

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Tooning up: Refreshed cartoon tropes

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1397 cartoonist Bob Staake drew four of the most cliched settings for magazine cartoons, and we asked the Loser Community to freshen them up. The original cartoons had no one on the island, no one in the desert, and just the bartender and psychiatrist in the other two.



"Trump WON!"

(Idea and caption above by Rob Cohen, Potomac, winner of the first-place Lose Cannon)

Castaway on phone: "Between noon and 5 p.m. You can't narrow down that window?" (Frank Mann, Washington)

Two people on the island. "I think I can hear Kimberly Guilfoyle." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Lone man grabs his head and sobs uncontrollably as a copy of "How to Tango" washes up on the island. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

Big mass of football players crowded on the island: "How come the basketball guys got to 'bubble' at Disney World?" (Mike Ostapiej, Ravenel, S.C.)

Sign: "Mt. Everest: Elev. 29,029." Trump-like figure, sitting: "It's a hoax!" (Rob Cohen)

One bedraggled man on the island, another in a suit. "Hi, I'm Rudy. Got any dirt on Biden?" (Duncan Stevens)

Two castaways, one wearing a face mask: "Dang it, Marty! Put your mask on! You trying to kill me?" (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring)

Two sharks recline in lounge chairs, wearing sunglasses and holding daiquiris with umbrellas in them. "Can you believe we ever bought that 'keep swimming or you'll die' crap?" (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)



"In 375 miles, crawl right."

(Idea and caption by Mike Gips, Bethesda, second place and the Capitol dome squeeze ball)

Astronaut planting U.S. flag: "Yessir, Mr. President. On behalf of Space Force, it's great to be here in New Mexico... um, I mean, on the moon." (Mark Raffman, Reston)

One crawling guy to another: "I think we'd make better time if we tried walking." (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

Salvador Dali paints a picture of a melting clock. In the desert are several melting clocks. (Pia Palamidessi)

Husband and wife cats to real estate agent: "Just look at the size of this bathroom!" (Robyn Carlson)

Two old-style Western bandits with bandannas over their faces: "Zeke, you can't make me wear this thing. I can't breathe! What about my rights?" (Mark Raffman)

Trump holds up a glass of water over a man crawling on the ground. "I would like you to do us a favor, though..." (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

Little cactus to big cactus (picture unchanged). "Dad, when I get older, will my third arm be as big as yours?" (Mike Ostapiej)



"I do temperature checks, of course, but what if they're asymptomatic?"

(Idea and caption by Steve Smith, Potomac, third place)

Putin sits at the bar. Bartender: "Name your poison." (Greg Dobbins, Boynton Beach, Fla., fourth place)

Covid particle sits at the bar. "Man, I've been everywhere today." (Duncan Stevens)

Despondent devil sits at the bar. "You have a fantastic year and still they want more." (Frank Mann)

Anthony Fauci sits at the bar. Bartender: "Your boss doesn't appreciate you, you say?" (Duncan Stevens)

Teen sits at the bar with a mask almost completely covering his face, while the bartender looks at his ID photo — which is also totally masked. (Jeff Shirley)

Drawing is unchanged. "That will be \$11.50, Mr. Houdini... Mr. Houdini?" (Mike Caslin, Round Hill, Va.)

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy at the bar. "A beer — and be slow about it." (Greg Dobbins)

Two rats at the bar. "I tell ya, it's a real human-race out there." (Pia Palamidessi, Cumberland, Md.)

Elephant at the bar. "I drink to forget." (Bob Kruger, Rockville)

Priest comes toward the bar. "Just once I wanted to walk in alone." (Robyn Carlson, Keyser, W.Va.)



"Whenever I'm in a room, nobody talks about me."

