Style Invitational Week 1254: Inkorporation — a change-a-letter contest

Plus the winning poems featuring words from particular years

(Click here to skip down to the winning "year-poems")

Untie Anne’s Pretzels: So soft they come undone. (John Drummond)

Bloomingdale’s: For great deals on irregular fashions. (Valerie Matthews)

Inko’s: Documents copied by scribes while you wait. (Craig DuBose)

This week’s contest, suggested by 104-time Loser Matt Monitto, is one we’ve never done specifically before, though it’s firmly in the tradition of so many "change-a-letter" Style Invitational contests: Change the name of a present or past business, store or agency (not just a product) by adding one letter, deleting one letter, transposing two letters, or substituting one letter for another, as in the examples above, which got ink in various Invite contests over the years.

Submit entries at this website: www.sl/enter-invite-1254 (all lowercase)
Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a substantially sized glitter globe containing, because why not, a **cow doing a wheelie on a motorcycle**. This fine sculpture — we named it Cowasaki — was initially donated by Prime Prize Donor Cheryl Davis and was won by Mark Raffman in 2014 with his second-place metabolic term, “Tropical depression: Stifling high-pressure system that has stalled over Cuba for the past 55 years.” Ironically, Mark has donated the globe back to the Empress (admittedly, we have given him 49 Invite prizes not counting Loser magnets . . .).

**Other runners-up** win our "**You Gotta Play to Lose**" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag,"**I Got a B in Punishment**." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "**No Childishness Left Behind**" or "**Magnum Dopus**." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FrisSink for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, Nov. 27; results published Dec. 17 (online Dec. 7). See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline 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](http://on.fb.me/invdev). “Like” Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkaday](http://bit.ly/inkaday); follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

**The Style Conversational** The Empress’s weekly online column, published late Thursday afternoon, discusses each new contest and set of results. Check it out at [wapo.st/conv1254](http://wapo.st/conv1254).

**And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .

**JEST IN TIME: THE YEAR-WORD POEMS OF WEEK 1250**

In **Week 1250** we invited you to explore Merriam-Webster’s nifty Time Traveler tool to see a list of English words and phrases that were first used in a certain year (or ancient century) — and then write a poem that included at least three of the words from a particular year. Many entrants noted that they’d chosen their birth years for their poems; presumably that’s not true for the ones from the 15th century. (The year-words are in boldface.)

**4th place:**

1955:
My **flatmate** likes **veggies** to eat,
But my **hidden agenda** is meat.
By replacing the **Beta**
**Vulgaris**, I made a
**Beef borscht** — he did not miss a beet! (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

**3rd place:**

1992:
His **man cave** was awesome, with **gadgets galore,**
But he was a Class A misogynist boor.
And yet, he had women, a new one each day;
He called them **arm candy**, bestowed PDA.
But none of these gals kept him warm in the winter:
He’d made them at home on his cool **3-D printer**.
(Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

**2nd place**
and the Merriam-Webster 'fortnightly' tote bag:

1865:
Manny, with the mutton chops, the wheelman, mostly placid, 
Joined with Alec, the smart aleck, from the gin mill down the street, 
For a heist with a huge jackpot. But the barbituric acid 
Al had taken just that morning made him pass out on his feet.

Of this ragtag team of robbers only Manny thus was able 
To confront the wealthy oilman when he walked into the bank, 
And he drew his gun and told him, "Put the money on the table." 
Then he lost his nerve and laughed, and said, "This whole thing's a prank!"

But the victim was well thought of and well groomed, and, well, was wealthy, 
And he summoned the police, and hook and ladder, and the mayor, 
And every anti-crime official, and anybody who was healthy, 
And en masse the town descended, meaning Manny had no prayer.

When Alec had awoken and saw Manny was surrounded, 
He was rightly pessimistic that his friend would be alright. 
So he told the group, "My friends, your keen suspicions are well founded. 
It was him, and him alone, and boy he gave that man a fright!"

