

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 984

in which we asked you to write something in which each successive word started with the next letter of the alphabet — in either direction. And you could even turn around and switch directions, or head from Z on to A or vice versa (“A,” “and” and “the” could be added anywhere). This contest prompted a number of entrants to force the Empress to slog through 26-word and longer sentences (Judge to E: “For giving ink to that atrocious pun, you will hereby serve a 26-word sentence, and surrender your tiara immediately”) that all seemed to be about xanthippic yaks or yapping zebras. She will spare you further, and instead show how it's done right:



Z on to A, to Y: Zeroes, athletes, braniacs, cheerleaders, dorks . . . Everybody faking grins . . . (Hey, it's just kissing!) . . . “Look, Ma, no —” . . . Oops! photos. . . Quotes (really shallow, though) . . . Upperclassmen . . . Varsity winners . . . XOXOXO. Yearbook. (Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)

Alpha bettered: Honorable mentions

Armstrong's bicycling career: dope-pedaling. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Armstrong biked competitively, defeating every France-going hopeful in July. Knocking Lance, malicious naysayers obsessively persecuted. Quit robbing seven titles, USADA — very weak. (Amanda Yanovitch, Midlothian, Va.)

2 Winner of the genuine 18-inch rubber chicken: H to A: Harry's genitals frankly elicit doubts concerning bedroom abilities. (Ann Martin, Bracknell, England)

3 T back to A, then forward to R: Tampa Secret-Rendezvous Quarters: “President Obama's a narcissistic Marxist, liar and Kenyan. Jeez, investigate the Hawaiian government! Follow the evidence! Democrats concealed the bozo's actual birth certificate!” the Donald explains, flashing a goofy “hey, I'm just kooky” look. Mitt nods obligingly, pales and quickly retreats. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

4 A to Z: A belligerent candidate, defiantly expounding fallacious gynecological health information, just kept lecturing, making numbers of people quite rightly say (to use vilifying words), “X#\$%, you zero!” (Steve Gerritson, Bothell, Wash., a First Offender)

Diana, Cuba beckons again! Zip your Xtreme-Dream wetsuit, vow unwavering tenacity! Swim. Retch. Quit. Plan one next marathon lunacy. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

Allowing budget cliff-diving ensures the Four Ghastly Horsemen in January, Krugman lectures me. (David Genser, Poway, Calif.)

A boa constrictor doesn't ever forget: Giving hugs is just killing. Love

murders. Neatly. On purpose. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Another bit casual dopers easily forget: Getting high inhaling joints kills living mitochondria. Nevertheless, optimistic potheads quietly remain stoned, toking up volumes while X-rays yield zero apparent “brain collapse” (duh). (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

A jaded Kate (lately Middleton): “Nosy, obnoxious pregnancy questions! Royalty sucks!” (Katherine Stickers, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., a First Offender)

Debt = China bought America. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

“Hey, I'm just kidding,” laughed Mitt nervously. “Obama's policies rarely seem taxing.” (Tom Cary, Hollywood, Md.)

Joystick kaput? Luckily, men now overcome the problem; a quick remedy shapes things up. Viagra: a winner! (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Sexual rapport: Quid pro O. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Limbaugh makes news the oldest profession. (Dave Airozo, Silver Spring)

Bleeding crocodile? Dying elephant? Fractured goat? Hemorrhaging iguana? Jaundiced kangaroo? Languishing moose? Narcoleptic opossum? Paralyzed quail? This unflappable vet will X-ray your zoo animals! (Graham Lester, Roeland Park, Kan.)

And last: Avoiding brainier competitions delivering earnings, fame, glory, honor — I just keep losing. (Kevin Dopart)

See more alphabetical passages in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite988.

Still running — deadline Monday night — is the Week 987 contest on homophone humor. See wapo.st/inv987.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 988: A faster break

Electrify chess pieces so that voltage steadily increases until somebody makes a move.

If you take more than 60 seconds to take your turn in Scrabble, your opponent gets to whack your knuckles with his tile rack.

In a 4G world, who has the patience for 1G sports? When the two-minute warning means that the game should be over in a half-hour or so, you might as well compensate with some other pastimes that we could speed up to fit our ever more frantically ticking clocks. Loser Mike Gips suggests: **Suggest ways to make sports and other leisure activities more time-efficient or exciting, as in Mike's examples above.**

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — speaking of novel pastimes — a pair of actual three-sided dice, intended for those who lack the dexterity to play Rock-Paper-Scissors in the usual manner. “Loser logic at its finest,” notes donor Jeff Contompasis, since this method requires a suitable dice-rolling surface. Jeff also includes a bonus prize of official USDA instructions on “Obliterating Animal Carcasses With Explosives” (e.g., “Horseshoes should be removed to minimize dangerous flying debris”).

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders receive a smelly, tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Sept. 24; results published Oct. 14 (online Oct. 12). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 988” in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviterules. The subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Beverley Sharp. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

STYLE CONVERSATIONAL Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join us at washingtonpost.com/stylconversational.

MOVIES

Nenad Cincin-Sain mulls success for the time being

BY ANN HORNADAY

When Nenad Cincin-Sain introduced his feature debut “The Time Being” at its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival last week, he anticipated the first question at the Q-and-A session after the screening.

Just to get it out of the way, he answered it: “My father's Croatian, my mother is Serbian, my wife is Albanian and I was born in Slovenia,” said Cincin-Sain, 41, saying that everyone's first question to him is “always about my

name.”

With that, the audience watched “The Time Being,” a drama about a young artist (Wes Bentley) who is finding difficulty balancing his struggling career and his burgeoning family when he meets a mysterious patron (Frank Langella).

Cincin-Sain, who has worked extensively in music videos and video installations, evinced a sharp painterly eye in “The Time Being,” composing sequences to create an expressive, even meditative experience — embellished by fre-

quent shots of gorgeous paintings by Stephen Wright and Eric Zener.

Cincin-Sain, who moved to Bethesda from Toronto as a child and attended Bethesda Chevy Chase High School before “running away from home” as a young teenager, admitted that “The Time Being” was inspired by “personal struggle.”

In a later phone conversation, he elaborated: “One day I was at the museum with my son, who at the time was about 2 or 3 years old. And while I was there with him, all I kept thinking about

was, ‘I should be home working on the script and getting financing for the film.’ Then when I got home I started feeling guilty that I wasn't with my son. I started to experience this constant duality between my obsession with my work and my family.”

Of experiencing his first world premiere, Cincin-Sain said, “It felt great.... We've gotten a number of calls from distributors asking for information, although no deals have been presented to us.”

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MATT CARR/GETTY IMAGES

Nenad Cincin-Sain of “The Time Being” at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival.