

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1160: A remeaning task — redefine an existing word

Plus Dead Letters: the winning verses for our annual obit-poem contest



My List



The definition of “perplexed” as “lost in a movie theater” got ink in 1998; this week, can you redefine it or another word starting with P-through Z? (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers January 28 [Follow @PatMyersTWP](#)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to this week’s winning verses about people who died in 2015)

Perplexed: Lost in a movie theater. (Michelle Feeley)

Rubbernecker: A couple practicing very safe sex. (Ross Elliffe)

Willy-nilly: Impotent. (Beth Benson)

Soda: Totally obvious to a teenager. (Mark Young)

Back in 1998, the Invitational ran a contest for new meanings for actual words, yielding [one of the most viral Invites ever](#) (have you ever seen that list including “coffee: a person who is coughed upon” and “lymph: to walk with a lisp”? That was Week 266). We repeated the contest in 2004, drawing [another fabulous set of results](#). Then again in Week 749, but just for the first third of the dictionary, and in Week 925, for the second third. It took a nudge from Invite legend Chris Doyle to remind the Empress that she never covered the rest of the alphabet: **This week: Redefine an existing word or two-word term beginning with P through Z**, as in the examples above from earlier contests. The definition should differ greatly from the original; it shouldn’t be a cynical interpretation of the word’s actual meaning.

Winner gets the [Inkin’ Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives two bottles of highly novel drinks: (a) Chocolate-Covered Maple-Smoked Bacon Soda — “breakfast in a bottle”; it is brown; and Leninade, very red soda with a hammer-and-sickle logo. “Join the Party!” Both donated by Michael Cotterman, a long-ago Invite prize-mailing flunky who is now a newsroom administrator, not to mention a [punk bass player](#).

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#), the older-model “[This Is Your Brain on Mugs](#)” mug or a vintage Loser T-shirt (possibly gently used). Honorable mentions get our lusted-after Loser magnets, “[Magnet Dum Laude](#)” or “[Falling Jest Short](#).” First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). Email entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, Feb. 8; results published Feb. 28 (online Feb. 25). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include “Week 1160” in your email subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week’s results is by Jeff Shirley; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jesse Frankovich. 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; follow [@StyleInvite](https://twitter.com/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.

[And the results of the Style Invitational contest posted four weeks ago . . .](#)

POETRY IN MOTIONLESS: THE OBIT POEMS OF WEEK 1156

[Week 1156](#), our annual Dead Letters (or Post Mortem) contest for poems about people who died the previous year, drew verses about not only the predictable Leonard Nimoy and Yogi Berra, but also the would-be robber of a German condom-dispensing machine, and a burglar who got stuck in the chimney.

4th place:

Jean Nidetch, founder of Weight Watchers:

Arriving in Heaven, Jean murmured a greeting,
Then said to Saint Peter, “It’s time for a meeting.
I hope that you’ll help me as I make the rounds,
’Cause each of your cherubs could lose a few pounds.” (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

3rd place:

Mohammed Emwazi, “Jihadi John”:

Jihadi John read articles about Islamic State,
And soon became converted to the joys of blood and hate.
But now he’s only particles. More pages won’t be read.
His state is not Islamic. It’s just ultra, ultra dead. (Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

2nd place and the “Fat of Python” and “Cobra Toxan” skin ointments:

Miami Dolphins kicker Garo Yepremian:

Higgledy piggledy,
Garo Yepremian,
Dolphins' ex-placekicker,
Ceases to be.
Unceremonious
Fans of the Redskins, though,
Jeered at [his passing](#) in
'73.
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:**Woman who accidentally killed herself while [adjusting her bra holster](#)”:**

She got herself a push-up bra
That had a single fatal flaw.
It didn't just support her charms;
This bra was meant for bearing arms.
But holster bras should not be trusted,
Since bras are always readjusted.
Sad to say, dear gun-nut crazies,
“Push up” now refers to daisies. (Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney, Md.)

Sorry for your loss: honorable mentions**Would-be burglar who [got stuck in the chimney](#):**

A burglar climbed to a rooftop;
The chimney, he used as a door.
He got stuck and nobody noticed
Till the fireplace started to roar.
He died, and this terrible story
Has a moral that might make you flinch:
Turns out 2015 was the year
That Christmas stole the Grinch. (David Friedman, Arlington, Va.)