Then he jumped in Manny's wagon, and he drove it to the gin mill, 
And he lived a life of freedom, prisoner only to the drink, 
While his mutton-chopped accomplice soon was locked away in sinville, 
Where he spent his sleepless evenings on a box spring in the clink. 
(David Giminsky, New York, a First Offender)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

With my pina vanua swimsuit s a okini, 
When my klutzy husband doesn't try my wits, 
When my personal computer spits out money, 
When my horror show teens cease to act like jerks, 
When my nutjob in-laws move to someplace sunny, 
That's when I'll know that Wicca really works. 
(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Downward doggerel: Honororable mentions

1579: 
A significant subject of jokes 
In an epithet-dilled shame-orama, 
Widely known as the fattest of folks— 
And the ugliest too—she's Your Mama! 
(Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)
1982:
Said the bimbette, "I'll take this one here
As my boy toy — just look at that rear!"
But her friend said, "No dice,
He won't look at you twice:
See, your gaydar needs tuning, my dear." (Mark Raffman)

1825:
Huffity, puffity,
Our pompous president
Thinks he can outdebat
Any and all.
Truth is he's nothing but
Egomanical —
Just a huge humnux whose
Hands are quite small. — R. Tillerson (Jesse Frankovich)

Before 12th century:
Mayor Rob Ford wasn't wise
Getting filmed smoking crack. His demise
Was assured when he tried
To deny he had lied,
So now he's the Ford of the Lies. (Jon Gearhart)

It's sad that "graffiti," "corrupt" and "plundered"
Were all in use by 1500. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

1945:
Head honcho to his Navy crew:
"Relax, men. Here's what you can do:
As you chugalug your Coke,
You can make an A-bomb joke.
You can holler, hoot or whistle
Re our latest guided missile.
You can rank the pro and con
Re our mighty Pentagon.

Cold War humor, and graffiti:
Touch-and-go (unless it's meaty).
But Admiral Nimitz
Is off-limits."
(Mae Scanlan, Washington)
A haiku entirely of 14th-century words:

Poetry pattern
Specifies syllable count:
Seventeen total.
(Jesse Frankovich)

1602:
We walk to her place;
My heart ups its pace.
Will she comply?
Oh, my - yes! Oh my!
Shoes dropping with thuds!
A strewment of duds!
'Twas an enviable fling.
But alas, there's one thing:
"It can't be! It can't!"
Oh, it is - she's enceinte.
(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

1908:
Said the school bus mechanic, "I'm scared.
"I just can't fix this horn!" he declared.
Then a Boy Scout — no yob —
Said, "Let me do the job."
And in minutes: "All set. Beep repaired." (Mark Raffman)

1651:
'I've read of your soup and its status:
Blue-ribbon, in fact — yet it's gratis!
So how could it be
That your bean soup is free?"
"You'll realize in 10 seconds ... flatus."
(Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick, Md.)

15th century:
My new play's a big hit, I am certain.
Act 1: Adolescents start flirtin'.
Act 2: They start datin'.
Act 3: They start makin'.
Act 4: The torn rubber. [Drop curtain.]
(Jon Gearhart)

1789:
In '89 of 47,
Aristocrats were mighty mean
To commoners who lived in France;
These poor folks never stood a chance.
But then one day they spread the news:
we've had it with the royal blues:
On bechamel you glutons feed,
And all we get is beggarweed.

You care not that we waste away;
You stuff your face with Montrachet.
Your royal waists are thickening.
And (sacre bleu!) it's sickening!

'Eat cake,' you say? That's just a crock!
We're going to clean your cuckoo clock.
When all is done and all is said,
You'll rue the day you lost your head."
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Eats & Drinks newsletter
The latest buzz on the D.C. area dining and bar scene, featuring restaurant critic Tom Sietsema, every Wednesday.

1960:
You can call me a kook or a crank,
But my theme park idea, it's no prank!
This new elder care venture's
A "Disney for Dentures" —
"No-Tomorrowland"! How could it tank?
(Mark Raffman)

1522:
His tweets are prattle,
His hair is orange,
He's easy to rattle.
Period.
(You didn't say the poems had to rhyme.)
(Kyle Hendrickson)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Nov. 20: our contest for totally bogus trivia about clothing and fashion. See wapo.st/inviter253.

Pat Myra is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post’s page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2005, 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 @patmyra on Twitter.

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