

The Style Invitational

By the Empress

Week 733: Just Drop It, Okay?

Saturday, September 29, 2007

I-am-I Beach: The last resort spot for egotists.

BS-ervation: A stupid platitude, like "It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game."

After reading humorist Gene Weingarten's online chat on washingtonpost.com, in which the Empress wrote in about "jokes, humorous observations, etc.," Indefatigable Loser Peter Metrinko was inspired to come up with this week's neologism contest.



(Bob Staake For The Washington Post)

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This week: Drop the first letter from an actual word or term to make a new word or term, and define it. Its use in a hilarious sentence is also welcome. The new word may not be a well-known existing word. This contest has enormous scope: it'll be very easy to come up with something or other. So edit yourself: **Send no more than 25 entries.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the "No Plot? No Problem! Novel Writing Kit," a book-shaped box containing such keys to literary eminence as "Daily Novelizing Briefs" as well as "motivational materials, pop-talking letters and commitment coupons."

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called that week) get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 8. Put "Week 733" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are 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 Oct. 27. 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 Tom Witte of Montgomery Village. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Dave Prevar of Annapolis.

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Report From Week 729

in which we asked you to take a sentence from The Post and "translate" it into "plain English": A bunch of entries cited one or another verbose BS-ervation (see This Week's Contest) meant to assure the populace about progress in Iraq, security measures, etc., and translated it as "We're doomed."

4. (Job posting) The mission of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) is to enhance the financial stability, accountability and integrity of the Government of the District of Columbia.

Plain English Version: Good morning, Mr. Phelps . . .

(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

3. "It was the one of the most different halves of football I've ever been around."

PE: "It's too soon after the game for me to talk good again yet."

(Russell Beland, Springfield)

2. the winner of the stationery made of Panda Poo paper:

"Our overall evaluation is that real progress has been achieved," Jones told the senators, and then he qualified that judgment with words such as "uneven," "unsatisfactory," "overly sectarian" and "failed."

PE: "After uneven, unsatisfactory and overly sectarian progress, our overall evaluation is that failure has been achieved."

(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

And the Winner of the Inker

"If the kind of success we are now seeing continues, it will be possible to maintain the same level of security with fewer American forces," Bush said.

PE: "Sure, maintaining the level of 'insanely dangerous' takes almost no troops at all."

(Russ Taylor, Vienna)

More To-the-Point Conversions

Iraq Study Group report: "Good policy is difficult to make when information is systematically collected in a way that minimizes its discrepancy with policy goals."

PE: "Bush cooks the books."

(Kevin Dopart; Ned Stone, Atlanta)

FREE RAZR PHONES!

PE: EXPENSIVE SERVICE AGREEMENTS!

(Ira Allen, Bethesda)

"The economy was in strong condition going into the recent period of volatility, and while certain sectors like housing are undergoing a transition, overall economic fundamentals remain solid."

PE: "The poo hasn't hit the fan -- yet."

(Susan Shapiro, Annapolis)

"And -- let's be honest here -- "

PE: "And -- let me sugarcoat this a little less than usual -- "

(Russell Beland)

Larry has been seeing "Carrie" for five years, and I don't want to hurt Larry or our friendship.

PE: You got any tips on how to McQuickie my friend's squeeze without getting caught?

(Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

British regulators said yesterday that they are prepared to allow the creation of embryos that are part human and part animal for use in medical experiments.

PE: Evolution has come to a spork in the road.

(Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

"I certainly want to win the gold, and in Beijing also." -- Chinese gymnastics coach Lu Shanzhen

PE: "I certainly want to win the gold, and not die."

(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

"To the extent that we can move quickly to denuclearization, we can move quickly to normalization."

PE: "This damn well better work."

(Mae Scanlan, Washington)

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PE: We can Photoshop you right out of your skivvies.

(Brendan Beary)

Fred Thompson: "I know that reform is possible in Washington because I have seen it done."

PE: "I've never actually managed to reform anything myself."

(Russell Beland)

"Seeks intelligent, civilized man, 60+ for lasting friendship."

PE: "Is hopelessly delusional."

(Kevin Dopart)



Detroit's Timo Perez, left, and Curtis Granderson celebrate their 6-1 win over the Seattle Mariners. Granderson had a historic night with his 20th ho

PE: Granderson had a historic night with his 20th "date."

(Kevin Dopart; Clifford Fishman, Rockville)

Story about a toy recall: The items are small and "don't pose a lead poisoning risk in themselves."

PE: They only pose a lead poisoning risk when in a child. *(Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)*

Sen. Mitch McConnell: "It is my hope [Larry Craig] will be remembered not for this but for his three decades of dedicated public service."

PE: He will be remembered for three decades of public services.

(Howard Walderman, Columbia)

Fill in the blank spaces in the grid so that every vertical column, every horizontal row and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9, without repeating any.

PE: Fill in the blank spaces until you realized you went wrong a long time ago, then swear and throw the damn thing away.

(Brendan Beary)

Entries may be edited for taste or content.

PE: We are funnier and more sophisticated than you are.

(Beverley Sharp, Washington)

Complete auto care starts with our \$17.99 oil change.

PE: For only \$17.99, we'll tell you that you need new shocks, struts, brakes, exhaust system, valve cover gaskets, water pump, CV joints, wiper blades and, of course, tires.

(Russ Taylor)

Anti-Invitationals -- sugarcoated interpretations of actual plain speaking:

FEMA stopped testing occupied trailers after March 2006, when it initially discovered formaldehyde levels that were 75 times the U.S.-recommended safety threshold for workplaces.

PE: "We've found no additional evidence of elevated formaldehyde in the last 18 months," FEMA officials said.

(Russ Taylor)

The New York Times and other newspapers vied with trash-TV talk shows hosted by the likes of CNN 's Nancy Grace, a biased wacko-feminist, and MSNBC 's Joe Scarborough, a right-wing blowhard, in a race to the journalistic bottom.

PE: A robust exchange of ideas emerged from a diverse mix of media sources.

(Russell Beland)

Next Week: Time-Wastes for Everyman, or Even Trivialer Pursuits