

Style Invitational Week 1207: Clue us in — a reverse crossword

Here's the grid; you write funny clues. Plus winning musings on various magical powers

I	T	S	A	T	R	A	P		B	A	R	G	E	S	
M	E	I	N	H	E	R	R		I	P	H	O	N	E	
S	E	N	T	E	N	C	E		D	E	I	D	R	E	
		C	I	T	E		L	P	S		N	A	A	N	
H	A	L		A	W	F	U	L		C	O	R	G	I	
A	L	A	S		S	I	D	E	P	O	C	K	E	T	
S	P	I	T	S		R	E	T	I	R	E				
H	O	R	R	O	R	S		H	E	A	R	S	E	S	
				I	D	O	T	O	O		L	O	E	W	E
C	H	U	P	A	C	A	B	R	A		S	L	O	G	
H	I	N	T	S		I	T	A	L	Y		A	K	A	
E	L	S	E		I	D	A		S	O	B	S			
S	T	U	A	R	T		I	D	A	R	E	S	A	Y	
T	O	R	S	O	S		N	E	C	K	L	I	N	E	
S	N	E	E	Z	Y		S	W	E	E	T	E	N	S	

Here are the answers to a Birnholz puzzle from 2014; it's up to you to provide creative, funny clues for up to 25 of them. (Grid by Evan Birnholz/DevilCross.com)

By Pat Myers • Entertainment December 22

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning ideas for what to do with various magical powers)

RETIRE: What to do to a car that won't run — or one that just has a flat

HEARSEES: Derrieres that fit best in men's jeans

There's a double helping of Evan Birnholz in The Post's Arts & Style section this weekend. First, because The Washington Post Magazine has Christmas off, Evan's ultra-clever Sunday crossword found room at our newsprint inn instead, on Page E4. And just as he did last year, Evan has slipped the Empress a grid to use for our annual backward-crossword challenge; once again, it's from a puzzle he constructed for his own website, Devil Cross, back in 2014.



How do you make Homer Simpson look more like O.J. Simpson? This week's second prize. (Pat Myers/The Washington Post)

This week: Supply clever, funny clues to up to 25 of the 72 words and multi-word terms in Evan's grid, as in the examples above (the second one being "he-arses"). Yes, the grid has no numbers — because we don't need them: just **list each word along with your clue** (if it's a multi-word or hyphenated term, please list it as a single word anyway, so the Empress can search for all the entries with, say, IDOTOO). The clues should be brief, but they don't have to be as short as for a real crossword, as the examples show. (Note: This is an American-style crossword, not the British type in which the clue contains an anagram of the desired word.)

Evan's own clues for this puzzle are, not surprisingly, pretty challenging; for example, for ANTI it's "No one?" — as in someone who says no. (We dispense with the convention of ending a wordplay clue with a question mark, since we'd end up with them on 90 percent of our clues.) If you'd like to try to do the puzzle first, before studying the clues above — or just want to see Evan's clues — go to bit.ly/devilcross2 and scroll down to the blank grid.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1207 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a brand-new [Chia Homer](#), a terra cotta bust of Mr. Simpson on which you grow a sort of Afro of green "hair" in the form of sprouting little chia seeds — making Homer look like a cross between Green Bill Cosby and Green Ronald McDonald. Donated by Not a Loser Herself Martha Heiner.

Other runners-up win the yearned-for ["This Is Your Brain on Mugs" Loser mug](#) or our Grossery Bag, ["I Got a B in Punmanship."](#) Honorable mentions get one of 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). Deadline is Monday night, Jan. 2; results published Jan. 22 (online Jan. 19). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Tom Witte; 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, published late Thursday afternoon, discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

CAPE-ABILITIES: THE RESULTS OF WEEK 1203

In [Week 1203](#) we asked what you would do with one or more of the magical powers we listed. Many Losers offered that if they could become many times as small, they might almost feel comfortable on a short flight in coach.

