

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Take the ha road: Winning signs

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1473 we asked you for messages for an electronic highway sign or barbecue joint marquee. Today's winner is pictured with aid of the sign-generator app at atom.smasher.org. See the other sign in this week's online Invite.

4th place: ATTENTION SELF-DRIVING CARS: COMMENCE THE REVOLUTION NOW! (Jeff Rackow, Bethesda)

3rd place: FIVE STARS! EXCELLENT DELAY! WOULD SIT THROUGH AGAIN (Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.)

2nd place and the Derriere Repair cream:

For the Little Pigs barbecue joint sign:

CLOSED FOR YOM KIPPUR (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:



(Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

SOUTHBOUND: Honorable mentions

DON'T TEXT AND DRIVE UNLESS YOU'RE MAKING FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS (Lenard King, Richmond)

PUT DOWN YOUR PH -- DON'T BE A D-M-Y WORDLE CAN WAIT (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

HWY DEDICATED TO TROOPER SMITH POTHoles DEDICATED TO SEN MANCHIN (Scott Richards, Hollywood, Md.)

WHO'S A GOOD DOG? YOU ARE! ESPECIALLY IF YOU CAN READ THIS (Sarah Walsh, Rockville)

ENTERING BLUE STATE WELCOME SATANIC PEDOPHILES (Steve Benko, Southport, Conn., a First Offender)

EXPECT DELAYS IT'S THE LAW (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring)

SPEED CAMERA AHEAD SO STOP PICKING YOUR NOSE (Paul R. Brown, Silver Spring, a First Offender)

NEW LANE UNDER CONSTRUCTION YOUR DESCENDANTS ARE GONNA LOVE IT (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

CRASH AHEAD PREPARE TO EXTEND NECK (Frank Mann, Washington)

SPEED TRAP AHEAD OR MAYBE NOT FEEL LUCKY, PUNK? (Mark Raffman, Reston)

BRIDGE FREEZES BEFORE HOT LANE DUH! (Mark Raffman)

LEAVING PG COUNTY NEXT 3 COUNTIES ARE RATED R (Mark Richardson, Takoma Park)

OVERSIZE LOAD? DIAPER CHANGING STATION AT NEXT REST AREA (Lori Lipman Brown, Silver Spring)

REMINDER: YOUR SENATOR VOTED AGAINST THE INFRASTRUCTURE BILL (David Kleeman, Chevy Chase)

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY: MOM SAYS PUT ON A SWEATER (Tom Dickinson, Springfield, a First Offender)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1477: Thinking outside the big box

Field whistle on a lanyard: I am highly disappointed in this product — not a single lovely lady has given me so much as a wink when she walks by. The only good thing is that my spit drains out of it pretty well.

Over the years, The Style Invitational has invited the Loser Community several times to "review" some mostly boring products listed on a certain shopping portal. This time, though, we won't have to mention who owns The Washington Post. This week: Send us a humorous "review" for any of the following items listed on walmart.com, as in the example above. Keep them brief; 75 words would be long for us. The reviews must not cause harm to the manufacturer or seller. Don't post the reviews online until after we post the results. To find the exact items we're using this week, click on the links included in this week's entry form or in the online Invite.

- Standard shoehorn
Field whistle on a lanyard
White sandwich bread
Digital alarm clock
Roll of Duck brand silver duct tape
Original Slinky
20-quart clear storage box with latching top
Lion mane costume for cats

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1477 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, March 7; results appear March 27 in print, March 24 online.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a little book called 'How to Rule the World: A Handbook for the Aspiring Dictator.' It's a witty satire by André de Guillaume, but this copy, found in a used-book store and donated by Loser Richard Franklin, has been greatly improved, humorwise, by some previous reader who — quite seriously, it seems — dutifully underlined such passages as "Surround yourself with directionless and malleable toadies" and checked off items in the diagnostic quiz "The Ideal Personality of a Leader": "You like giving instructions in a loud voice" — circled "YES."

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 new lusted-after Loser magnets, "A Small Jester of Appreciation" or "Close, but Ceci N'est Pas un Cigare." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviteFAQ. The headline "Take the Ha Road" was submitted by both Jesse Frankovich and Craig Dykstra; Tom Witte 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, with classic product reviews, at wapo.st/conv1477.

