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Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1413: We're finna give you some new words

Write a funny poem with one of these. Plus fun with song titles.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers

Dec. 3, 2020 at 10:25 a.m. EST

+ Add to list

(Click [here](#) to skip down to the winning truncated song titles)

I gave my vote at first to **greige**:
A blend, it seems, of grey and beige,
But also — in a span so brief!
Communicating rage and grief.

My fave's now **favipiravir**,
Which won't let covid doom us!
No link with fava, let's be clear:
It's medicine, not hummus. — *Julia Griffin*

In a year that's transformed our lives so greatly that you can't watch a Christmas romcom without shuddering at the lack of social distancing in the tinkling sleigh, it's not surprising that our language has changed as well. And of course our pals at Merriam-Webster are on the case. Below is a list of some of the words and phrases (including new usages for existing ones) added this year to the dictionary at [m-w.com](#), along with a link to each full definition. **This week: Write a poem of eight lines or fewer featuring one or more of these terms**, as in the two-part example above by Julia Griffin, queen of Light magazine's topical Poems of the Week at [lightpoetrymagazine.com](#).

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The terms must be used as they're defined in the new m-w.com listing: e.g., "novel" needs to mean "not previously

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2



The first Clowning Achievement trophy, replacing the Lose Cannon, goes to 27-time winner Frank Osen.

identified,” not only “new and fresh” or “what I will definitely write one of these days.” You may use a closely related form of the word, like a plural or adverb.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1413 (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday, Dec. 14;** results appear Jan. 3 in print, Dec. 31 online.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, the new Style Invitational trophy that we introduce today. The sorry-faced bozo replaces the Lose Cannon, which got its name from a Trumply spelled Trump tweet about Hillary Clinton; like its inspiration, it’s been with us since 2017 and we’d think it’s high time to put it

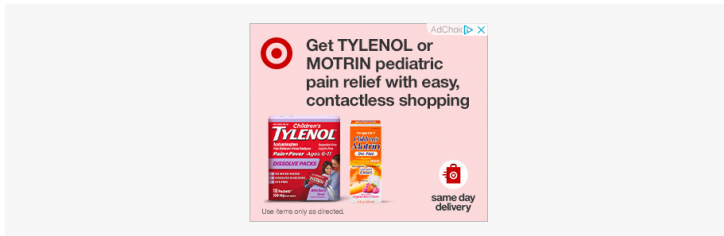
behind us. There will be only 100 Clowning Achievements, since that’s how many “retired” little clown heads the Empress was able to score from some craft shop’s online clearance sale. Based on an idea by Loser Kevin Dopart.



Second place wins a box of **Clamdy Canes** — **yup, clam-flavored candy canes**. They’re a holly jolly yucky ucky greige and white. Donated by Loser Edward Gordon.

Other runners-up win their choice of our “[For Best Results, Pour Into Top End](#)” **Loser Mug** or our “[Whole Fools](#)” Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, “[No Bility](#)” or “[Punderachiever](#).” First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline “[Deck the Ha\(II\)s](#)” is by Jeff Contompasis; 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](https://twitter.com/StyleInvite) on Twitter.

The Style Conversational: The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week’s at wapo.st/conv1413.



New “You’re Invited” podcast episode: An interview with Hall of Fame Loser Jeff Contompasis, who tells how he changed his Invite approach after getting no ink for eight years. [See bit.ly/invite-podcast](http://bit.ly/invite-podcast).

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

DECK THE HALLS: THE SHORTENED SONG TITLES OF WEEK 1409

In [Week 1409](#) the Empress asked the Losers to drop one or more letters from the middle of a song title. Half a dozen people offered **EVERY BreATH YOU TAKE** — “**It’ll be washing you**”; numerous others suggested **YESterDAY** — “**every day in the Trump White House.**”

4th place:

DON’T LET ME DOWN: John Lennon’s little-known first song to contain the lyric “Imagine no possessions . . .” (*Stephen Litterst, Newark, Del.*)

3rd place:

SleIGH RIDE: A song about the long drive home after Thanksgiving dinner with the in-laws. (*Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.*)

2nd place

2020 broke Christmas music. Here’s what I’m listening to instead.



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and the game *What's That Smell?*:

I'M SO EXCITED: "I'm about to lose control, and I don't like it." — You Know Who (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

And the first winner of the Clowning Achievement:

MARGaritaville:

"Don't know the reasons

We chose this Four Seasons —

Since when have they had a horse manure aisle?

