday night, May 10: our annual "grandfoals" contest. See wapo.st/invite1430.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"FORCING THE ISSUE" By GARY LARSON

ACROSS

1 Perfume brand that sounds forbidden
5 Was humbled
12 Resulting (from)
19 It's known for its bell ringers
20 Only one of Rolling Stone's "500 Greatest Songs" not written in English
21 Like Hershey's Kisses
22 Celebrity magazine employee?
24 Night vis-à-vis Nacht, e.g.
25 Possessive in a Harry Potter title
26 Using a lifestyle magazine to cool off?
29 Kind DA
30 1983 Streisand title role
31 Uproar
32 Large seal hunters
36 "What a lousy play!"
39 Furry wrap
41 Catch in the act
42 Found a chlearying magazine?
47 Head-turning hiss
49 Levine of Maroon 5
50 Goes too far
53 "Over There" songwriter
57 Jumble
58 Spanish province or its capital
59 Zodiac animal
60 Group mental condition
61 Firewood option ... or destiny
62 Former Russian space station
63 Tired
65 Removed all evidence of graphic for a personal well-being magazine?
70 Esoteric
73 Challenges
74 They may be blocked
75 Workmanship
78 Pressured, with "on"
79 Legend on the ice
80 Indian wrap
82 Whoop-de-do
83 Three-___ engine

84 Writer with the most combined Oscar and Tony nominations
87 Showgirl in a Manilow song
88 Czuchry who played Cary Agos on "The Good Wife"
91 Closing the doors of a financial magazine?
93 French toast need
96 Turkish bread
99 Round-skipping edge
100 Newspaper essays
101 Gift tag word
103 Film that's barely shown?
105 Marlon's "Godfather" role
108 Shoplifting a fitness magazine?
111 Not bright
116 Split
117 Kiosk selling a news magazine?
119 Nook or Kindle

120 Hollywood's Annette and Peter
121 Valhalla VIP
122 Street, in Stuttgart
123 Sneaky programs
124 Street in New York's Chinatown

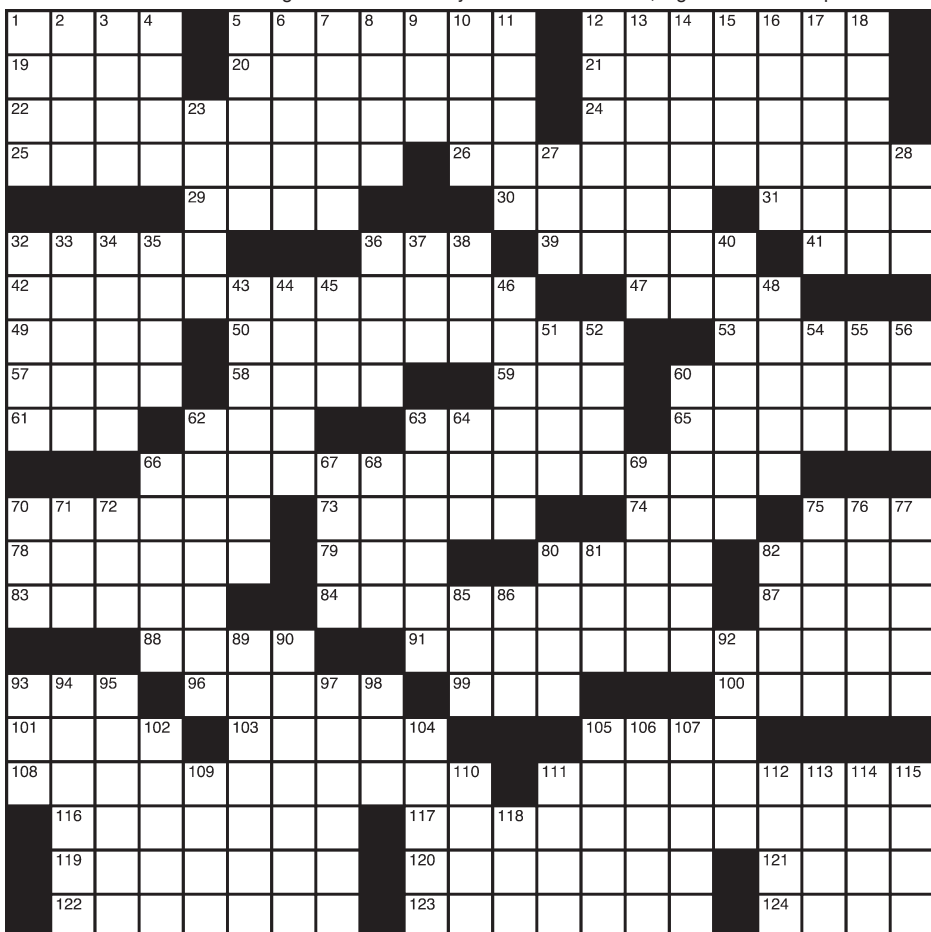
DOWN

1 Bedtime melody
2 Fuel-efficient Chevy
3 Loudmouth
4 Not culturally sensitive, for short
5 As, Jays and Rays
6 Records, in a way
7 "The Future of the Movies" co-author
8 Sonatas, say
9 Real estate ad abbr.
10 Symphonic wind
11 In a languid way
12 Highlight
13 Reindeer landing area

