

The Style Invitational

By the Empress

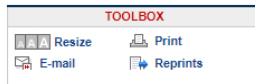
Style Invitational contest Week 893: Give us a hint -- 25-word stories

By The Empress
Saturday, November 6, 2010

As you can gather from the length of most of today's losing entries, the Empress tends to think that short is good. (Which is handy for her, considering her own sub-Amazonian stature.) Back in 2006 we did a contest for [six-word stories](#) (winner: "They suck, Pete Best consoled himself," by Mike Levy of Silver Spring). This week we're going to be a bit more expansive -- up to 25 words -- as in the new anthology "[Hint Fiction](#)" by Robert Swartwood. Named because the minimal stories only suggest a plot that the reader has to fill in for himself -- reading between the line, you might call it -- "Hint Fiction" is composed mostly of tale-lets that tend toward the macabre or violent or depressing. For example: "Houston, We Have a Problem," by J. Matthew Zoss: "I'm sorry, but there's not enough air in here for everyone. I'll tell them you were a hero."



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)



We, of course, will shoot for funny.

This week: Write a humorously witty story in 25 words or fewer. It doesn't have to be fiction, but it should be a narrative, not just a funny musing. A title, if you include one, or a fake attribution won't count toward the 25 words.

Winner gets [the Inker](#), the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins this fine play set of [U.S.A. vs. Commies](#), which will help your children learn to eliminate the Red Scourge. Donated by Russell Beland.

Advertisement **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 Loser Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their first ink). 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, Nov. 15. Put "Week 893" 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 to be published Dec. 4. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. This week's contest was suggested by Brendan O'Byrne of Regina, Saskatchewan. The revised title for next week's results is by Beverley Sharp; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Dave Prevar.

Report from Week 889

Our annual Tour de Fours contest, in which we ask you to coin a word containing a solid block of four given letters (this year they were P, O, L and E) in any order: Have we ever mentioned that one Chris Doyle of Ponder, Tex., is pretty good at this contest?

The winner of the Inker

Gestapoleemics: Calling your political opponents Nazis. (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

2. winner of the [dog toy in the shape of a bikini-wearing chicken body](#):

Pelosiraptor: A fierce ancient beast, not yet quite extinct. (*Ann Martin, Bracknell, England*)

3. Googooplex: An enormous day-care center. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

4. CEOplug: When pulled, it often releases a golden parachute. (*Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.*)

POLE sitters: Honorable mentions

Alpoetry: Dog food that sets off a Rin-Tin-Tinnabulation with its [swell, sweet, grilled-swill smell](#). (*Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church*)

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Trumpole: An English barrister with an even sillier wig than his colleagues'. (*Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.*)

Polecatastrophe: A date with someone who didn't use deodorant. (*Beverly Sharp, Washington*)

Teleportapotty: The holy grail of waste disposal technology. (*Erik Wennstrom, Bloomington, Ind.*)

Napoleonsis complex: The tendency to compensate for shortcomings by [acquiring sports teams](#). (*Craig Dykstra, Centreville*)

Slop-etiquette: Rules for feeding at the federal pork barrel. "Slop-etiquette requires that Appropriations Committee members line up first." (*Ira Allen, Bethesda*)

Dopeleganger: A dork who looks just like you. (*Roy Ashley, Washington; Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City*)

Narcolepigram: A long, boring saying. (*David Kleinbard, Jersey City*)

Nincompeople: To Fox News watchers, everyone on MSNBC, and vice versa. (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase*)

Osteoplump: "Big-boned." (*Chris Doyle*)

Apopletric: Blowing a fuse. (*Kevin Dopart*)

Poel: Christmas during the recession. (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village*)

Dactylopejorative: Hoity-toity word for the one-finger salute. (*Chris Doyle*)



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

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Kelpo: The new seaweed diet for PETA pets. (*Elizabeth Dere, Ammandale, a First Offender*)

Feelops: The airport security squad in charge of giving pat-downs. (*John O'Byrne, Dublin*)

Beatlepontiff: Pope John Paul George Ringo. (*Chris Doyle*)

Poleyps: unfortunate ailment developed by exotic dancers. (*Frank and Cindy Curry, Bruceton Mills, W.Va.*)

HopeLOL: Republican campaign slogan. (*Edmund Conti*)

Drooplessness: A concern four hours after taking Cialis. (*Chris Doyle*)

Temple-oath: First, do no ham. (*Chris Doyle*)

Oculopeel: To undress with the eyes. (*Chris Doyle*)

Casserolepia: Constellation that remains stationary over the Midwest. (*Christopher Lamora*)

Anvilope: A mailman's nightmare. (*Chris Doyle*)

Encyclopediass: A know-it-all. (*Tom Witte*)

And last: Brothelponder: The best little whorehouse in Texas (trust me on this). (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

Next week: Double teaming, or Lions + Tigers + Bears



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