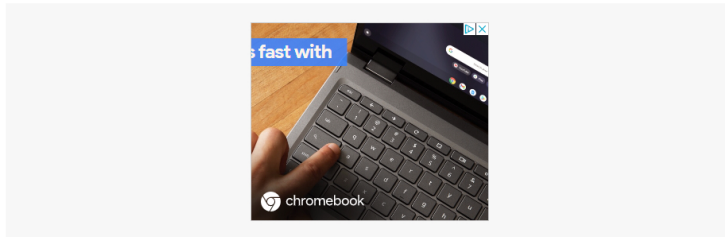
But I can't be moody

'Cause my name is Rudy

And I also came here to sell you a pile." (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

B(all)ADS: Honorable mentions

HELLO, GOODBYE: "So long, 2020, this song's for you!" (*Lee Graham, Rockville, Md.; Richard Franklin, Alexandria, Va.*)



HEART LIKE A WHEEL: Trump gets his cardiology report. "So strong!" (*Marli Melton, Carmel Valley, Calif.*)

I WOULD WALK 500 MILES: Honestly, I'm just not that into you. (*Seamus O'Connor, Springfield, Va., a First Offender*)

DON'T FEAR THE REAPER: The first-draft title for "Baby Got Back." (*Bob Kruger, Rockville, Md.; Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

I FEEL PRETTY: Trump's Song of Spite, sung to Alexander Vindman, Mark Esper, etc. "It's delicious how vicious I feel!" (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

96 TEARS: After getting bored with the hot dog eating contest, Joey Chestnut tries corn on the cob. (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)

500 MILES: What the president gleefully sang after having mirrors installed throughout the White House. (*Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.*)

TWIST AND SHOUT: The Secret Service reveals its code names for Don Jr. and Kimberly Guilfoyle. (*Duncan Stevens*)



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

IS YOU: Lament of the January credit card statement. (*David Peckarsky, Tucson*)

BRUSH, UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE: A millennial's rejection of high culture. (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

DON'T BE CRUEL: The only rock song Fred Trump let his son listen to. (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

COUNTRY 'TIL I DIE: Trump's post-election theme song. (*George Thompson, Springfield, Va.*)

I GOT YOU bABE: "I got way more popular votes than Lincoln ever did. Not even close! He only got a measly 2 million!" (*Steve Leifer, Potomac, Md., a First Offender*)

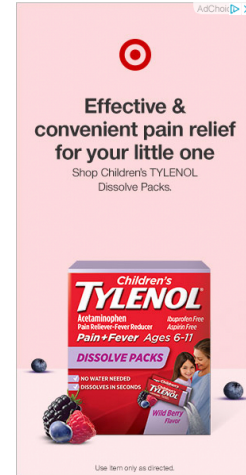
WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN: Roger Daltrey puts his foot down after his bandmates don't chip in for the burgers and fries he picked up at Wendy's. (*Larry Gomberg, Lake Frederick, Va.*)

Podcast

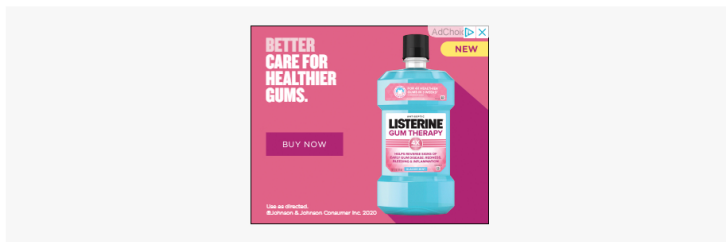
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IT'S THE MOST Wonderful time of the YEAR: A remake of "We Didn't Start the Fire," but it's all from 2020. *(David Peckarsky)*



DON'T GO BreAKING MY HEART: Clarice's song in "The Silence of the Lambs: The Musical." *(Jerry Birchmore, Springfield, Va.)*

DISCø INFERNO: Burn, baby, burn! An ode to back pain. *(Madelyn Rosenberg, Arlington, Va.)*

FOR-BIDdEN FRUIT: The Peach State turns blue. *(Frank Osen)*

BOOGIE WOOGIE BUGLE BOY: Swingin' theme for "Metamorphosis: The Movie." *(Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)*

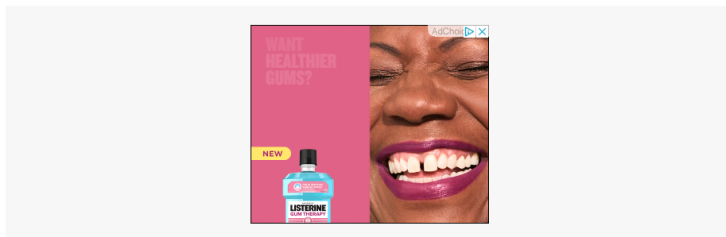
LA baMBA: Ritchie Valens's last single before he went to business school. *(Chuck Smith, Woodbridge, Va.)*

GOD bLESS AMERICA: Anthem of the U.S. Atheist Society. *(Susanne Pierce Dyer, Suisun City, Calif.; Neal Starkman, Seattle)*

GOD, bLESS AMERICA: The new U.N. theme song/ardent plea. *(Seamus O'Connor)*

MamE: "My special fascination'll/ Prove to be inspirational! / I think I'm just sensational, me!" *(Gary Crockett)*

GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE f UN: Teens moon over the North Korean leader. "Love his tests, each megaton!/We girls, we wanna have Un." *(Duncan Stevens)*



RESPECt YOURSELF: The theme of the Gender Confirmation Surgeons of America. *(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)*

RETURN TO SeNDER: "I filled a goblet for Elijah / Left it by the door / Bright and early next evening / He came back for more." *(Josh Feldblyum)*

