

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1355: The inside word – our ‘air quotes’ contest

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Find one telling word within another. Plus winning Halloween ideas.



Second place in our contest for Halloween ideas: Carve a pumpkin that shows everyone what a loser you are (at right, lit from inside). Designed and carved by Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich., who's definitely going to perplex those trick-or-treaters. Other ideas below. (Jesse Frankovich)

By **Pat Myers**

Oct. 24, 2019 at 9:26 a.m. EDT

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning Halloween costume and party ideas)

F“lawless”: Describing the president’s perfect phone call.

An“tip”athy: The feeling waiters have toward cheapskates.

Con“trite”: Sorry for having sent the Empress a joke that has 7 million Google hits.

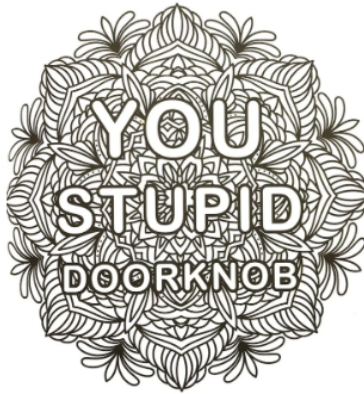
One more time, since it seems there’s no end to the possibilities offered up by Any Word or Name in the English Language. **This week: Highlight part of a word, name or short phrase in “air quotes” to give the word a new meaning or description**, as in the examples above by Jesse Frankovich, who conveniently supplied the new ones above while reminding the Empress that we hadn’t done an “air quotes” contest in a year and a half. You can’t change the spelling of the original. It’s not going to be any trickier

You can't change the spelling of the original, I'm not going to ban tinkering with capitalization, punctuation and spacing, but I think they might weaken the joke.

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Um, wouldn't they rather be reading? A page from the coloring book "How Librarians Swear," this week's second prize. (Coloring Crew)





Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1355 (no capitals in the Web address).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a coloring book titled "**How Librarians Swear**," which embeds inside various kaleidoscopic designs such imprecations as "You stupid doorknob," "What the fun" and "Oh shootdarn it." Donated by soap-mouthed Loser Drew Bennett. My guess is that actual librarians find this

a load of @#^%ing @\$%&.

Other runners-up win our "**You Gotta Play to Lose**" Loser Mug or our "**Whole Fools**" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "**Too-Weak Notice**" or "**Certificate of (de) Merit**." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday, Nov. 4**; results published Nov. 24 in print, Nov. 21 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Wise Guise" was submitted by both Kevin Dopart and Bill Dorner; Chris Doyle and Jesse Frankovich both came up with 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; follow [@StyleInvite](https://twitter.com/StyleInvite) on Twitter.

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AD



"We brainstormed all night and we think this costume is the best way to soften your public image, Mr. Giuliani." Honorable mention, by Lee Graham, Rockville, Md. (Dressing up "Nosferatu" (1922))

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 (see the links to earlier "air quotes" winners), check it out at wapo.st/conv1355.

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

WISE GUISE: THE HALLOWEEN IDEAS OF WEEK

1355

In **Week 1351** the Empress asked for ideas for timely and creative Halloween costumes or party ideas. Judging from many of the entries, we'll predict that a lot of people will show up at your nerdier parties as a Republican congressional invertebrate: spineless, see, harharhar.

Meanwhile: So where's Bob?

Custom-carved Style Invitational pumpkins are certainly cool, but we're eagerly awaiting the return of Invite Cartoonist Since 1994 Bob Staake, who decided to idly loll around after emergency surgery last week to get a new aortic valve. Bob reports that "no coronary disease was found, meaning that readers of The Post and Invite are stuck with me for another 26 years." Bob aims to be back drawing misshapen animals next week.

AD

4th place:

Wear a suit with a whistle around your neck, a paper bag over your head, and a bull's eye on your back. (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

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3rd place:

Build an upright casket with a revolving stand at the base. Invite guests to dress as their favorite Founding Fathers. While playing an audio loop of the president, have the guests step in and take a spin in their grave. (*Bob Kruger, Rockville, Md.*)

2nd place

and the [zippered bag that looks like a fat belly](#):

See Jesse Frankovich's pumpkin, above.

