DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Who, what, where, when, why and ha

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1433 was the latest of our Questionable Journalism contests, in which readers chose any sentence from a current publication (most chose The Post) and wrote a question that it might answer.

4th place:

A. "Sometimes he would stand in the sitting room . . ."
Q. How do we know Walter Mondale was a rebel at heart?
(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

3rd place:

A. "There's something about digging in the dirt, turning it, smelling it."
Q. What do you like best about being a reporter for the National Enquirer?
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

2nd place and the book with out-of-print Seuss stories:

A. In Oklahoma, you have mesoscale convective systems, supercell storms, and big complexes that produce a lot of lightning."
Q. Why does the wind come sweepin' down the plain?
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

A. That was Frances McDormand having explosive diarrhea in a plastic bucket on a van.
Q. What was the worst act on "Celebrity America's Got Talent"?
(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

Blanks for asking: Honorable mentions

A. Seated in a yellow plastic laundry basket attached to two thick ropes, I was lowered into the earth. The light got dimmer, the temperature colder.
Q. So how was your performance review? *(John Kammer, Fairfax)*

A. I just got into my car and drove around for two hours.
Q. How did you win the Indy 500?
(Frank Mann, Washington)

A. This is how misogynistic culture is conceptualized, created, cultivated and codified.
Q. How does Fox News human resources begin its new-employee training session?
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

A. "There is a lot of pressure on moving all the big players certainly to go faster than they were planning."
Q. Why is there a live bull on the running track?
(Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

A. It's different and dignified, but it just doesn't work on many levels.
Q. What do you think of Pat Boone's cover version of "WAP"?
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

A. "The poster was taped to two PVC pipes that were stuck inside construction cones."
Q. What punishment did Mark Zuckerberg suggest for inappropriate Facebook comments?
(Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)

A. "I hadn't seen that kind of positivity in a while. It was really cool."
Q. Why were you rubbing balloons all over the cat? *(Frank Osen)*

A. "It really has to come from within."
Q. What lesson does the crew in the "Alien" spaceship learn the hard way? *(Steve Honley, Washington)*

A. "She built a fortress of pillows and blankets in the guest bedroom."
Q. How did Mike Lindell's wife signal that their marriage was rocky? *(Stephen Dudzik, Olney)*

A. A man from Idaho balanced a garden hoe on his nose for nearly two hours.
Q. What happens in Boise when WiFi and cable go out?
(Stu Segal, Charlotte)

A. How about the guy with the gut?
Q. Emma is sick — who can we get to play the pregnant woman in tonight's performance?
(Terri Berg Smith, Rockville)

A. Now, a year after this pandemic began, there are masks everywhere — on door handles and in drawers.
Q. What explains the recent drop in sales of pantyliners?
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

A. Scientists are using it to study depression, anxiety and fear.
Q. Do you think anyone ever rereads Trump's inaugural address? *(Lee Graham, Rockville)*

A. Some of them are shovel-ready. Some of them are almost shovel-ready.
Q. Delegate Norton, what do you think of GOP arguments against D.C. statehood?
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

A. "I'd run through a brick wall for Coach."
Q. Do you miss air travel since the pandemic started?
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

A. A modern car can easily have more than 3,000 chips.
Q. Why do you often hear a crunching noise when you adjust the seat in a minivan?
(John McCooey, Rehoboth Beach, Del.)

A. "The withdrawal is set to begin on Friday and will be completed by May 1."
Q. What's the timeline for the final stage of the nonagenarians' marriage consummation?
(Leif Picoult, Rockville)

A. "There's nothing wrong with this feature, but it's not extraordinary."
Q. What comment are you liable to receive if your profile photo is an extreme close-up of your nose?
(George Thompson, Springfield)

A. "This is a moral imperative, an economic imperative. A moment of peril, but also a moment of extraordinary possibilities."
Q. How did 10-year-old Bill Clinton ask his mother for lunch money?
(Kevin Mettinger, Warrenton, Va.)

