

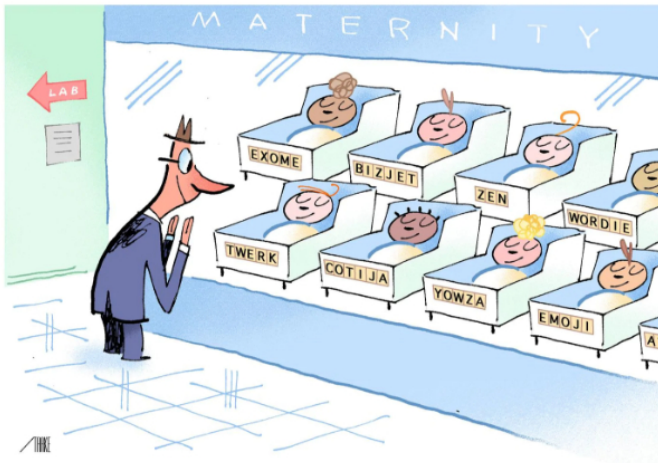


1

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1299: OK, hivemind! A contest with new Scrabble words

Plus the winning bad news/REALLY bad news jokes



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**
September 27

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning bad-thing/REALLY-bad-thing jokes)

ARANCINI (rice balls) → rice → Condoleezza → condo leaser → Scott Pruitt → EPA → creepy A → “The Scarlet Letter” → Puritans → witch hunt → his latest tweet → FACEPALM (an “oh, no” gesture)

Three weeks ago, Merriam-Webster announced some of the words it had just added to its [online dictionary](#), and we asked you to write poems featuring them (see the results of [Week 1296](#) next week). Now, this week, M-W has announced [additions to its Scrabble dictionary](#) — including the strategically important *ew*, *OK* and *zen* — 50 of which we list below. So what to do with them? Gaack, not poems again.

So the Empress polled the hivemind of the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook (without showing the words, of course) and went with the suggestion of Loser Hildy Zampella.

This week: Choose any two of the words in the list at the bottom of this column as the beginning and end of a humorous word chain of 6 to 14 words or phrases, linked by subject matter, by synonyms or by

Hate parks? Neither do we.

Congress:

Stand up for America's
outdoors and the Land and
Water Conservation Fund.

#saveLWCF



Most Read Entertainment

1 Jack Black really wants you to see his new movie. He paid for it himself.



2 Viral Kavanaugh cartoon powerfully depicts the assault of Lady Justice



punning, as in the example above. The list below has links to the Scrabble dictionary's mini-definitions; my Style Conversational column (wapo.st/conv1299, published late afternoon Thursday, Sept. 27) has a list of all the definitions so you won't have to click on each one; or you can look them up at scrabble.merriam.com.

Submit entries at the website wapo.st/enter-invite-1299 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a genuine **snapping-turtle skull**, found in a swampy area near Richmond by Loser Jeff Shirley, who may have used his skills as a dentist to clean and polish it to an attractive semi-shine. It's surprisingly large, at least as big as the Empress's fist, even though, lacking a jaw, it will not snap.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "We've Seen Better" or "Idiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, Oct 8**; results published Oct. 28 (online Oct. 25). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Badder Up" for this week's results is by Jon Gearhart; Chris Doyle wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @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 from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

BADDER UP: THE LOSING AND REALLY LOSING JOKES FROM WEEK 1295

In **Week 1295** we asked for signs of some unfortunate thing, paired with a *really* unfortunate thing.

4th place:

Sign that your husband is unfaithful: He has sex with a movie star named Stormy.

Sign that your husband is REALLY unfaithful: He has sex with a movie star named Lassie. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.)

3rd place:



Don't worry: This snapping turtle skull — this week's second prize — is missing the jawbone. (Pat Myers/The Washington Post)

Sign of an out-of-control food

fad: Before Labor Day they're selling pumpkin spice latte.

Sign of a REALLY out-of-control food fad: Before Labor Day they're selling pumpkin spice sushi. (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

2nd place

and the [notepad that looks like a bitten-off chocolate bar](#):

You might be "out of the mainstream" if you think Alex Jones is on the level.

You might be REALLY "out of the mainstream" if Alex Jones thinks

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you are on the level. (Mark Raffinan, Reston, Va.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Sign that you're too old to pick up young women: When they see you, they cross the street.

Sign that you're REALLY too old to pick up young women: When they see you, they help you cross the street. (Brian Allgar, Paris)

Direr straits: Honorable mentions

Sign that your brakes are going: An annoying chirping sound.

Sign that your brakes are really going: An annoying crashing sound. (Dave Airozo, Silver Spring, Md.)

Sign your country is in trouble: An unstable, race-baiting moron is the president.

Sign your country is really in trouble: Half the country says, "So?" (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Sign you might be a cheapskate: You shop at Dollar Tree.

