

NY minicon, November 2009

The Chron

Hot

“The chronogram — a centuries-old literary form — follows a simple but demanding rule: when all letters corresponding to Roman numerals (*c, d, i, l, m, v, and x*) are added together, they produce a sum equivalent to a specific year of the Christian calendar. The single words *memory* and *memento* are thus chronograms of the year 2000 ($m \times 2$); so are *A moment for feasts & prayers* ($m \times 2$) and *A year to pay homage to the dead* ($m \times 1 + d \times 2$).”

Harry Mathews wrote the above paragraph as an introduction to his eight-page story: “Clocking the world on cue: the chronogram for 2001”. Both the title and the story were chronograms for 2001. The story contains 2001 *i*'s and not a single *c, d, l, m, v, or x*.

Today, we will write our own chronograms for 2009. Some will be headlines; others will be opening sentences or paragraphs for imaginary newspaper articles (news, editorials, op eds, sports, columns, food, fashion, art, entertainment, weather, etc.) The goal is to capture the essence of this year, politically, culturally, or even poetically. I will compile your creations into a small newspaper of sorts, *The Chron*, and send it to you as a souvenir of this minicon.

Here are the Roman numerals:

I = 1

V = 5

X = 10

L = 50

C = 100

D = 500

M = 1000

Here are some Roman numeral combinations you can use in your chronograms of 2009:

MMVIII — no X, L, C, or D

MDDVIII — no X, L, or C

DDDDVIII — no X, L, C, or M

MDCCCCVIII — no X or L

MDCCCCLLVIII — no X

Many other combinations are possible. For example, if the V is a problem, you can always substitute five additional I's.

NEWS

Obama divides Iraqis on war

Man bites dog in VIP diner

Liberals in Congress vote on "death panel" legislation; Obama loses face

Boy presumed to be taking a very long balloon trip was actually only in the attic

Illicit Ponzi coup: gov't catches Madoff

FASHION

Designers, including Oscar de la Renta, convey creations

BUSINESS

Mortgages in very distressed situation

First-time buyer program saving housing

WANT ADS

I'll be looking for a full-time editorial position until I locate one

HEALTH

Bacon still delicious: swine flu fears overcome by tasty pork

SPORTS

Yankees vie in new park, Mets dead in new site

ENTERTAINMENT

"This is it" movie a dud

Independent horror movie is a huge hit

COMICS

Archie's marriage to Veronica causes fans to cheer wildly

HOROSCOPE

Gemini: You are going to die very soon after Senator Kennedy

WEATHER

Today: high of 55°, overcast, chance of rain.

2 p.m.: high of 56°, foggy, then sunny

Tonight: 30°, chance of frost