Style Invitational Week 1346: AZ if — balancing acts

A brand-new neologism contest. Plus the winning combo-abbrevs.

(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers
August 22

(Click here to skip down to the winning abbreviation combos)

B-Y: Bolshy: A Russian ballet company whose dancers suffer from stage fright. (Bob Staake)

H-S: Hipatitis: Terminal coolness. (Tom Witte, Week 278)

S-H: Suckotash: A dish of corn, lima beans and tofu. (Russell Beland, Week 278)

M-Ni: Muccussion: The drastic result of overly strenuous nose-blowing. (Chris Doyle, Week 368)

M-Ni: Mushderloin: Result of a kick in the crotch. (Stephen Dudzik, Week 256)

This week’s contest was suggested to the Empress by the Royal Consort, who sleeps in on Sundays later than the E does these days. He was lying
in bed, listening to the weekly Sunday Puzzle a few weeks ago on NPR’s “Weekend Edition,” and heard the answer to a challenge posed by listener Andy Blau: Think of a word that is “alphabetically balanced,” or symmetrical: Its first and last letters are the same distance from the beginning and end of the alphabet; its second and second-to-last letters are, too; and so on. He suggested BEVY — B and Y; E and V. The winning word: WIZARD. How cool is that!

It’d be insane to ask you to produce totally balanced words, but I think we could work it with the ends. This week: Think of a new word or two-word phrase that begins and ends — either way — with one of these “alphabetically balanced” pairs, most from earlier contests that happen to fit this week’s parameters:

AZ, BY, CX, DW, EV, FU, GT, HS, IR, JQ (good luck!), KP, LO, MN

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1346 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a toiletclaver, or, as its Danish manufacturer translates it, “bathroom piano”: It’s an electronic floor mat that you place in front of your commode so that you may tap out a tune — perhaps “Let It Go” — on the keyboard diagram. But can you do that and write Style Invitational entries in the same session? Try to find out. Donated by Loser Since Week 120 Roy Ashley.

Other runners-up win our “You Gotta Play to Lose” Loser Mug or our “Whole Fools” Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusty-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 Tuesday, Sept. 3 (aw, don’t labor on Labor Day); results published Sept. 22 in print, Sept. 19 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline “Short Fuses” is by Tom Witte; Jesse Frankovich 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; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

The Style Conversational: The Empress’s weekly online column discusses the week’s new contest and results. This week, an answer key to the Week 1342 results. See it at wapo.st/conv1346.

And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .

SHORT FUSES: COMB. ABBREVS. FROM WEEK 1342

In Week 1342 we asked you to mash together two abbreviations. If you can’t figure out some of the portmanteaus below — the Empress herself spent lots of hours puzzling over the 1,000-plus entries — check out this week’s Style Conversational at wapo.st/conv1346 for an answer key.

4th place:

J/KKK: “Ha ha, of course I’m not racist! That was just a Halloween costume.” (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)
3rd place:

**PhDD:** Person who might have occasion to say, “Excuse me, my brain is up here.” *(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)*

2nd place and the sarcasm sign and button:

**WCCR:** The bathroom on the right. *(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)*

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

**UNICEFU:** “Every child’s life is precious! . . . Oh, wait, those children aren’t from here.” *(Danielle Noulin)*

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**Short-term losses: Honorable mentions**

**AARPG:** The ultimate “get off my lawn” weapon. *(Ira Allen, Bethesda, Md.)*

**AARPM:** 45s, 33s and still a few 78s. *(Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)*

**AFL-CIOB/GYN:** For all your labor needs. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)*

**NSFWH:** Warning stamp on federal agency documents containing facts. *(Kevin Dopart, Washington)*

**AT&T&A:** Its cellphone agreement page features lots of naughty pictures, but still no one reads it. *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

**BCCNN:** Default email setting of White House junior staffers that explains the continual “according to insiders” scoops. *(Stephen Litterst, Newark, Del.)*

**BYOBNB:** Camping. *(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)*

**CCCPAC:** Annual gathering of conservative activists and their Soviet supporters. *(Chris Doyle)*

**CRISPRBG:** The science that many Americans wish could keep the justice around forever. *(Dottie Gray, Alexandria, Va.)*

**CVSTFU:** “Customer Smathers to the pharmacy desk — your stool softeners are ready for pickup.” *(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)*

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CVSTFU: “Customer Smathers to the pharmacy desk — your stool softeners are ready for pickup.” (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

DCAPTCHA: “Select all images with a corrupt, power-hungry liar.” (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

ETASAP: “Get your butt in here now!” (Roger Darlymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

ETATMI: “I’ll be there between 19 minutes 24 seconds and 21 minutes 7 seconds from now.” (Ray Ashley, Washington)

FICOCD: Obsessively checking your credit score after every transaction. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.)

FOMOMG: What teens suffer when they have to put their phones away. (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

FUBARNR: Spring break. (Kerry Humphrey, Arlington, Va.)

GMOMG: “Check out the size of those tomatoes!” (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick, Md.)

GOPDA: Kissing the president’s butt in full view of your constituents. (Jesse Frankovich)

HOVIP: A clown car driver in the high-occupancy lane. (Bob Kruger, Rockville, Md.)

IBMAGA: The company whose motto is “Don’t think.” (Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.)

IMDBFF: That one acquaintance you only invite to hang out on pub trivia nights. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

IRSV: “Please respond by April 15.” (Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)

LMAOEB/GYN: “Ha ha, look at the speculum! Doesn’t it look like a duck? Quack, quack! Okay, get back to work, there, Mr. Duck!” (Danielle Nowlin)

MSRPOTUS: The going rate for enolments. (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

NARA: Uh, we’ve got some work to do. (Sam Mertens)

NASAFTRA: The dedicated men, women and FX artists who helped fake the moon landing. (Stephen Dudzik)

NFL0L: “We’re doing all we can to make the sport safer for the players.” (Mark Raffman)

NSFW40: Lubricant for even more uses! (April Musser Brand, Alpharetta, Ga.)

OR/GYNRA: A group that supports shotgun weddings. (Jesse)
OMBDSM: “We really, really love budget cuts — deep, sharp, stinging ones.” (Kevin Dopart)

401KO: Effect of Trump’s trade war on my retirement account. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

OMGCYA: “Nobody wants to see you in that Speedo!” (Jeff Strong, Fairfax, Va.)

RSVPS: Announcing to your hosts that you’ll also be bringing guests they did not invite. “RSVPs: Fido will be coming, too — don’t worry, we’ll bring carpet cleaner!” (Kevin Dopart)

SAT&T: The new “open phone” exam. (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.)

TMIIHP: Telling the server that the Fresh N Fruity makes you Rooty Tooty. (Jean Sorensen, Herndon, Va.)

USUK: America and Britain issue a joint declaration to the rest of the world. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

WITFIFA: The 2022 World Cup in Qatar? (Jim Derby, Rockville, Md.)

WITFLOTUS?: Wearing a pith helmet in Kenya? (Bill Dorner)

YMCAARP: Favorite place of the Retirement Village People. (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park, Md.)

YMCAAT?: Young men, a bunch of premeds/ I said young men, there’s plenty of beds… (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

YOLOTOH: Better safe than sorry. (Jesse Frankovich)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 26: Our contest for fake trivia about food. See wapo.st/invite1345.

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.