

The Style Invitational

By the Empress

Style Invitational Week 830: Reinterpreting Headlines; and Words Within Words

Saturday, August 15, 2009

The Art of Letting Employees Go

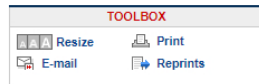
Sweatshops Offer Decorative Bathroom Passes

In sporadic bouts of magnanimity, The Empress occasionally deigns to correspond with a few members of the greater Loser community. But then these people go and say things to her like "Is it so blasphemous to say I never read the A-section?"

Well, it might not exactly be blasphemous, Mr. Craig Dykstra of Centreville, but given your ardent quest for ink -- 143 entries in the last two weeks -- you might want to get some A-section (or other-section) religion, if only for a few days. **This week: Take any headline, verbatim, appearing anywhere in The Post or on washingtonpost.com from Aug. 14 through Aug. 24 and reinterpret it by adding a "bank head," or subtitle** (like the joke bank head offered under the actual Post headline above). Include the date and page number of the headline you're citing from the paper; for Web articles, give the date and copy a sentence or two of the story (even better, just copy the URL). You don't have to use the entire length of the headline, but don't skip words or use snippets that distort the meaning of the original. Headlines in ads and subheads within an article (as well as actual bank heads) can be used, too; photo captions cannot.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)



Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a Cushy Tushy -- a woolly item that is essentially a sweater for your toilet seat. Not the seat lid, mind you: the actual seat. Nice on a cold day, maybe, but, um, do you really want to be the second person to sit on that thing?

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions 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, Aug. 24. Put 'Week 830' 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 Sept. 12. 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 results is by Tom Witte; this week's Honorable Mentions name is by Kevin Dopart.

Report From Week 826

in which we asked you to take any word or multi-word term, put it a portion of it in quotation marks and describe the result -- as you'll see, the trick to making it funny was to find a word in there that had no relation to the real root of the word. Fabulous week: We received far more worthy entries than we can fit on the page; we'll print more of them when we find ourselves with some extra space.

The Winner of the Inker

1. *the winner of the annoying Superfly Monkey slingshot thing.*

The Winner of the Inker

2. *the winner of the annoying Superfly Monkey slingshot thing.*

3. *Casan'ova': A guy who leaves a trail of unwed mothers. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)*

4. *Mi'shear'd: Wait, you said you wanted your hair to look like Jessica Simpson's? (Erik Wennstrom, Bloomington, Ind.)*

5. *Mis'once'ption: The myth that you can't knock up your girlfriend the first time you have sex. (Lois Douthitt, Arlington)*

6. *Casan'ova': A guy who leaves a trail of unwed mothers. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)*

7. *Mi'shear'd: Wait, you said you wanted your hair to look like Jessica Simpson's? (Erik Wennstrom, Bloomington, Ind.)*

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C'louse': Honorable Mentions

'Alas'ka: A state of regret. -- J. McCain, 16 Blocks Down Pennsylvania Avenue (*Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge; Brendan Beary, Great Mills*)

A'polo'gize: To be self-deprecating about your excess wealth. (*Lois Douthitt*)

A'pot'hecaries: The new California drugstores. (*Yuki Henninger, Vienna*)

Ab'dome'n: The six-pack 20 years later. (*Wayne Rodgers, Satellite Beach, Fla.; Mae Scanlan, Washington*)

An'napoli's: Maryland's other Little Italy. (*Kathleen Brasington, Annapolis, a First Offender*)

An'tithe'sis: Stealing from the collection plate. (*Jan Brandstetter, Mechanicsville, Md.*)

Ar'bo're'tum: Seen one tree, seen 'em all. (*Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.*)

B'rat'wurst: Sausage served in a cheap restaurant. (*Michael Kilby, Wildau, Germany*)

Dow'ry: Having your new bride tell you, "You mean you thought I was related to *that* Bill Gates?" (*Lois Douthitt*)

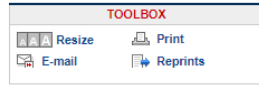
Dissem'bling': Why would you think they're not real diamonds? (*Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.*)

C'onan': A late-night guilty pleasure. (*Tom Witte*)

But'cher'ed: Had some unfortunate plastic surgery. (*Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.*)



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)



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C'leave'r: A hint that you've been hanging around too long in your hosts' kitchen. (*Russ Taylor, Vienna*)

Carpen'try': A Cub Scout birdhouse project. (*Barbara Turner, Takoma Park*)

'Con'tainer: The slammer. (*Susie Wiltshire, Richmond, a First Offender*)

Edu'cat'ion: The training of those who haven't the slightest interest in being trained. (*Max Pieper, Burke, a First Offender*)

E'ducat'ion: Learning that money really can buy happiness. (*Craig Dykstra, Centreville*)

Expect'orate': Say it and spray it. (*Jim Lubell, Mechanicsville, Md.*)

F'ore'play: An activity in which one hopes to strike gold, but usually strikes out. (*Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland*)

Immi'grate': Irritate folks whose families moved here before yours did. (*Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles*)

Ina'lien'able: The right of the government to a third of your paycheck. (*Russ Taylor*)

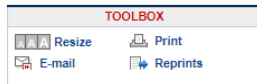
Jo'urn'alist: An obit writer. (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

Kn'it': The nice, um, something that Aunt Lucy made you for your birthday. (*Jane Auerbach*)

Advertisement Le No'zz'e di Figaro: An opera. (*Brendan Beary*)



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Mc'Nam'ara: An otherwise accomplished person whose name will forever be associated with one enormous failure. (*Tom Witte; Brendan Bear*)

Mezza'nine': An almost perfect midsection. (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn*)

P'itch'er: The player in the bullpen who always shows up on TV at just the wrong time. (*James Noble, Lexington Park*)

President': Someone who lives here and wasn't born here. -- L. Dobbs (*Dave Zarrow, Reston*)

Pil'grim'age: The trip to the in-laws' for Thanksgiving. (*Craig Dykstra*)

R'e'fin'ancing: An enormous pile of never-ending paperwork. (*Steve Offutt, Arlington*)

S'pee'd: What you do when the next rest stop is 89 miles away. (*Tom Lacombe, Browntown, Va.*)

Sh'ape'ly: 112-96-112 (*Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.*)

Spe'cialis't: The 'doctor' who keeps sending me all those e-mails. (*Michael Fransella, Arlington*)

Stup'id'ly: How Gov. Sanford explained his absences. (*Roy Ashley, Washington*)

Advertisement 'Sty'lus: A pig pen. (*Chris Doyle*)

Sy'nap'se: A senior moment. (*Beverley Sharp, Washington*)

Taber'nacl'e: Where the salt of the earth gathers to pray. (*Elden Carnahan, Laurel*)

Ve'hic'le: The squad car of the Alexandria police chief. (*Pie Snelson, Silver Spring*)

W'ash'ington Post: Because as much as you'd like to, you can't use the Huffington Post as fireplace kindling. (*Ward Kay, Vienna*)

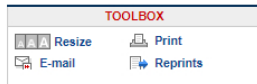
And last: Pa'ink'iller: Something that takes the hurt away. (*Vic Krysko, Suratthani, Thailand*)

Next Week: *Caller IDiot*, or *Consumer Ha Line*

Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.



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