IMAGINARY PEOPLE FOR YOU TO MEET

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Words that have been made out of people’s names, such as boycott and forsythia, are known as eponyms. However, there appears to be no name for the inverse process, that of creating fictitious names to describe generic behavior or inanimate objects. What behavior or objects do the following names stand for?

Be warned that this quiz is more difficult than most of the ones I present in Word Ways. Even if you get a harlot’s hello (British slang for nothing at all), you will certainly learn something about a little-known byway of onomastics.

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2. Titivillus 17. Miss Thing
3. Old Nick 18. Father Bunloaf
4. Dolly Oil 19. Lucy Law
5. Nancy Pretty 20. Mary Jane
7. Tabby 22. Big Dick from Boston
8. House Larry 23. Maggie Moores
12. Jimmy Green 27. Whistling Willie
14. Herkimer Jerkimer 29. Peter Funk
15. Mr. Whiskers 30. Peter Lug

Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.