SEE A DISTRACTED DRIVER? TEXT 'SAFETY' TO 73826 (Bill Grewe, Front Royal, Va., a First Offender)

WELCOME TO DC IT'S BEEN: 416 DAYS SINCE OUR LAST COUP ATTEMPT (Donald Norum, Charlottesville)

WHY ARE YOU GOING TO WORK NAKED? MADE YOU LOOK (Frank Mann)

LET'S JUST SAY IT'S NOT A GOOD TIME TO GO INTO LABOR (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

SILVER ALERT HAVE YOU CALLED YOUR MOTHER? (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)

AIRPORT NEXT EXIT TSA LINE BEGINS PREVIOUS EXIT (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

AT DUSK TURN ON HEADLIGHTS SAVE DEMOCRACY (Steve Baldwin, Bethesda; Tim Livengood, Columbia)

NOW ENTERING A STATE WITH LEGALIZED POT — HOLES (Jesse Frankovich)

ENTERING THE BRONX WHADDA YOU LOOKIN' AT? (Steve Smith, Potomac)

YOU HAD TO HAVE THAT LARGE COFFEE, DIDN'T YOU? (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

5 MIN TO NEXT EXIT WAIT, NO, 15 MIN EH YOU'LL GET THERE WHEN YOU GET THERE (Elizabeth Molyé, Washington)

NO MERGING WITHOUT ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

SIRI IS NOT THE BOSS OF YOU EXIT WHENEVER YOU WANT TO (Terri Berg Smith, Rockville)

WELCOME TO TEXAS SET CLOCKS BACK TO 1971 (Perry Beider, Silver Spring; Daniel Galef, Tallahassee)

FOR THE BARBECUE SIGN

FILL UP ON OUR BEANS AND GET GAS TOO (Mark Raffman, Edward Gordon, Austin; Dave Airosso, Silver Spring)

KERMIE! SAVE ME! (Terri Berg Smith)

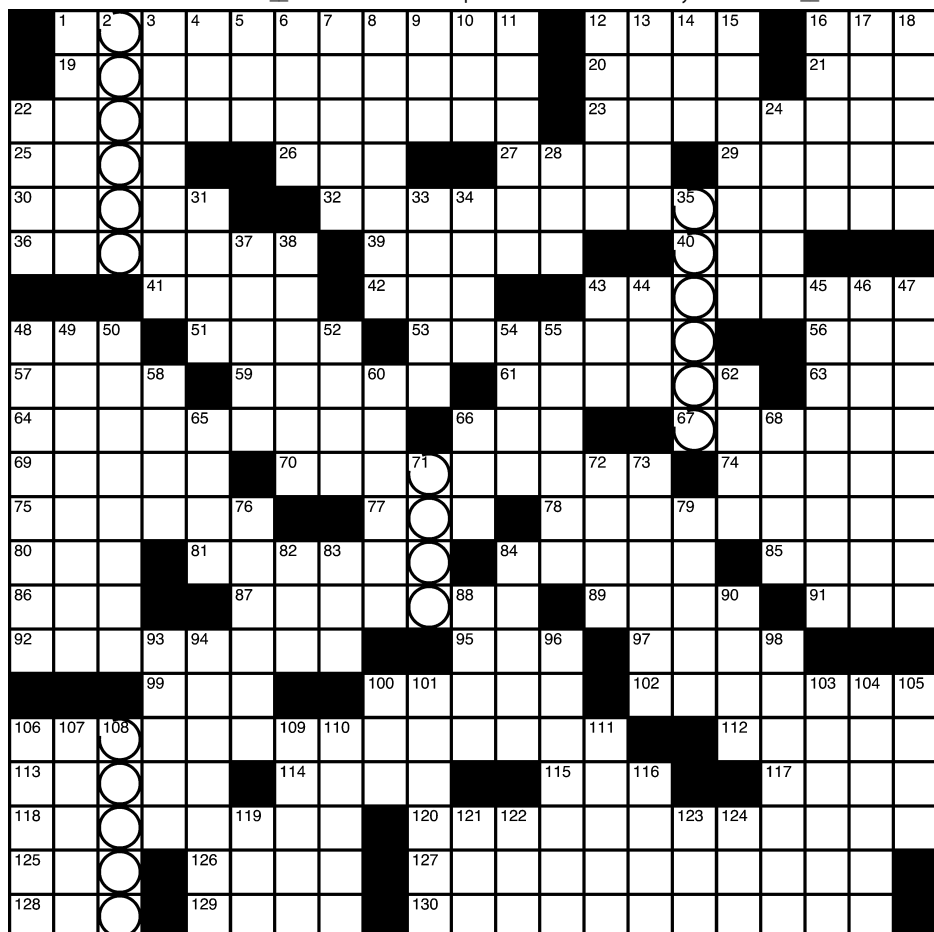
STOP IN AND SEE A MAN EATING PIG (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

More honorable mentions at wapo.st/invite1477.