A. I have an old astronaut costume I'm thinking about dusting off.
Q. Really, you still haven't gone wedding dress shopping?
(Hannah Seidel, Alexandria)

A. Pour the egg mixture over the greens, covering them evenly.
Q. How were the protesters planning to disrupt the Masters tournament?
(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

A. The administration will propose nationwide standards for tailpipe emissions in mid-July.
Q. Is it true they're planning to limit beans in school lunches?
(John Kammer)

A. Washington's last option is to trade down.
Q. Any idea how the State Department will deal with the duvet and comforter shortage?
(Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

A. I shouldn't have to be afraid to express myself.
Q. Why do you care that you're not allowed to use USPS as a transportation option? *(Stu Segal)*

A. That dude was wrong.
Q. What's an example of the new "plain English" emphasis in appellate court rulings?
(Duncan Stevens)

And Last: A. The fact is, publishers have always made highly selective judgments about who they print and who they don't.
Q. What is definitely not true if this entry gets ink? *(Mark Raffman)*

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1437.

Two contests still running — deadline for both is Monday night, May 24:
— Make a diorama or other funny artwork including at least one cicada or casing. See wapo.st/invite1435.
— Offer a new plot for a real movie title. wapo.st/invite1436.

New contest for Week 1437: One-offs: A 'typo' neologism contest

Hurrito: A pre-made, pre-hardened breakfast wrap. *(Bob Staake)*

Streeptococcus: The acting bug. *(Susan Geariety)*

Goodzilla: A giant lizard that puts out forest fires by stamping on them. *(Sandra Hull)*

Sayonada: So long, and thanks for nothing. *(Mae Scanlan)*

We're back with yet another variation on The Style Invitational's stock in trade: the change-one-letter neologism contest. This week's contest was suggested to the Empress by Gabe Goldberg (who last appeared in the Invite when he suggested a contest in 1994):
You're a fat-fingered typist: Change a word, name or phrase by either adding or substituting one letter *that's adjacent (in any direction) to the original one* on a regular QWERTY keyboard, or by doubling the correct letter, as in the examples above from various previous neologism contests (plus Bob Staake's own example).

So you might:
(a) **Substitute** a H for an B, as in "hurrito" above; or
(b) **Add** an E next to R, as in "Streeptococcus"; or
(c) **Repeat** a letter that's already there, as in "Streeptococcus" and "Goodzilla."

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1437 (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday, May 31**; results appear June 20 in print, June 17 online.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a **cute little squeeze toy of a shark** that is more or less ingesting and egesting a human leg as you squeeze. This is the Official Squeeze Toy of the Internal Revenue Service. Well, that's what they're saying. Donated by Dave Prevar.

What a "stress reliever"!

Other runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grossery 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 for this week's results is by Jon Ketzner; 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 Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week's at *wapo.st/conv1437*.

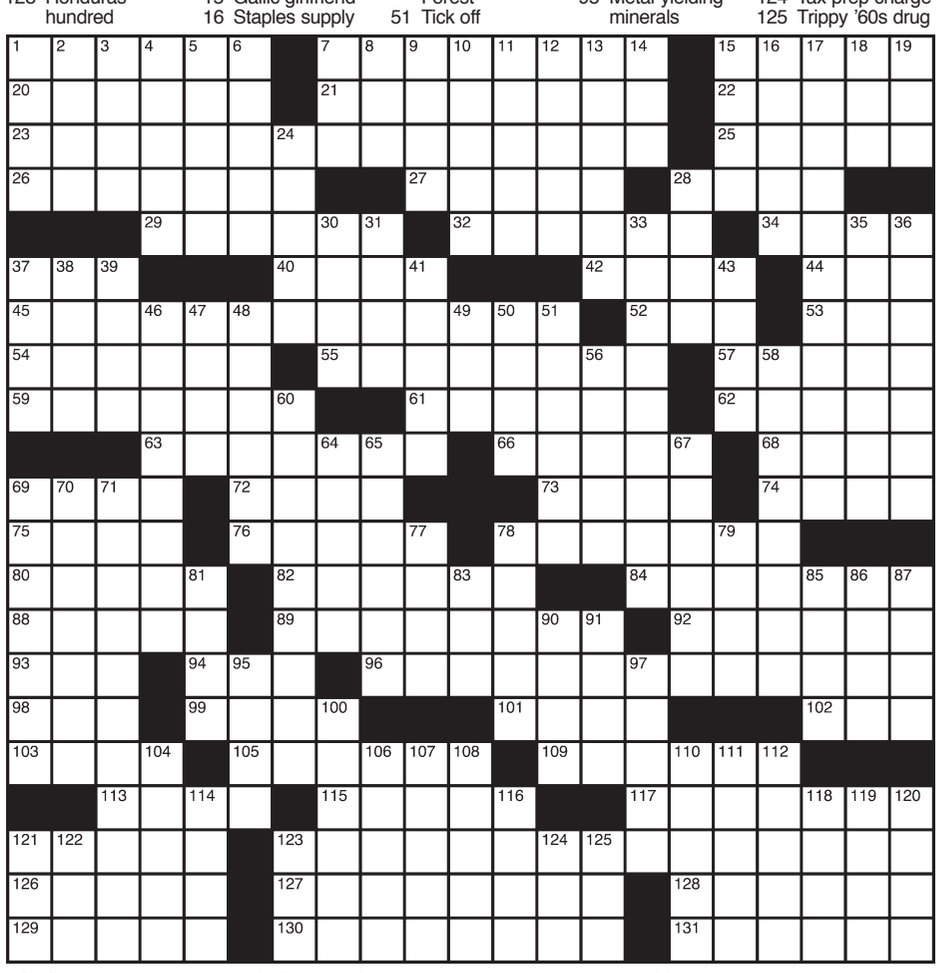
L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"FOOD FOR THOUGHT" By GARY LARSON