[Anne Woods](#), “gurning” (funny-face) champion:

Anne Woods was a champion gurner,
Whose facial contortions would earn her
Both fame for the hideous scowls she could make
And a coffin deliberately closed at her wake. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Lillian Vernon, catalogue mogul:

Lillian Vernon is gone but not buried —
Oh, what a fiasco! Don't ask! It
Seems nobody planned on the extra two weeks
For a personalizable casket. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

Leonard Nimoy:

Knockity Spockity,
Half-Vulcan alien;

Watched him on “Star Trek”; my
Feelings were mixed;
Right there in Hollywood
(Incomprehensibly!),
Why did he never go
Get those ears fixed? (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Comcast founder Ralph J. Roberts:

That solemn morning after he departed,
I hope his friends and family didn’t swoon
While waiting for his service to get started
Sometime between the hours of 8 and noon. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Burglar attacked by an alligator:

A Florida man was burgling a house — a non-law-abiding civilian.
He fled from the scene, eluding the cops, but not so the town’s crocodilian.
He plunged in the lake and soon realized he’d chosen an ill-advised time.
“What ho!” said the reptile. “A fortunate snack. I’ll take a big bite out of crime.”
The homeowner’s breathing more easily now; she’ll suffer no further vexations.
There won’t be a trial; he had no defense for the serious alligations. (Nan Reiner)

Pet Rock creator Gary Dahl:

It had no cuddly fur and couldn’t bark or purr;
The only trick it knew was playing dead.
Yet now, on certain days when ruin meets your gaze
(A savaged running shoe or couch or bed),
Or when it’s 10 below and Fido has to go . . .
Admit it: you would take Dahl’s pet instead. (Melissa Balmain)

Don Featherstone, inventor of the plastic flamingo:

Don Featherstone thrills as he peers through the gates,
Where a freshly mowed field of lush fescue awaits.
The plastic flamingo clutched under his arm
Will bring joy to the souls now bereft its charm.
But there’s good news and bad news to come from Saint Pete,
Because God has a mission for Don to complete:
Yes, he’ll get into Heaven, but that’s been deferred
Till he first goes to Hell and gives Satan the bird.
(Chris Doyle)

Don Featherstone, it would have been fantastic
If you had changed your name to Featherplastic. (Melissa Balmain)

Mario Cuomo

I’m sorry is no mo.
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

John Nash, the world-renowned mathematician, died;

Left us too early but in recognition, I’d
Put age of death on his graveside memorial:

10 squared times 2, plus 6, less 5 factorial.

(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

Yogi Berra

American as apple pie or pasta primavera —

Few people made their mark like pisan Lawrence Peter Berra.

The three-time MVP who made our pastime so much fun

Reminded us, “Keep trying! It ain’t done until it’s done!”

But then at 90 Yogi said: “100? I can’t make it:

When someone sticks a fork in you, you really oughta take it.”

(Dave Zarrow, Reston, Va.)

Culinary entrepreneur Chuck Williams

Chuck Williams showed us, with nary a doubt,

All manner of stuff that we can’t live without.

Sets for fonduing and oils made with truffles,

Cast-iron steamers and tablecloth ruffles,

In mail order shopping I’ve got my diploma,

A magna cum laude from Williams-Sonoma. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

James R. Dixon, authority on amphibians

Lest you think his claim to fame is dim,

The white-lipped peeping frog is named for him. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Natalie Cole

When Natalie Cole

Sang “Unforgettable”

[With her dad’s departed soul](#),

The stunt was a mite regrettable. Would Nat have looked askance?

Listeners could only guess.

Now she has the chance

To ask him: No or yes?

(Warren Clements, Toronto)

Jack Ely, “Louie Louie” singer:

Jack’s life on Earth at last was spent;

He sang “Me gotta go” — and went. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

At Jack Ely’s funeral someone stood up;

A sincere panegyric was read.

“This eulogist’s great!” raved one guest to another;

“Though [hell if I know what he said](#).” (Danielle Nowlin)

James Horner

Since “Titanic” composer James Horner is gone,

Our spirits are sinking — his heart won’t go on.

(Jesse Frankovich)

Man who blew up a condom vending machine:

Dear anonymous dimwit from Germany: what could be denser

Than thinking it clever to blow up a condom dispenser?

Being struck in the skull by the shrapnel was not your best move,
But you won't reproduce, so the Darwin Awards would approve.
(Brendan Beary)

Egyptian-born actor Omar Sharif

The gig here on earth has completed its run for the debonair Omar Sharif,
So Gabriel flew down to greet him with news that his next journey wouldn't be brief.
"Our wait list is lengthy; it might take a while to accomplish your heavenward slog, O —
But trust me, 'twill feel like mere seconds compared with your voyage in 'Doctor Zhivago.'" (Nan Reiner)

"Cairo's protesting," said **Omar Sharif**,
"About 'Funny Girl,' claiming we're getting too cozy."
Barbra replied: "You think *you're* getting grief?
Take a look at this letter I got from Aunt Rosie!" (Chris Doyle)

The Jacka, Chinx Drugz, Ezkimo, Pumpkinhead, Hussein Fatal, MC Supreme, Young Ready, etc.:

Rappers met in heaven for a medley:
For each, life wasn't silent, it was deadly. (Mark Raffman)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 1: Our contest for novel board or parlor games. See bit.ly/invite1159.

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