



Style

Style Invitational Week 977: Fun with Google Translate, 8 years later



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

June 21, 2012

*Original: I keep my food fresh with preservatives.**Translated into French and then back to English:**2004 result: I preserve my fresh food with condoms.**2012 result: I keep my food fresh with conservatives.*

In 2004, a few months into her reign, the Empress put up a contest that got what might have been our largest response ever: Contestants had to choose some passage of text and translate it into one of five languages with Google's translating tool — then enter that foreign-language result through the same tool, and ask it to be translated into English. The results were hilariously incompetent; "linguists, you won't soon be replaced by a machine," the E predicted.

Eight years later, Google Translate (translate.google.com) does a far, far better job; many of the passages used in the 2004 contest translate back and forth without a hitch now. But there are many more languages to try — 60, from Afrikaans to Yiddish — and as you can see from the example above, there's still room for comical error. So: **This week: Translate a line of text from English into another language using Google Translate; then copy that result and translate it back into English. You may also make intermediate steps into one or more other languages.**





Show us both the original and the final lines, of course, and tell us the language(s) you used. (You don't have to show us the line in the foreign language.) If I can't duplicate the process, I won't run your entry.

Winner gets [the Inkin' Memorial](#), the Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins a [ceramic mug](#) evidently designed to hold dairy beverages, given that it features a three-dimensional voluptuous, perky, tan-lined human, er, udder. Donated by Nan Reiner.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-



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Contest winners get their choice of a covered [Style Invitational Loser T-shirt](#) (we're phasing these out), a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after [Loser magnet](#). First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, July 2; results published July 22 (online July 20). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 977" 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/StyleInv. The subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Mae Scanlan; the alternative headline in the "Next Week" line is by Edward Gordon. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

Report from Week 973

our first shot at a third "Triple Crown" foal name contest, in which entrants could "breed" only the horses that didn't get ink in the first contest, plus horses that ran in the actual races but weren't on our first list. For a field of just a couple of dozen horses instead of the initial 100, a fine run indeed.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Castaway x Full Cry = Jonah and the Wail (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

2. Winner of the battery-powered toilet handle/night light:

Currency Swap x Lasso = Loan Some Cowboy (*Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.*)

3. El Padrino x Stereo in Motion = iPodrino (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

4. Sensor x Big Blue Spirit = Eye Beam of Genie (*J.D. Berry, Springfield, Va.*)

Horse do-overs: Honorable mentions

Fox Rules x Prospective = Cunning Attraction (*Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park, Md.*)

Stereo in Motion x Sabercat = Moves Like Jaguar (*Kathy El-Assal, Middleton, Wis.*)

Creative Cause x Teeth of the Dog = Big Fang Theory (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

Castaway x Fox Rules = Ginger Ailes (*Jonathan Hardis, Gaithersburg, Md.*)

Lime Drop Kid x Castaway = Dessert Island (*Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.; Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.*)

Castaway x Full Cry = Robinson Caruso (*Harold Mantle, Lafayette, Calif.*)

Cigar Street x Castaway = Butt Out (*Charles Mann, Falls Church, Va.; Roy Ashley, Washington*)

Sabercat x Chief Gaga = Poke Her Face (*Rob Wolf, Gaithersburg, Md.; Fred Dixon, New Market, Md., a First Offender*)

Stereo in Motion x Chief Gaga = TweeterLikeALady (*Judy Blanchard*)

Afford x Teeth of the Dog = Discount Dentures (*Tonda Phalen, Alexandria, Va., a First Offender; Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.*)

Full Cry x Afford = Cry Me a Flivver (*Harold Mantle*)

Afford x Sabercat = Put It on My Tabby (*Judy Blanchard*)

The perils of being a woman who's just asking to be left alone



5 Perspective
Carolyn Hax: A kiss-and-don't-tell with an ex-boyfriend's buddy



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Fly Lexis Fly x Afford = Fly Yugo Fly (*Cheryl Davis, Arlington, Va.*)