ACROSS
1 Sitcom character originally called Kessler in the pilot episode
7 Impounds, maybe
15 Very silly
20 Charge
21 Asthma sufferers' aids
22 Not a sparkling finish
23 Easy-to-hit pitch in Stockholm?
25 Apple tablets
26 Home and nickname of The University of the South
27 Pet __
28 Touch
29 Anna __, 18th-/19th-century poet called the Swan of Lichfield
32 1973 Judy Blume novel
34 Swell
37 Johannesburg's land: Abbr.
40 Precisely
42 Classical and Romantic
44 Grass bristle
45 Minor matter in Manchester?
52 Steamed state
53 "Just kidding!"
54 Shakespearean title city
55 Caulking materials
57 More than dislike
59 London classic, with "The"
61 Gung-ho
62 "Big Little Lies" co-star with Nicole, Shailene, Laura and Zoë
63 How dividends might be paid
66 Dustin's "Midnight Cowboy" role
68 Toledo's lake
69 __ facto
72 PC storage stats
73 Colombian cat
74 Agile deer
75 Fuzzy fruit
76 Online memo
78 Flips, in a way
80 __ Isle: Ireland nickname
82 Lindsay's Broadway writing partner
84 Brothers of old Hollywood
88 Stitch temporarily
89 Being a nuisance to
92 Research
93 @@@@
94 Fish often fried
96 Argument in Ulaanbaatar?
98 IBM competitor
99 Chicago daily, familiarly
101 Nair rival, once
102 Radical '60s org.
103 Tennis immortal
105 Times to remember
109 Pioneer 35mm cameras
113 Outback birds
115 Realizes
117 121-Across maker
121 Sandwich cookies
123 Rent money in Mumbai?
126 Tomato __
127 Devotions
128 Honduras hundred
129 Rough suit fabric
130 In a bind?
131 Dave of "Storage Wars"

DOWN
1 Contact between two billiard balls
2 Investment firm T. __ Price
3 From square one
4 King with a gilt complex?
5 Web mag
6 Alter, in a way
7 "Mystic River" Oscar winner Robbins
8 Indivisible
9 Sound of a hit
10 Totally full
11 "Tiny Alice" playwright
12 Emulate Silas Marner
13 Garfield's gal pal
14 Fashion initials
15 Gallic girlfriend
16 Staples supply
17 Medal recipient in Milan?
18 Typical: Abbr.
19 Fellows
24 "The Return of the Native" setting
28 Sweat
30 Goes bad
31 Challenge
33 Worried state in Dublin?
35 Two-time Tony winner Kurtz
36 Menu heading
37 Guns
38 Old-time knife
39 Uttar Pradesh tourist city
41 Princess topper
43 Scorch
46 Starting place for a comeback
47 "Are we going __ not?"
48 Strauss opera
49 Where St. Pete is
50 First actor who sang "If I Were King of the Forest"
51 Tick off
56 Byes
58 Brewpub bragger, often
60 Dance move in Dijon?
64 Greek marketplace
65 Weather forecast shorthand
67 "Fan-cee!"
69 Japanese floral art
70 Hook and Silver
71 Inferior items in Zurich?
77 German capital
78 Have the throne
79 Scientology founder Hubbard
81 Religious offshoot
83 Prefix with fuel
85 Squeezes (out)
86 Wished undone
87 Sunscreen nos.
90 Caroling standard
91 __ club
95 Metal-yielding minerals
97 Book that spawned the film "What's Love Got to Do With It"
100 Island administered by three countries
104 Play too broadly
106 Moth-repellent wood
107 Flags down
108 Sudden outpouring
110 Trick
111 Yippie Hoffman
112 Stud farm residents
114 Likely to be discounted
116 Foul mood
118 Posted
119 Blanchett of "Elizabeth"
120 You may get a whiff of one
121 Select
122 __ bar
123 "Portlandia" network
124 Tax prep charge
125 Trippy '60s drug