4th place

Shape-shifting: I would turn myself into a Chihuahua during storms so my habit of piddling myself would seem more acceptable. (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

3rd place

If I had **X-ray vision**, I would become an orthopedic surgeon and go to poor rural clinics to provide free health care. Just kidding! I would look through people's clothes at their butts. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

2nd place

and the *['Pessimism: It's probably not that great' T-shirt](#)*:

X-ray vision: Don't need it — I just walk right into the dressing room. — D.J.T., Still New York (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Supersonic speed: I'd stand on the Olympic podium next to Usain Bolt and proudly receive my silver medal. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Downed power lines: honorable mentions

Becoming huge and shape-shifting: I'd become a super-large Newt Gingrich and put the star on the Capitol Christmas tree. Just like the Abominable Snowman in the Rudolph TV special, but with hair spray and no friends. (Kevin Doport, Washington)

Imperviousness to heat: I'd run into burning buildings to save people. Then run back in and ransack their drawers for cash. Come on, it was going up in smoke anyway! (Ben Aronin, Washington)

Shape-shifting and becoming many times as small: I would assume the shape of a camel and then fit through the eye of a needle, paving the way to Heaven for countless dead tycoons. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Shape-shifting: I would assume the shape of a 15-foot rooster, paint myself blue and run through the [National Gallery's East Building](#) shouting, "I'm free! I'm free!" (Roy Ashley, Washington)

I'd **shrink** and sneak into Trump's bedroom while he's alone at the White House and then do a series of **shape-shifts** into the Ghosts of Wives Past, Present and Yet to Come. The future vision would be Rosie O'Donnell. You're welcome, Melania. (Kevin Doport)

Shape-shifting: I would become a star so I could twinkle. This is how I actually answered that question in elementary school, which led to an undeserved critique by classmates during recess consisting of a most unpleasant Atomic Flying Wedgie. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va., who's slowly getting over that)

If I had **supersonic speed** and **X-ray vision**, was **impervious to cold** and could **shape-shift**: I'd race to the North Pole, morph into an elf, and get an early look at what Santa is bringing me this year. Oh yeah, like you wouldn't? (Perry Beider,

Silver Spring, Md.)

Supersonic speed: I'd be late for everything, just to mess with people. (David Ballard, Reston, Va.)

Supersonic speed: I'd go to law school and become an ambulance-catcher. (Roger Strauss, Silver Spring, Md.)

Imperviousness to heat and cold: I could fulfill my childhood ambition to become a firefighter/penguin researcher. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Imperviousness to cold: In August, I could go to my D.C. office without even bringing my parka. (Howard Walderman, Columbia, Md.)

Imperviousness to cold: I'd stand outside disguised as a snowman, waiting patiently to scare the bejeebers out of the next person who let his dog poop on my lawn. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

X-ray vision: I'd finally confirm that sicko Schrödinger's cat is dead. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

X-ray vision: I'd wear a lead-lined blindfold — because I definitely do not want to see people's skulls and intestines. (Melissa Balmain)

X-ray vision: I don't really want to use it for anything. I just want to wear those [cool glasses](#) with the spiral lenses. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

To become many times as large: I'd become a hand model. — Donald Trump (Ben Aronin)

Many times as small: I would fill my toilet with heated water so it could double as a Jacuzzi. (David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

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Many times as large: I could finally see just how cold — and deep — urinal water is. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Having supersonic speed: When the car ahead of me on the Beltway moved, I'd be able to move that five additional feet really, really fast. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Having supersonic speed: As my wife can tell you, there are times when this can leave a lot to be desired. (Jesse Frankovich)

Many times as small: At last I can finally get that last bit of toothpaste out of the tube! I'll need tiny miner's helmet for light and a minuscule bulldozer. Bulldozer's gonna need an itsy-bitsy ramp to the mouth of the tube . . . Man, this is complicated! But so worth it. (Elliott Shevin, Oak Park, Mich.)

Still running — deadline Monday, Dec. 26: Enter any of the year's previous contests. See bit.ly/invite1206.

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