(Idea and caption above by Duncan Stevens)

Both shrink and young client stare at their phones. Shrink texts to client, "Tell me how your week was." (Anita Holmes, Apple Valley, Calif., a First Offender)

Dog lying on the couch: "They always ask me, 'Who's a good boy?' But they never TELL me I'm a good boy." (Wendy Shang, Falls Church)

Murder hornet on couch: "I don't feel I'm getting the attention I deserve right now." (Jennifer Dickey, Silver Spring)

Space alien on couch: "But that's where we ALWAYS put the probes. It doesn't mean I have a fixation!" (Mark Raffman)

A priest, a rabbi and a Baptist minister sit side by side on the couch. Psychiatrist: "I've identified your problem. You're in the wrong cartoon." (Jeff Shirley, Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

The Empress is sitting in the psychiatrist's chair. A guy in a dunce cap is lying on the couch, troubled. The Empress says, "Have you considered submitting funnier entries?" (Mike Gips)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Sept. 14: Our contest to "breed" two horse names and name the "foal." See wapo.st/invite1400.

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potato chips, coffee, oats, graham crackers, chocolate chips and butterscotch. Maybe a bit much, but I'm guessing that Loser Jeff Contom-pasis was able to get them on the clearance rack for \$1.12 not because of their taste, but because of the brand name: Compost Cookies.

Other runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "No 'Bility" or "Punder-achiever." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Tooning Up" is by Kevin Dopart. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev; "like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday.

BRAND-NEW PODCAST! In Episode 2 of You're Invited, host Mike Gips interviews Chris Doyle, the most successful Loser of all time. It's terrific. Hear it at NRARS.org.

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week's at wapo.st/conv1401.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers. Clues include 'Aparicio of Cooperstown', 'Scratches (out)', 'Serving perfectly', etc. Answers include 'Aparicio', 'Scratches', 'Serving', etc.

Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY MADALYN ASLAN
HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Sept. 13: Intense, caring and determined, you must fight your tendency to neglect your emotional self. Others marvel at how you accomplish what you do, and this year is no exception.
ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your self-awareness and appearance are important now. You're dealing with your emotional self, the person you are becoming.
TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You find most opportunities working behind the scenes today. Do not be surprised if partnerships go haywire.
GEMINI (May 21-June 20): There's a lot of communication and exchange of ideas taking place in your home today.
CANCER (June 21-July 22): You're either gaining a boost in your status, recognition and personal popularity, or you're feeling in need of the same.
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You're feeling as if you need to get away. Your mind is active and you yearn for new experiences.
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Your experiences are more intense than usual. Security is an important issue.
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Harmony and peace are highlighted. You're looking for a balance as you fine-tune a relationship.

New for Week 1401: How hai? A joke-haiku contest

HOW HOT IS IT? It is so hot that my iPhone now qualifies as a Baked Apple. — Paul Lander

The haiku above was lifted not from an earlier Style Invitational contest, but from the online poetry journal Light. Its editor, Melissa Balmain (who also has 167 blots of Invite ink), featured it as one of Light's "poems of the week" — and pointed it out to the Empress: contest potential. Oh, yes.

This week: Write a joke (roughly) in the "It's so xxx" genre as a haiku, as in the poem above. For our purposes (purists, please don't write in to quibble) a haiku is anything written in three lines, with 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second, 5 in the third. As with the example, you may add a title as well. Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1401 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, Sept. 21; results will appear Oct. 11 in print, Oct. 8 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a nice fresh carton of eight cookies, into which are mixed a list of morsels including pretzels,

Answers to last week's puzzle.

Grid of crossword puzzle answers: SHAME, SWAB, APTITUDE, KILOS, PITA, PAISANOS, FILECABINET, LEVELBEST, ARTESIAN, FEDERAL, DUO, GETSMAD, SMARTS, ENNOBLE, OWINGTO, ORE, DRILLSERGEANT, CLUE, ASSOON, ASEA, DERAILED, SEQUITUR, PBA, ASTERS, SCULL, RAINIER, UPPER, TSA, HAMMERPANTS, RAJ, RAVEL, ASKEDIN, SPIRO, HEELER, UMS, KEYPUNCH, BARSTOOL, BACOWORKON, OMOO, SANDERIVANO, COUR, GOO, TARRIES, PATSDRY, ONTAPE, DIECAST, RAS, CELEBRE, TINPLATE, PLANEFARE, NAILCLIPPER, TELEVISE, ANNE, ANGER, SADDENED, TYCO, TEARS