



Your Bowie Target is
Now Remodeled.

Come visit us at
Martin Luther King Jr Hwy & Lottsford Vista Rd.



Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1313: Dead Letters — our obit poem contest

Plus the best of a redo of 24 of the past year's Invites



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

January 3

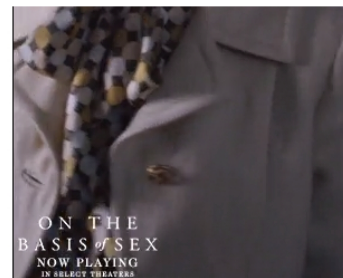
(Click [here to skip down](#) to the inking entries from our do-over contest)

**Philip Roth wrote with poise;
His prose made you shiver.
He explained Jews to goys
(Plus new uses for liver).**

We embrace 2019 with our annual exhibition of the level of taste and decorum for which The Style Invitational is famed. **This week: Write a poem of no longer than eight lines about someone who died in 2018**, as in the example above by “Portnoy’s Complaint” acolyte Gene Weingarten. You can find lots of lists of notable ex-people by Googling “deaths 2018.” The Invite is a humor and light-verse contest, and so the Empress is not looking for sappy odes. But neither does she welcome nasty salvos-in-rhyme that rejoice over the person’s death or predict an afterlife among the Hadeans just because the decedent voted incorrectly or produced crappy music: We have no interest in causing pain; Lord knows you don’t have to look too far elsewhere to get your quota of that.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1313 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our new Style Invitational trophy.



ON THE
BASIS OF SEX
NOW PLAYING
IN SELECT THEATERS

Most Read Entertainment

1 The shutdown has closed the Smithsonian. Here's where you can go instead.



2 Analysis
Fox's 'The Masked Singer': Donny Osmond? T-Pain? Rumer Willis?



Second place receives a set of **three genuine dried scorpions** — along with a black-light flashlight that, when trained upon the desiccated critters, is supposed to make them glow. And they're perfectly edible, according to the package — and surely I wouldn't think twice about doubting the safety advice printed on the shrink wrap of an item promising to "Amaze Your Friends!" Maybe we can write a poem about you next January. Donated by Loser and chronic prize-donor Dave Prevar.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "We've Seen Better" or "IDiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, Jan. 14;** results published Feb. 3 (online Thursday, Jan. 31). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Dave Prevar; Kevin Dopart wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

SECOND FIDDLING: PART 1 OF OUR 2018 RETROSPECTIVE

Week 1309 was Part 1 of our yearly retrospective; we invited you to enter (or reenter) Style Invitational contests from the first half of the past year. We could fill this page up again with just song parodies or even foal names from this time around, but the Empress aimed for the 'Vite Variety Pak.

4th place:

Week 1255, words including the letter block S-A-N-T in any order:

Sycophantasize: To dream of working for the president. (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

3rd place:



From the Week 1281 contest, for photos with googly eyes added: Honorable mention by Lee Graham, Derwood, Md.

(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Week 1268, bogus trivia about the news media and publishing:

Ancient Rome's town crier, Alphonsius Rokerus, was the first to proclaim "Traffic and Weather Together on the VIIIs." (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

2nd place

and the [Ukrainian toilet paper with Putin's face](#):

Week 1280, "air quotes":

Nondiscl"o"sure: "This legal agreement guarantees that everything will remain absolutely private."

Our best guesses on the celebrities in disguise.

- 3** Karyn Kusama has been through 'dark times' in Hollywood. But her movies are even darker.



- 4** A professional regurgitator? Meet the five craziest acts on 'America's Got Talent: The Champions.'



- 5 Perspective**
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's dance video is goofy, joyful — and absolutely nothing to be ashamed of



Post REPORTS

Latest episode

The confounding case of alleged spy Paul Whelan

► Listen 22:37

Unparalleled reporting. Expert insight. Clear analysis. Everything you've come to expect from the newsroom of The Post — for your ears.

washingtonpost.com

© 1996-2019 The Washington Post

[Help and Contact Us](#)

[Policies and Standards](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Print Products Terms of Sale](#)

[Digital Products Terms of Sale](#)

[Submissions and Discussion Policy](#)

[RSS Terms of Service](#)

[Ad Choices](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Week 1272: Create a new curse:

May you fill the next vacant Cabinet position — and never quiiiiite get fired.
(Ellen Ryan, Rockville, Md.)



Donate today to the Stop Medical Malpractice Foundation! For the Week 1256 caption contest, by Duncan Stevens. (Cartoon by Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

#ReDoo: Honorable mentions

Week 1255, SANT neologisms:

Natsphyxiate: To choke in the playoffs. (Hildy Zampella, Alexandria, Va.)

Bombpensation: A symptom of missile envy. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Week 1259, euphemisms:

For cliché-ridden: “Filled with classical references.” (Kathy El-Assal, Middleton, Wis.)

Week 1264, Yelp reviews:

Heaven help the unsuspecting concertgoer attending Elm Street Preschool’s holiday sing! Several of the vocalists were off pitch, the production values were slipshod, and Kevin in the second row needs to stop picking his nose. Two stars. (Frank Osen)

Week 1265, song parodies about education:

High School Gym Class

(to “Help!” by the Beatles)

Help, I’m in the bleachers!

Help, chased by burly creatures!