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Stick some googly eyes on your rotating lawn sprinkler and say it's Rudy Giuliani. (*Hildy Zampella, Alexandria, Va.*)

Gave up the ghost: Honorable mentions

Answer the door wearing a blue suit, white shirt and red tie, and tell the trick-or-treaters that you'll be happy to give them some candy if they get you dirt on Joe Biden. (*Hildy Zampella; Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.*)

AD

A Superman costume: Go naked, except for glasses. Not to worry, though: No one will recognize you later without the glasses. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

Break into the morgue, steal a cadaver, don its skin, and voilà — you're dressed up as Keith Richards! (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Buy a Native American costume, cut it into 1,024 pieces, and pin one of them on your blouse to go as Elizabeth Warren. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

At a Republican Halloween party, they might play "Pin the Fake Tale on the Donkey." (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

A GOP party: Serve canned dog food in bowls without utensils. Ask the guests to lap it up, compliment it as both delicious and healthy, and praise you as the best cook in history. (*Neal Starkman, Seattle*)

Wear an orange wig, a red tie — and a bare belly where you've drawn on six-pack abs with a Sharpie. (*Bob Kruger*)



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AD

Dress as a bell tower with lots of bats suspended from the roof. Everyone will guess that you're Trump, but it's still more subtle than going as a giant rotting orange. *(Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)*

Dress up as George R.R. Martin. Go trick-or-treating four years from now, or whenever. *(Mark Raffman)*

Go as a group of crickets that occasionally chirp, and tell people you're the home crowd at FedEx Field. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)*

Go as the Nats bullpen and constantly relieve myself. *(Ira Allen, Bethesda, Md.)*

If you're a white politician put on blackface, and you can be toast. *(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)*

Put on a thin, revealing outfit with large holes that reveal way more than you intended, and go as a White House Phone Transcript. *(Stephen Litterst, Newark, Del.)*

Repurpose an old snake costume by putting an "AOC" nametag on, and be a "Green Nude Eel." *(Stephen Litterst; Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)*

AD

Come as Lindsey Graham: Dress up as a cute little lap dog with a shiny brown nose. *(Seth Tucker, Washington)*

Get a nice tan, put on a "Life Is Good" T-shirt, grab a margarita, and be Gen. John F. Kelly. *(Steve Smith)*

A scary party activity: bobbing for hot dogs in a tepid water bath from an authentic D.C. hot dog cart. *(Jeff Hazle)*

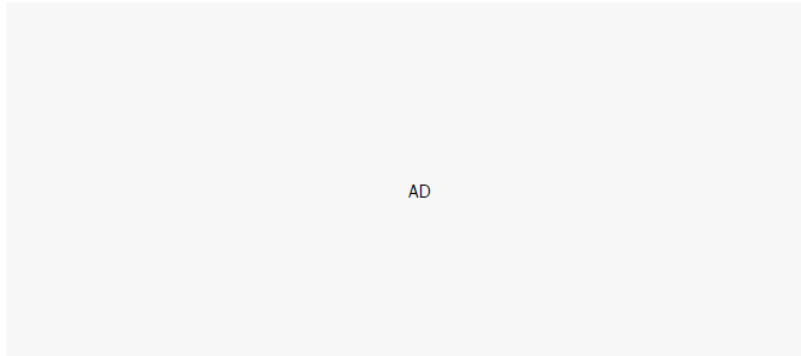
A Reverse-Halloween party: Invite children to dress as corporate executives and sell candy to the adults. *(Neal Starkman)*

With eight of your friends, dress up as “Sexy Supreme Court.” (*Mark Raffman*)

This year I am buying only congressional Republican pumpkins — guts already removed. (*Rivka Liss-Levinson, Washington*)

Use the back half of a two-person horse costume and be Trump, because he stands on his own. (*Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.*)

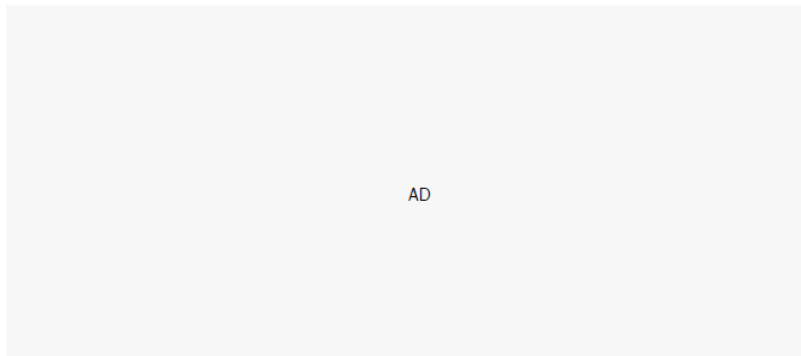
Wear a Fonzie mask and bunny ears wrapped in tinfoil, place a cardboard box with the front cut out over your head, and be Joe Biden’s television set. (*Steve Smith*)



Wear a shirt with a giant “M” on it and carry a peach and a sprig of mint. Clearly, you’re . . . Captain Obvious. (*Hildy Zampella*) [Indeed, to judge from the number of entries suggesting this very idea, you’ll be seeing peach costumes by the bushel this year.]

Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 28: Our contest to discover new words in a word-search grid. See wapo.st/invite1354.

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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 [Twitter](#)

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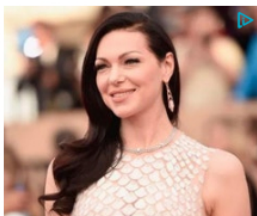
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