

The Style Invitational

WEEK 115: THE MNEMONIC PLAGUE

Old mnemonic device to remember the colors of the spectrum:

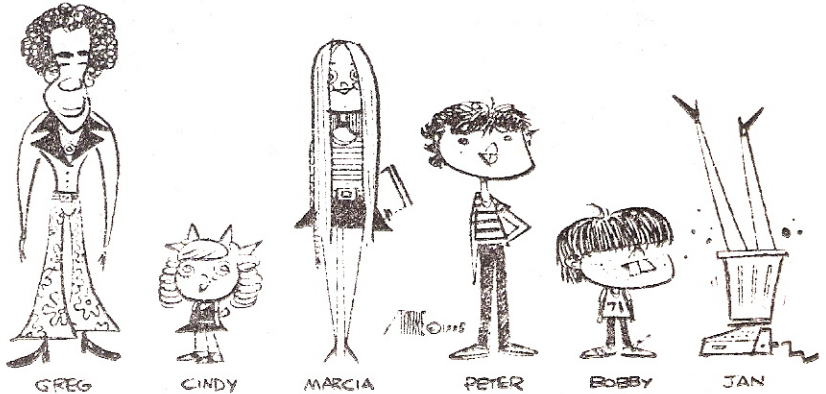
"Roy G. Biv."

New mnemonic device to remember the colors of the spectrum:

"Repent, Orenthal! Your Glamorous Beloved Is Vivisected."

REMEMBERING THE BRADY BUNCH KIDS' NAMES

GRIND CHILDREN, MAKE PEANUT BUTTER, JELLY



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This Week's contest was suggested by Greg Arnold of Herndon, who wins a picture of a contented, unexploited wild elephant in her extremely natural habitat, pooping. Greg suggests you come up with new mnemonic devices to remember complicated lists. The names of the Supreme Court justices. Planets in the solar system. Countries of Central America. Whatever needs remembering. You don't have to refer to an old mnemonic device; there need not even be one. First-prize winner gets the fabulous spigot illusion, an imitation brass faucet suspended over a glass and seemingly held aloft only by its own stream of liquid, a value of \$50. Runners-up, as always, get the coveted Style Invitational losers' T-shirts.

Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper stickers. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to the Style Invitational, Week 115, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, fax them to 202-334-4312, or submit them via the Internet to this address: losers@access.digex.net. Internet users: Please indicate the appropriate week number in the "subject" field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, June 5. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, appropriateness or humor. No purchase necessary. The Faerie of the Fine Print & The Ear No One Reads is still seeking nominations for The Ear No One Reads. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

REPORT FROM WEEK 112,

in which we asked you to come up with the first lines of a book so bad you will put it right down. But first, a hearty Style Invitational thank-you to those many, many alert readers who pointed out primarily that this idea, submitted by Jessica Steinhice, was actually stolen from the annual Bulwer-Lytton bad fiction contest. They were shocked to discover we had ripped off an idea, as though this entire contest were not itself a shameless rip-off of the New York Magazine Competition, which was no doubt a rip-off of something else. The marketplace of ideas in America is a giant Thieves' Bazaar peopled by pickpockets, safecrackers and second-story men. Being shocked by this would be like being shocked that, in the movie, Superman isn't really flying - an analogy we stole from a 1985 article by Dave Barry. Thank you.

Several people submitted amusingly beginning from real books. Our favorite was this, by Bob Lieblich of Arlington. It is the opening line of "Thanatopsis," by William Cullen Bryant: **"So him who in the love of nature holds / Communion with her visible forms she speaks / A various language."**

◆ Second Runner-Up (from a book about humor): **Any attempt to write about humor is to take a pickax to it. It is like making dead what is alive. It is wringing the neck of a swan. Nevertheless...** (Roger Gilkeson, Washington)

◆ First Runner-Up (from a medieval epic verse): **The Wurtling Fezagiol gamboled upon the plee / With zingled hube; / And the Zeebloard did pfout / Amid winnick and ploray / Whilst I skrote the Turling-Toed Keef / And the Cloven Drep turned a-queeving. / The Dizzled Yingbore did give way / To biorthing and glimpering. / After that, things started to get confusing.** (Paul Sabourin, Silver Spring)

◆ **And the winner of the dorky baseball cap with long gray hair:**

From a children's coloring book:

(Kevin Mellema, Falls Church)



◆ Honorable Mentions

From a novel written without the letter e:

"Oh! Oh!" moans Morris, as his blood runs out of him. "You took all my blood out of my body."

"And your plasma, to boot," growls a nasty man with an awl and a pump.

As Morris croaks, a big pool of blood drains away into a pail.

(Sarah Worcester, Bowie)

From a novel written entirely in the letter e:

E eeeee eeee ee eeee E eee eeeee eee. Ee eeeeeee, eeeee ee. Eeeee, ee! Eeee ...

(Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

From a home projects book:

The projects in this book are fun and easy, and all you will need are a triple-speed planer, a variable height-grounded peg holer, a narrow-beam eyelet laser, an infinite-pitch diamond-edge buzz saw ...

(Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

From a hard-boiled detective novel:

It was the sort of Monday that made you want to bite open the veins in your wrists. Geoff was broke. Broker than a cheap

Taiwan knockoff copy of a Timex after it's fallen into a bowl of spinach borscht. And his wife, Jacki, was mad, madder than a hatter in October with a leftover carload of bunny-shaped Easter bonnets. The phone rang loud, louder than an ugly hooker's hot pants ...

(Helene Haduch, Washington; Russ Beland, Springfield)

From a celebrity memoir:

You probably have been wondering what we replacement players have been doing with ourselves since the strike. . .

(Ken Krattenmaker, Landover Hills)

And Last:

Hit for the cycle. That's my goal. I'd been runner-up, honorable mention, contest suggester, outright winner. I needed a mention in someone else's entry.

Anybody's. Carnahan. Smith.

Krattenmaker, Beland, Worcester. Even

Pannullo. I prayed: "Mention me and spell

my name correctly, or it won't count."

-From "Me" by Jessica Heinstice.

(Jerry Pannullo, Chevy Chase)

Next Week: **What Kind of Foal Am I?**