El Padrino x Afford = Brando X (*Rick Haynes, Boynton Beach, Fla.*)

El Padrino x Big Blue Spirit = Godpapa Smurf (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Big Blue Spirit x Lemon Juice = Djinn with a Twist (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

Boltzapper x Done Talking = Bye, Jove (*Laurie Brink, Cleveland, Mo.*)

Boltzapper x Fox Rules = High Doltage (*Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.*)

Cigar Street x The Caller = Panatelamarketer (*Chris Doyle*)

Boltzapper x Creative Cause = Pop Goes My Easel (*Howard Walderman, Columbia, Md.*)

Currency Swap x Optimizer = Perfectly Franc (*Steve Price, New York*)

El Padrino x Currency Swap = Capo and Trade (*Susan Thompson, Cary, N.C.*)

Fox Rules x Full Cry = Telly Ho (*Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.*)

El Padrino x Fly Lexis Fly = The Godfeather (*Michael Innis, Washington, a First Offender*)

Lemon Juice x Lime Drop Kid = Sauerbrat (*Susan Vavrick, Springfield, a First Offender*)

Stereo in Motion x Full Cry = Panasonic Boom (*Kevin Dopart*)

Lime Drop Kid x Got What = Lime Drops (*Gregory Koch, Storrs, Conn.*)

Take Charge Indy x Fox Rules = All Right Turns (*Rob Wolf*)

Lime Drop Kid x Lasso = 7-Earp (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

Lemon Juice x Lime Drop Kid = Sierra Mister (*Lynne Larkin, Glenn Dale, Md.; Brian Cohen, Lexington, Va.*)

El Padrino x Went the Day Well = Yoda Juan (*Steve Honley, Alexandria, Va.*)

Prospective x Afford = Future Shack (*Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.*)

Fox Rules x Big Blue Spirit = Rude Indigo (*Harold Mantle*)

Currency Swap x Chief Gaga = Drachma Queen (*Steve Price*)

Teeth of the Dog x Fly Lexis Fly = Pugasus (*David Genser, Poway, Calif.*)

The Caller x Done Talking = Dialed "M" (*Kathleen Schindler, Chapel Hill, N.C., a First Offender*)

The Caller x Take Charge Indy = Harassin' Ford (*Mike Gips*)

Fox Rules x Done Talking = Start Spinning (*Gary Crockett*)

Still running — deadline Monday night — is the Week 976 “Join Now” neologism contest. See wapo.st/inv976a.

Visit the online discussion group [The Style Conversational](#), where the Empress discusses today's new contest and results along with news about the Loser Community — and you can vote for your favorite among the inking entries, since you no doubt figured the Empress chose the wrong winner. If you'd like an e-mail notification each week when the Invitational and Conversational are posted online, write to the Empress at

and conversational are posted online, write to the *Empress* at losers@washpost.com (note that in the subject line) and she'll add you to the mailing list. And on Facebook, join the far more lively group [Style Invitational Devotees](#) and chime in.

Next week's results: Eat Our Dust! or **New York Minuet**, a limerick contest to honor the contest we outlasted, the 973-installment New York Magazine Competition.



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Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. [Follow](#)

The Post Recommends

A baby was abandoned in a phone booth 64 years ago. Now, DNA has helped explain why.

Steve Dennis, who back then didn't yet have a name, was found in a telephone booth by two bread deliverymen in January 1954.

Aug 20



White House reporter April Ryan has a bodyguard. Sarah Huckabee Sanders should pay the bill, Ryan says

Ryan, a veteran White House reporter, unloaded on the press secretary and Omarosa Manigault Newman in a new interview with the Hollywood Reporter.

6 days ago



Three people were caught in a riptide, and a rescuer faced 'the toughest decision'

Matt Tomaszewski extended his paddleboard to the exhausted couple bobbing in the water. "If you want to survive, you need

