

The Style Invitational

WEEK 46: "WE WANT STUPID ENTRIES ONLY"



BY MARC ROSENTHAL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This week's contest was proposed by Sarah Worcester of Bowie, who receives an elegant selection of clear plastic ice cubes containing embedded insects. At first, we thought Sarah had come up with a terrible idea for a contest. But the more we considered it, the more we liked it: *Make up a sentence that, were it not for this contest, would never otherwise be uttered.* First-prize winner receives a really fancy harmonica featuring a wah-wah button or whatever it is called, a value of \$40. Runners-up, as always, get the coveted Style Invitational losers' T-shirts. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to the Style Invitational, Week 46, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or fax them to 202-334-4312. Entries must be received on or before Monday, Jan. 24. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. No purchase necessary. The seriously underappreciated Faerie of the Ear No One Reads wishes to inquire as to whether anyone has noticed the Faerie's handiwork, and to solicit ideas for future weeks. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

Report from Week 43, in which you were asked to describe God.

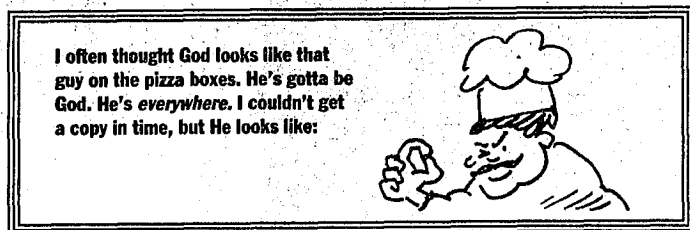
We expected trouble with this one. What we anticipated was a mailbag full of hilarious, bladder-weakening entries far too tasteless to publish. The good news is, we got almost nothing that was tasteless. The bad news is, we also got almost nothing that was funny. Fact is, we got almost nothing at all, a mere 200 entries, possibly because the premise of this contest was so insulting that decent human beings gave it a wide berth. Or possibly we were being punished by God Himself, who—mandibles flailing and blowhole snorting—bollixed up the responses. Possibly this contest was simply an idiotic idea.

Fortunately, we *know* we are idiots. We are nothing if not self-aware. And so, many weeks ago, in the fine print, we solicited entries for a "Dorkiest Middle Name" contest, for use someday when we had blundered into a bad contest and had nothing funny to print. We got 40 responses from persons with aggressively cheesy middle names, including one from Bernadette Scholastica Hearn of Rehoboth Beach, Del. She was to be our first-prize winner right up until the final week of the contest, when we received an entry, together with confirming documentation, from the parents of a spunky 2-year-old lad in Baltimore. Suddenly the contest was over. We flushed all prior entries and did not even bother to open new ones. Mom 'n' Dad win a six-pound wheel of imported Brie cheese, a value of \$50, and young Valentino AssateaguePonyFootfalls Wiebel wins a real live pony. Hahaha. Just kidding. Lucky he can't read yet, eh, Mom 'n' Dad? Val gets a big fuzzy toy.



Valentino AssateaguePonyFootfalls Wiebel

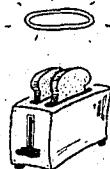
◆ Now that we have expended the required number of column inches, here is the Winner of the Week 43 contest, the very best entry we got. It arrived in an envelope marked "Fragile—God Enclosed," and contained a drawing and an explanation:



For efforts artistic and literary, Tom Gearty of Arlington wins the Worm Ranch and Chia Pet.

◆ First Runner-Up: **On Christmas night, my in-laws prepared themselves to leave my house at 9:03 p.m. They peered outside and announced that they would never be able to get up the hill with all that snow on the ground. This meant they would be staying overnight. Just then, God appeared in the form of a snowplow coming down the street ...** (Keith Drewes, Chantilly)

◆ Honorable Mention:



(Tom Gearty, Arlington)

◆ And Last:

Look in a mirror and disregard what you see. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Next Week: **Adverb Publicity**

THE WASHINGTON POST

Soaps on Call

The Washington Post provides daily updates of soap operas on Post-Haste, its free telephone information service. Call 202-334-9000 from a touch-tone phone and then enter the category code of the soap opera you want: All My Children (8201); Another World (8202); As the World Turns (8203); The Bold and the Beautiful (8204); Days of Our Lives (8205); General Hospital (8206); Guiding Light (8207); Loving (8208); One Life to Live (8209); The Young and the Restless (8211). For a directory of the codes, enter 8200.

Coming Sunday, Jan. 23

The Spa Experience

A Travel section theme issue features Judith Weinraub reporting from Mexico's Rancho La Puerta, Christine Spolar sampling several southern California spas, Rachel Christmas on five Caribbean spas and the Fearless Traveler with a survey of the local spa scene.