Two contests still running — both due Monday night, Feb. 28: Write a song or cheer for the newly named Washington Commanders, or any other D.C. institution (wapo.st/invite1475); and find Googlenopes, phrases that get no Google hits, and/or Googleyups, phrases that surprisingly do (wapo.st/invite1476).

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- 'JUICY TIDBITS' By KATRINA LEE
ACROSS
1 Often abbreviated reaction to information overload
12 Ukulele ridge
16 "Gotcha" sounds
19 Starter
20 Indian flatbread
21 Laser pointer chaser
22 Altruism
23 Most of the 2010s
25 Span of a scale with three sharps
26 That, in Madrid
27 Gucci of fashion
29 "Elements of Algebra" author
30 "Don't back down, bro!"
32 Completely different situation
36 Certain carton components
39 Reunion attendees
40 Café freebie
41 "Don't think so"
42 Nos. for alums
43 Comparative data diagram
48 "The Misery Index" network
51 Bulgarian's neighbor
53 Type of diet that might replace potatoes with cauliflower
56 New Deal agcy.
57 "High Rollers" co-host
59 Grams
61 Alert on the road
63 "in Charlie"
64 "Play it cool"
66 Prefix, with treat or giving
67 Blow a fuse
69 Sellers of KAFFERE
70 Middle-earth ring bearer
74 Following
75 Tokyo airport
77 Apple runs on it
78 Raggedy
80 Hot state
81 How three nursery-rhyme merchants went to sea
84 Trailer follower
85 Laker legend, familiarly
86 Votes against
87 Soybeans served in the pod
89 Gawlk at
91 With 6-Down, Rudolph's guiding light
92 Dad's referral?
95 Boarding precedes it: Abbr.
97 Penicillium, e.g.
99 Half a martial art
100 Kendrick with a Pulitzer
102 On the lam
106 Résumé alert about an unfinished goal
112 Like a romantic dinner, in Paris
113 Chef's protection
114 Word with words or chance
115 Org. with many returns
117 Paris gal pal
118 Most sentimental
120 Total removals
125 Maiden name
126 Ball
127 "The Crocodile" of early tennis
128 ID on many returns
129 Post
130 "Give me some gossip!" ... and a hint to this puzzle's sets of circles, which affect four
Cross answers
DOWN
1 What Rickey Henderson often beat
2 Chinese for "black dragon"
3 NIAID director
4 Luzon, for one: Abbr.
5 JFK predecessor
6 See 91-Across
7 Thompson of Marvel movies
8 Beat it
9 Night before
10 Technica: tech news website
11 Make drinkable, as seawater
12 70-Across nephew
13 "Mr. \_\_\_": Rami
14 ORD posting
15 Zoom annoyance
16 Amtrak speedster
17 Sultan's group
18 Intimidate, with "down"
22 Identical
24 Foretell
28 Paris article
31 Trivia night settings
33 Flings
34 "That's wrong \_\_\_ many levels"
35 Like some remedies
37 Hammer parts
38 "Ghost Story" author Peter
43 Forbid
44 Flood shelter
45 23andMe discovery
46 "Thank the Lord!"
47 Got a move on
48 Instruction
49 "\_\_\_ Holiday": opening section of Copland's
Malek drama
50 First woman to be named Doctor of the Church, briefly
52 \_\_\_ Brith
54 Tory adversary
55 \_\_\_ de' Medici, first de facto Lord of Florence
58 Berry in a bowl
60 Garlic genus
62 Get plastered
65 Piedmont bubbly
66 Classic UK. sports cars
68 Prepare, as beans
71 Fett in "The Mandalorian"
72 De \_\_\_ again
73 Stain
76 Short on iron, maybe
79 Serf of Sparta
82 Ruckus
83 Cap with a pompo
84 Convened in
88 Idea that spreads in a culture
90 "First Lady of
93 Entrance porch
94 Teen dystopian novel narrator
96 Hanukkah top
98 Duchamp, for one
100 CD precursors
101 Lets out, say
103 Channel changer
104 Kind of pig
105 They can be tricky to run into
106 Daybreaks
107 Foil relatives
108 Putting \_\_\_
109 Designer Ashley
110 Like some cornered kings
111 "You know the \_\_\_"
116 90-Down's improv
119 Just make, with "out"
121 Good name, briefly
122 "Star Wars" nickname
123 German "Alas"
124 \_\_\_ the line