14 "Little House" series author
Laura ___ Wilder
15 Fein
16 Defeatist's statement
17 Chad, but not Jeremy
18 Two-time Oscar winner Jackson
23 Chow line?
27 "Survivorman" creator Stroud
28 Whipped cream serving
32 "Becoming" memoirist
Michelle
33 Teases
34 Stay over
35 Mail features
36 Swiss capital
37 Switch positions
38 Baseball's "Little Giant"
40 Social companions
43 Neatened, as
44 Ward off
45 Vintage auto
46 Features of many fonts

48 Synagogue scroll
51 Way to go
52 Jolly Roger bosun
54 Consumes
55 Newcastle Brown ___
56 "Game of Thrones" patriarch Stark
60 Gin rummy action
62 Twenty Questions category
63 "Super!"
64 Sushi garnish
66 Land in "The Hunger Games"
67 Hokkaido noodle
68 Unusual
69 Yankee manager Boone
70 "... and justice for ___"
71 Outdoor gear giant
72 Tom or tabby
75 Do penance
76 Very upset
77 They may be slid into ovens
80 Fries, e.g.

81 Friend in France
82 Sty feed
85 Soft toss
86 Subtle
89 Authority abusers
90 Bridge supports
92 Cow, at times
93 Pond dweller
94 "I, Claudius" author Robert
95 Small racing vehicle
97 Stick (to)
98 "Chandelier" singer
102 Charades play
104 ___ salts
105 Fancy home
106 Surmise
107 "___ Were the Days?"
109 Hurricane-tracking agcy.
110 Jazzy Jones for ___
111 Team's burden
112 Either H in H2O
113 "No Angel" singer
114 Release
115 Job for a body shop
118 2015 Verizon acquisition



5/9/21

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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | May 9: You are honest, open and direct. Not only are you practical, you also have a wonderful, artistic imagination. As your new year begins, you are entering a time of new beginnings and fresh starts. Be open to letting go of old habits and habitual patterns in your life. Consider new ways of doing things, because this year will bring you fresh opportunities.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

On the whole, this is an upbeat, powerful day for you because for most of this day, the moon is in your sign; plus, it's dancing with lucky Jupiter. This makes you feel optimistic and exuberant.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

This is a favorable time for you with both the sun and your ruler, fair Venus, in your sign. This is why you feel so friendly and sociable with everyone. Because you have a warm feeling in your tummy, you will enjoy your own solitude.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Today, part of you wants to hide, but the other part of you wants to get out and chat to everyone. No doubt, your involvement with groups and organizations will be positive. In particular, you might be involved in a charitable enterprise.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

You make a favorable impression on others today, which is why people admire you and might be talking about you. Creative and artistic friends are also in the picture. This is a good day to go after what you want, because Mars in your sign gives you an edge.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Today you need to shake things up a bit because you want to do something different. You want to break free from your daily routine. Ideally, you would love to travel. Go someplace you've never been before. Be proactive about going after what you want.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You're in an adventurous frame of mind today, which is why travel and adventure will appeal to you. However, when it comes to financial matters, you feel so generous, you're tempted to give away the farm. Generosity is a good thing, but remember your own self-interests.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Because today the moon is opposite your sign, you have to be cooperative with others. Be prepared to go more than halfway. You will come out smelling like a rose because at this time, issues — especially financial matters — will tend to go your way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

This is a solid day. Issues related to partners and close friends are warm and supportive. Meanwhile, business related to your job, a pet or your health also will be affirming and positive, which pretty much gives you the green light for today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You're in work mode, trying to get better organized. You want to improve your health as well. Today, however, you want to play. Fortunately, physical sports and exercise will fill the bill for you. You

can improve yourself while having fun.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Because this is a fun-loving, playful time for you today, you might entertain at home, or several people might spontaneously gather where you live. The purpose of this gathering could be for fun, for education or for charitable purposes.

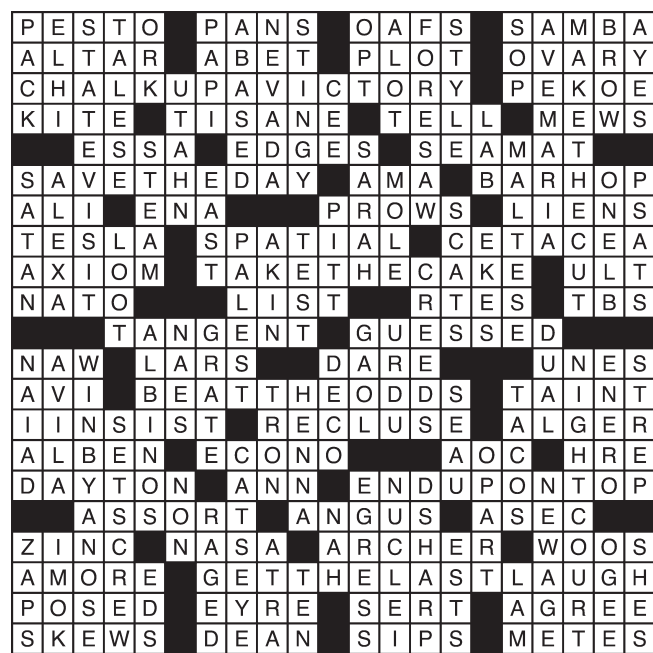
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Look around you. Everything you see began with a thought. Because you are optimistic and inclined to believe in your ideas today, who knows where this may lead?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

This is a good money day for you. You might see ways to boost your earnings or you might attract money to you. This is a positive day for you.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



5/2/21