

The Style Invitational

Week CVIII: Spit the Difference

What is the difference between Enron and a salmon? They both smell fishy, but you can't buy a piece of salmon for thirty cents.

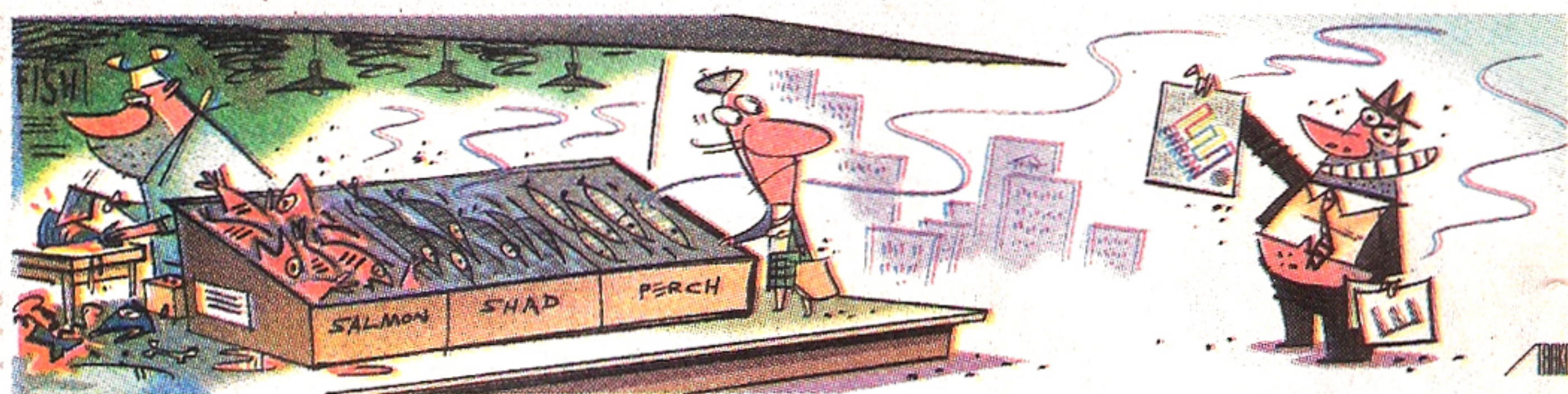


ILLUSTRATION BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This Week's Contest: Take any two nouns that appear on the front page of today's Washington Post (or today's home page of washingtonpost.com) and explain how the nouns differ from each other, as in the example illustrated above, which was taken from a recent Page A1. You can use proper names, and you can also include any modifiers that appear with the noun. (As in, say, "large, steamy chalupas.") First-prize winner gets a genuine antique 1968 Democratic Campaign Bottle, still in its box, in the shape of a donkey with Hubert Humphrey's face. This is worth \$50. First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. U.S. mail entries have been canceled due to rabid, spit-flying fanaticism. Deadline is Monday, Feb. 25. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and phone number. E-mail entries must include the week number in the subject field. Contests will be judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post.

Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published in four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate

relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Chris Doyle of Burke.

Report from Week CIV, in which you were asked to come up with the opening lines to a joke that badly telegraphs the punch line. Many people missed the point, instead taking well-known jokes and clumsily ruining the punch line. Close, but no exploding cigar. The best of these: **Watson and Holmes are camping out on a night of beautiful stars, which they cannot see because they are in a tent. At one point Holmes awakens and . . .** (Lloyd Duvall, Roslyn, Pa.; Bob Sorensen, Herndon) Also, **How many really selfish, arrogant people—you know, the sort of people who think the world revolves around them—does it take to screw in a light bulb?** (Billy Trimble, Washington)

◆ Second Runner-Up: **Bill Buckner, the 1990s Buffalo Bills and George W. Bush are eating pretzels one day when . . .** (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

◆ First Runner-Up: **Knock, knock. Who's there? Jiang Spit-on-Me-if-I-Say-the-Same-Word-Twice-in-a-Row Hu.** (Russell and Adam Beland, Springfield)

◆ And the winner of the Japanese disposable men's underpants: **Samuel F.B. Morse's wife, Dorothy, who is a champion sprinter, asks his advice on a race the following day. "Well, Dot," he said . . .** (Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)

◆ Honorable Mentions:
Two really pompous upper-class bird enthusiasts were enjoying their luncheon on a park bench when one said to the other, "Do you have any Grey Poupon?" and . . . (Gary Patishnock, Laurel)

Linda Tripp walks into a Volkswagen dealership, and says she needs to replace her '98 Bug, and . . . (Mark Young, Washington)

For Bill Clinton's surprise birthday party, his friends buy him a fancy centerpiece: An ice sculpture of Hillary, which . . . (Mark Young, Washington)

So Tipper Gore and her friend, Tyler, were out in a canoe . . . (Robin D. Diallo, Lilongwe, Malawi)

The Rev. Archibald Spooner, after whom Spoonerisms were named, was speaking with his bishop, who observed there might be a rainstorm later in the day. Not wishing to give any offense, Rev. Spooner decided to give the polite and equivocal answer of "Might be." Unfortunately . . . (Roy Ashley, Washington)

So Bill Gates is traveling on a highway, when he has a crash, and . . . (John O'Byrne, Dublin, Ireland)

Al Gore, Pinocchio and Howdy Doody are . . . (Roger and Pam Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

A priest, a minister, and a rabbi were complaining about the things they had to cut from their lives to be true to their religions . . . (Judith Cottrill, New York)

Sen. Byrd, carrying one of those giant foam hands, meets two of the Bushes . . . (Dane C. Petersen, Arlington)

Monica Lewinsky is buying a car, and this salesman is bragging about how much space this one model has between the driver and the roof of the car, so . . . (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

Joe Running Horse goes into a restaurant, and the maitre' d says there are no tables available for drop-ins, so Joe . . . (Barry Blyveis, Columbia)

This very stupid sailor is asked to swab the poop deck . . . (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

The doctor tells Vanna White that she has irritable bowel syndrome, and . . . (Sandra Hull, Arlington)

Seeking to replace Buddy and Socks, Bill and Hillary go to the pound and cannot decide between an alley cat and a female dog, when . . . (Sandra Hull, Arlington)

A priest who wants to buy a parrot for his bishop goes into a pet shop owned by a guy with Tourette's syndrome . . . (Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

Vincent van Gogh travels to the future in a time machine, and the first person he meets is Mike Tyson . . . (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

A chef decides to travel to a cooking contest, so he gets on a plane with his specialty, a frozen dessert called a bombe (which is pronounced "bom" and not "bom-bay"), and . . . (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

A Laplander orders an extra-hot cup of coffee at McDonald's . . . (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

Two Eskimo boys and their friend, Shotgun-Wedding-in-the-Igloo, were wondering about the origin of family names . . . (Sue Lin Chong, Washington)

This termite inspector with a peg leg . . . (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

Bob Dole had forgotten his hearing aid when Al Gore complained about his election results . . . (Bob Dalton, Arlington)

The baritone who always wished he could sing tenor was swimming off the coast of Florida . . . (Bruce W. Alter, Fairfax Station)

Next Week: **On the Appellation Trail**