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Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

Happy Birthday | Feb. 27: You are an intuitive dreamer. Many of you are shy. Nevertheless, you are passionate about whatever you embrace or decide to do. You are compassionate and care deeply about your loved ones. Good news. This is a wonderful year for you because you will get acknowledgment for your efforts. You might win awards, scholarships or get a promotion.

Moon Alert: Avoid shopping or making important decisions from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. After that, the Moon moves from Capricorn into Aquarius.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) For one more week, your ruling planet Mars will be at the top of your chart, arousing your ambition to achieve. Make the most of this strong determination and energy. Ideally, you want to be your own boss.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) It's easy to identify with your beliefs. Be careful about trying to coerce others into agreeing with you. It's okay for you to have your beliefs and ideas, in the same way that it's okay for others to have their beliefs and ideas.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Be gentle with others in disputes over shared property, taxes, debt or inheritances, or a disagreement about how to spend a limited amount of money. This is a test for you to transform the ways in which you assert yourself in the world.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Avoid important decisions during the Moon Alert. Afterward, your focus will turn to issues related to shared property or inheritances. You also might face a situation where your values are different from the values of someone else.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) After the Moon Alert, the Moon will move opposite your sign, which means you will have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. It simply means you have to be cooperative and accommodating.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Lately you have been determined to do your own thing. Your own self-gratification has come first because you feel you have the right to

express what and who you are. Very soon, this focus turns to work and accomplishment.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You're busy on all fronts. You want to be efficient. You might improve your home. You also want to entertain and socialize. This will take some fancy juggling on your part.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You have been persuasive and convincing in the past month because fiery Mars is in your House of Communications. In about a week, this strong energy will subside, as your focus shifts to increased activity at home.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You continue to have a strong focus on home and family; however, you are spending money. If shopping, be aware of the restrictions of the Moon Alert. Wait until the Moon

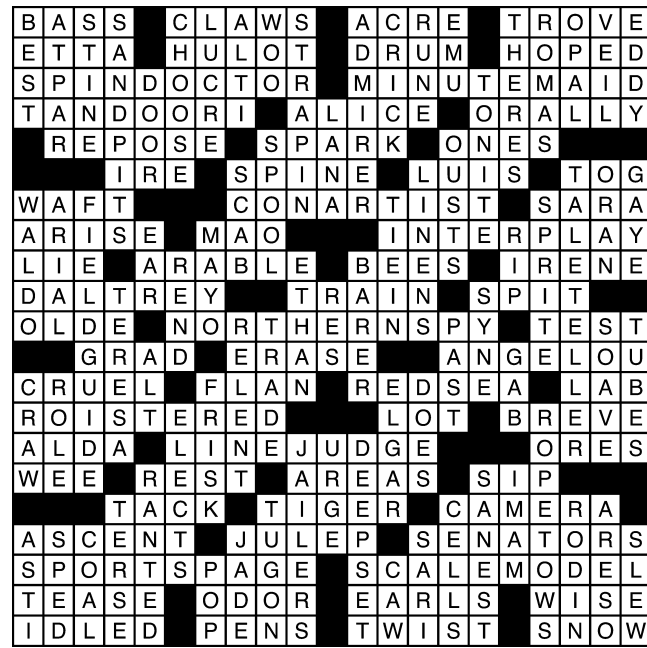
Alert is over to make big purchases.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) This is a good time for you to buy wardrobe items for yourself. Therefore, heed the restrictions of the Moon Alert today. Wait until after it's over to shop for something that makes you feel good.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) After the Moon Alert is over, the Moon will move into your sign, which will do two things: It will heighten your emotional response to everything and everyone. However, it also will slightly improve your luck over all the other signs.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Make the most of the fact that the Sun in your sign is approaching a lineup with Jupiter in your sign, which is a wonderful blessing for you. This will boost your confidence, optimism and good fortune.

Answers to last week's puzzle.



2/20/22