Help, go and get the teachers — help!

When I was younger, I feared no one while at play,
I always handled any kid who dared get in my way.
But now I scan the gym, and everywhere I see,
Muscled guys with tree-trunk thighs who all look 23.

Most days I don’t really need to shave,
And my scrawny bacon I would like to save,
Send those troglodytes back to their cave!
Won’t you please, please help me.

And now my life has changed, Mom fears that I’ll be scarred,
She buys me Lotrimin and gallons of Right Guard.
I feel so insecure, a transfer would be cool,
But my folks say there’s just no way to pay for private school.

Help me if you can to find my clothes.
They’ve been hidden by some sophomores, I suppose.
These dumb gym shorts sag down to my toes!
Someone please, please save me, free me, help me!
(Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

(See another parody at the bottom of the column.)

Week 1266, neologisms from ScrabbleGrams “racks”:

FIMNORS > **INFROM:** Where you want to be during a storm. (J. Larry Schott, West Plains, Mo.)

DEFGITY > **DEGIFT:** To keep a Christmas present you’d bought for someone else. (Lynne Larkin, Vero Beach, Fla.)

Week 1267, ill-advised product spokesmen:

Mitt Romney for the ASPCA: "Pets are like family. Sometimes, I even put my dog above my family." (David Peckarsky, Tucson)

Kevin Spacey for Home Depot: "How do you rebuild after your House of Cards collapses?" (Hildy Zampella)

Paul Manafort for Rolex: "We do time!" (Mark Raffinan, Reston, Va.)

Week 1268, fictoids about media and publishing:

Gutenberg changed the world with his printing press, but during his lifetime he actually had more commercial success with two other inventions: the garlic press and the trouser press. (Frank Osen)

Week 1269, bank headlines:

Real headline: America's worst serial killer

Bank head: Hapless psychopath claimed just 2 skinned knees, 1 wet willie in 40 years (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

America's greatest export is hurting
'Nobody inflicts pain like us,' Trump affirms (Mark Raffinan)

George Washington, dashing young colonel, returns to Mount Vernon
Reporter sets record, misses deadline by 246 years (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Northam plans \$269 million in new education spending
'Getting a U-Va. degree for my kid sure is getting expensive,' laments governor (Elden Carnahan, Laurel, Md.)

For 32-year-old Johnson, first win is well worth the wait
Shy ex-virgin has quite the night (Elden Carnahan)

Week 1272, new curses:

May you be cryogenically frozen and awaken during Kanye West's third term. (Frank Osen)

May your doctor give you the nickname "Ka-ching." (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Week 1273, new federal posts:

Mick Jagger as Secretary of Fossil Energy. (Frank Osen)

C-3PO for White House communications director: He's fluent in more than 6 million forms of it, and the president really likes shiny gold things. (Jesse Frankovich)

Week 1274, "foals" from the names of two Kentucky Derby nominees:

Call a Cop x Old Time Revival = **Criminal in Tent** (Hildy Zampella)

Mt. Rushmore x Magnum Moon = **Mt. Tushmore** (J. Larry Schott)

Biblical x Replicator = **Torah Torah Torah** (Jesse Frankovich)

Week 1275, pair a Shakespeare quote with a question:

A. "Here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the king's English"
(*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)

Q. What do you think he's going to tweet next? (William Kennard, Arlington, Va.)

A. "Away, you three inch fool." (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Q. What did Stormy say the next time? (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

A. Q. What do you think he's going to tweet next? (William Kennard, Arlington, Va.)

A. O, my offense is rank, it smears to heaven. (riamet)

Q. What did the Redskins coach say after yet another interception? (Duncan Stevens)

Week 1280, “air quotes”: S“unrise”: The morning after four glasses of wine. (David Peckarsky)

India“nap”olis: The most exciting city between Columbus and Peoria. (Ellen Ryan)

B“atty”: What Rudy Giuliani is. (Jesse Frankovich)

Absen“TMI”nded: “Oh, did I tell you already about our sex therapy session?” (Kathy El-Assal)

Another school-themed parody from Week 1265:

To “[Manic Monday](#)”:

Six o'clock already, I was just rousting offspring from bed,
Then I stopped to check my email and just stood there shaking my head.
Kids are happy now, but then I know they just won't get why
School isn't done till the week after the Fourth of July.

(Chorus) It's just a prank, you must be teasing!

It's well above freezing!

Not merely a delay,

You had to go the whole way

And call another blasted Snow Day.

Have to juggle meetings and got to scrap commitments I'd planned;
I hope the folks I'm bailing on are parents so that they'll understand.
Now we're hanging out in our jammies, someone please tell me why.
Blame it on the forecast, the sidewalk is completely dry.

(Chorus) Is this for real? You must be joking.

Just what are you smoking?

C'mon, for Pete's sake,

This closure was a mistake.

You canceled school for just one snowflake! (Hildy Zampella)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 7: our contest for new words containing the letter block “TOUR” (in any order). See wapo.st/invite1312.

0 Comments



Read These Comments newsletter

The best comments and conversations at The Washington Post, delivered every Friday. Join the conversation.

Sign me up

By signing up you agree to our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)



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

Style Conversational Week 1313: Perish and publish

The Style Invitational Empress on our 16th obit poem contest and retro-results.

1 day ago