5/23/21 xwordeditor@aol.com ©2021 Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | May 23: You are lively, witty and well spoken. You think fast and you move fast. You love to learn and gather information, which, in turn, you then share with others. You will be forever youthful. Following a recent change, this year is one of fitting in and letting the dust settle. It will be a more social, easygoing year.

Moon alert: Avoid shopping or making important decisions from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern today (2:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Pacific). After that, the moon moves from Libra into Scorpio.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Be careful with others today, because you have to go more than halfway when dealing with them. Be cooperative. Nevertheless, you might have a power struggle this afternoon. Romance is hot.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Once the moon alert begins, you might experience shortages and be less efficient. Be patient with co-workers to avoid power struggles.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Parents must be patient with their kids today, and romantic partners must be patient with each other. Fortunately, this is a wonderful, creative day. You can boost your health. Enjoy time with a pet.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
You might have an important discussion with a family member today. Perhaps you will choose to seek out solitude and cocoon at home. Socialize and enjoy relaxing. It's a high-energy week; nevertheless, you might choose to hide.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You need to communicate today. This is all well and good; however, as the moon alert begins today, you might find yourself trying to prove something to someone. Family relations are supportive.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Be careful handling your money today. During the moon alert today, restrict spending to food and gas. Conversations with family and neighbors are upbeat. You impress people. Bosses and parents you haven't seen in a while are back in the picture.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Today the moon is in your sign until after the moon alert is over. Until then, you might feel more emotional. Avoid arguments. Stay chill. Respect your moneymaking ideas.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Today you will prefer to work alone or behind the scenes because you want to escape from all the busyness around you. (Good choice.) During the moon alert, avoid important decisions and spending money on anything except food.

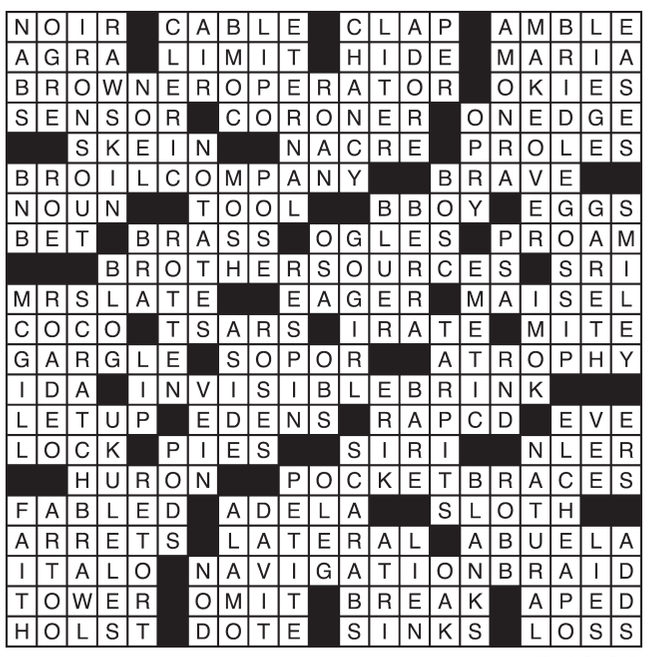
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
A conversation with a female companion might be important today. Naturally, this doesn't have to happen if you maintain your cool. You'll enjoy private time alone. Old friends and ex-partners are back on the scene.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Steer clear of power struggles with bosses, parents, teachers and the police. Wait until the moon alert is over to volunteer for anything. Time with friends and groups will be rewarding. Be patient with delays and goofy mistakes at work.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Avoid arguments about politics, religion and racial issues, which might easily arise today. These quarrels will accomplish nothing. Meanwhile, don't agree to anything important during the moon alert. People are impressed with you. Old flames are back in your world.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Squabbles about shared property, taxes, debt or shared responsibilities might occur today. Remember: Patience is the antidote to anger. Therefore, if you are patient, you're Teflon.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



5/16/21