Sign you might really be a cheapskate: You haggle at Dollar Tree. (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

Sign things aren't going well with your girlfriend: She dumps you.

Sign things really aren't going well with your girlfriend: She dumps you in a landfill. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Sign your kid's in trouble at school: Teachers describe him as "disturbed" and "out of control."

Sign he's really in trouble: They call him "presidential." (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Sign you're on edge: Your wife's singing is driving you crazy.

Sign you're really on edge: She's singing to Robert Mueller. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Sign there was a terrible mistake and you should immediately quit your new job: After your orientation, you realize you have no applicable skills, and don't even understand the list of your job responsibilities.

Sign there was a really terrible mistake and you should immediately quit your new job: After your inauguration . . . (Dallas Baker, Arlington, Va.)

Sad: The combined ages of the Beatles is currently 154.

Really sad: There are only two of them. (J. Larry Schott, West Plains, Mo.)

Sign you're getting old: You can't stand your kids' music.

Sign you're really getting old: You can't hear your kids' music. (Melissa Balmain; Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

Sign you might be in legal trouble: Your business partner agrees to testify against you.

Sign you might really be in legal trouble: Your lawyer agrees to testify against you. (Mark Raffman)

Sign you are a bit anal: You neatly fold your underwear as soon as you take it out of the dryer.

Sign you are really anal: You neatly fold your underwear before putting it in the dirty-clothes hamper. (David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

Sign you should be suspicious of your doctor: He always makes you

Sign you should be suspicious of your doctor: He always makes you put your feet in the stirrups.

Sign you should be really suspicious: He's your eye doctor. (Rick Haynes, Ocean City, Md.)

Bad: A naked man appears at your window.

Really bad: You're in the confessional at the time. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.)

Sign you have bad breath: The person next to you edges away.

Sign you really have bad breath: The turkey buzzard next to you edges away. (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

Sign you have man-boobs: When you go shirtless, guys make jokes about you.

Sign you really have man-boobs: When you go shirtless, guys stuff singles in your shorts. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

Sign you are a lazy proofreader: You don't notice that autocorrect changed several words, distorting your intended message.

Sign you are really lazy: You don't notice that autofocus changed several words, thereby distracting your intense meshugah. (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.)

Sign your glory days are over: You get injured playing basketball.

Sign your glory days are really over: You get injured watching basketball. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

You have a bad commute into D.C.: You're starting to think biking would be faster.

You have a really bad commute into D.C.: You're starting to think the Red Line would be faster. (Duncan Stevens)

Sign you're an unlucky heir: Your grandmother added a note to her will that she left you a box of gold bullion but forgot where she put it.

Sign you're a really unlucky heir: When you finally find it, you realize she also forgot how to spell "bouillon." (Frank Osen)

Sign you're a corrupt plutocrat: You make policy decisions involving corporations in which you have financial ties.

Sign you're a really corrupt plutocrat: ...and you [swipe Sweet n' Low packets](#) from restaurants. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Sign that it's a bad play: Half the audience leaves at intermission.

Sign that it's a really bad play: Half the cast leaves at intermission. (Kevin Mettinger, Warrenton, Va.)

Sign you're getting old: You begin reminiscing about old sports memories during work. "Why, I can still remember the first time I was the quarterback and won the championship..."

Sign you're really getting old: [Your Patriots teammates](#) tell you to shut up and call a play. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

Sign that the Texas Democrats need your vote: You get a robocall from Beto.

Sign that the Texas Democrats really need your vote: You get a booty call from Beto. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)

Sign that sea level rise is getting serious: It threatens the Outer Banks.

Sign that sea level rise is getting really serious: It threatens the investment banks. (Dudley Thompson)

Bad: Your doctor botched your breast enhancement surgery.

Really bad: You were scheduled for a vasectomy. (Craig Dykstra)

Sign you're going overboard with your new hobby: You just spent \$2,500 on a new bicycle.

Sign you're really going overboard with your new hobby: You just spent \$2,500 on an old truck to carry your new \$10,000 bicycle. (David Peckarsky, Tucson)

Sign you love The Style Invitational: You clear a place on your mantel for the day you win the Lose Cannon.

Sign you really love The Style Invitational: You returned your fancy new refrigerator because the doors weren't magnetic. (Kevin Mettinger)

Still running — deadline Monday, Oct. 1: our contest for things that can be abbreviated GHI, HGH, etc. [See wapo.st/invite1298](http://wapo.st/invite1298) .

These 50 words, for use in this week's word chain contest, are among those recently added by Merriam-Webster to its Scrabble dictionary. For the dictionary's brief definition, click on one of the links below; for a list of all the definitions, see this week's Style Conversational column (published late afternoon on Thursday, Sept. 27) at wapo.st/conv1299.

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Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. [Follow](#) 

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