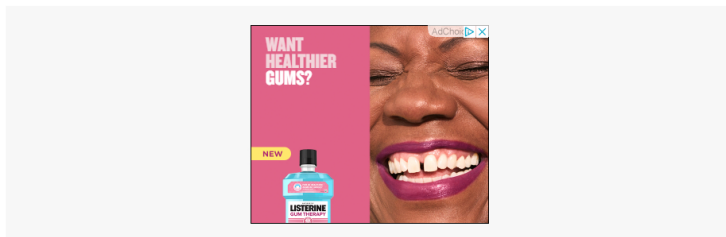
PAPA WAS A rollin' stONE: But go figure — Mama was a 10. *(Byron Miller, Cobble Hill, B.C.)*

JOHNNY B. goODE:

Deep down inside the ol' swamp up in Washington,
Ensnoced inside the White House, he's brainwashing Don.
He's showing how, in '53, a war Seoul won
Convincing him to go again is John Bol-ton.
For as the years go by his tune remains the same:
"What if we gave a war and everybody came?" *(Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.)*

ALL THE YOUNG DUDeS: A song about Tinder and Bumble. (B-side: **I WANNA BE seDATED**). *(Mark Raffman)*

BIG GREEN trACTOR: Casting call for the title role of "Shrek." *(Bill Hilton, Sebring, Fla.)*



WHAT child IS THIS? The Empress, once again, fails to understand my sense of humor. (*Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.*)

DING-DONG! THE WITCh IS DEAD: The headline on the eventual final column of The Style Invitational (*Chris Doyle*)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Dec. 7: our contest for anagrams of a title or line of a song. See wapo.st/invite1412.

DON'T MISS AN INVITE! [Sign up here](#) to receive a once-a-week email from the Empress as soon as The Style Invitational and Style Conversational go online every Thursday, complete with links to the columns.

This week's terms, with links to the full definition, etymology, etc., at m-w.com:

anti-vax or anti-vaccination

body-shame or fat-shame: to criticize or mock (someone) for supposed bodily faults or imperfections

bombogenesis : rapid intensification of a storm caused by a sudden and significant drop in atmospheric pressure

canna: Entry 2: containing cannabis

chef de cuisine: a chef who manages a professional kitchen

corona: informal term for covid-19

cryosphere: the part of the earth's surface characterized by the presence of frozen water, as in the ice fields of Antarctica and Greenland

CV or CV-19: abbreviation for covid-19

dark web: websites that cannot be found on search engines or browsers and usually are encrypted

deepfake: an image or recording that has been convincingly doctored to show someone doing or saying something that was not actually done or said

drifting: driving a car through a controlled skid; a sport in which this is done

fan art: unofficial art depicting characters from fictional works

fast-casual: describing restaurants whose food is more sophisticated than fast food but take orders at the counter (e.g., Chipotle, Chopt, Taylor Gourmet)

favipiravir: an antiviral drug

finna: ("fixing to"), slang for intending

Friendsgiving: a Thanksgiving dinner among friends

greige: grayish beige — or beigeish gray

herd immunity: when enough of a community has become immune from a disease that it's unlikely to spread

hydroxychloroquine: a treatment for malaria and not a cure for covid-19

iatrophobia: intense fear of doctors

nosocomophobia. . . .of hospitals

tomophobia: . . . of surgery

melissophobia: . . . of bees

impostor syndrome: when a successful person is convinced that he's really a hack and a fraud and everyone is going to find out

juicery: a food outlet that specializes in juices

microtarget: to tailor advertising to highly specific groups of people, often using data found from individual social-media activity

novel: not previously identified; covid-19 is a novel coronavirus

Paleo diet: a diet consisting of what people ate before the development of farming

physical distance: a greater than usual distance kept between people to prevent spreading a disease

PPE: personal protective equipment, worn to prevent spreading or catching a disease

shelter in place: to remain in one's current location (often under order) until a particular danger has passed

slow-walk: to delay or prevent the progress of (something) by acting in a deliberately slow manner, as in to slow-walk asylum applications at the border

thirsty: for attention, approval, etc. (Definition 2b)

trendspotter: well, it's someone who spots trends, as in what fashion-forward people are wearing

truthiness: "a truthful or seemingly truthful quality that is claimed for something not because of supporting facts or evidence, but because of a feeling that it is true or a desire for it to be true." As coined by Stephen Colbert in 2005.

upskill: to acquire or provide more advanced skills through additional education and training

useful idiot: a naive person who can be manipulated or exploited to advance a cause or political agenda. Lenin used this term for dupes of the Soviets.

WFH: working from home

zedonk or zonkey: a hybrid zebra-donkey

2 Comments



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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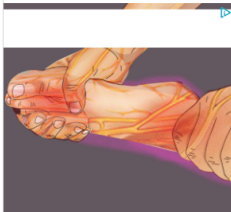
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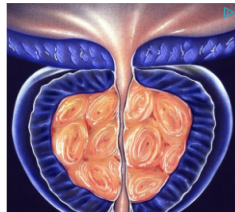
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