

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 672: Just Sign This



FROM ATOM SMASHER.ORG

Fairly New but Already Far Gone Loser Kevin Dopart of Washington called the Empress's attention to a fun Web site called Atom Smasher, on which you can make your own (pictures of) highway signs like the one here. **This week: Write a funny message for an overhead highway sign.** Maximum length: three lines, 20 characters per line. You don't need the Web site for the contest, but you can make your own picture (and other signs as well) at atom.smasher.org/highway.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets "The Worst Picture Ever Painted," at right, appropriately named many years later by its creator, the unbelievably masochistic Loser Fred Dawson of Beltsville — the same guy who sent in a photo of his generous gut in the Humiliate Yourself for Ink contest — who donated it (the painting, not his gut) for his own neighbors to see right here in the paper.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called this week) 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, July 31. Put "Week 672" 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 Aug. 20. 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 contest and this week's Honorable Mentions name are both by the indefatigable Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

REPORT FROM WEEK 668

In which we sought some colorful taglines to tell about justice done in various criminal (or comically "criminal") cases, a la the wrap-ups by ex-sheriff John Bunnell on "World's Wildest Police Videos":

- 4** This con man got nabbed calling out phony bingo numbers — now he's N4 life. (Drew Bennett, Alexandria)
- 3** This phony doctor forged his license and degree from Penn State. Now he's forging license plates in the state pen. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)
- 2** The winner of the lobster-scented bath gel: The yoga master embezzled the ashram funds. She'll do a good long stretch in the joint. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)



AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

This young hustler is sitting in the pokey — for poking in the city. (Robert W. Sprague, Alexandria)

PETTY OFFENDERS

They disregarded the zoning laws when they tried to put up that 10,000-square-foot mansion in Chevy Chase — now they'll finally get their wish for the Big House. (Brian Collins, Olney)

He didn't bother cleaning up the surprises his dog left in the neighbors' flower beds — and now the law is gonna give him a real lesson in doo process. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

For years, he overused the passive voice. Now hard time is being done! (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

The thief was caught red-handed — and now he's black-fingertipped. (Judith Cottrill, New York)

Jane went on a crazed rampage through Linens 'n Things — now her rap sheet is 300-count. (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)

The chocolate smudges on the galley proofs tell the whole story — you just can't have your cake and edit too. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Looks like Bob left the toilet seat up one too many times — and Mary's not one to take that sitting down. (Bob Sorensen, Herndon)

This sticky-fingered Snickers-sneaking tot will learn her lesson — behind the padded bars of her playpenitentiary. (Jer Gally and Clare Brown, Bethesda)

The press secretary's vague euphemisms confused and annoyed us one too many times. Now he'll, er, face a challenge. (Jay Shuck)

So what does the arsonist get for his 15 minutes of flame? A long spell in the cooler. (Ross Elliffe, Picton, New Zealand)

She thought her e-mail chain letters were harmless fun — until she ended up Fw:Fw:Fw:Fw:Fw:Fw:Fiendless. (Jay Shuck)

This man loved women so much he had four wives at one time — now he'll be the "wife" of four men at one time. (G. Smith, Reston)

He was charged with battery — and sure enough, his new home is a dry cell. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

His wife caught him arranging a tryst on his cellphone, and now he's trying to make nice with a huge diamond. Looks like he faces some high roaming charges. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

The cop at the party saw that she was serving herb in the brownies. Now she'll be serving hard thyme. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

When Rush Limbaugh was caught with someone else's Viagra prescription, he didn't expect a stiff sentence in the penal colony. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

The journalist didn't check her facts. Now there's a box reserved for her in the house of corrections. (Kevin Dopart; Jay Shuck)

Once again, the tippler tipped over his stein and made a river of beer down the bar — and this time, he was up Schlitz creek. (Russell Beland)



PHOTO (NOT PAINTING) BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

Suitable for flaming: "The Worst Picture Ever Painted," the prize for Week 672's first runner-up.

He referred to his wife as "the old lady" — now he's the one with the false teeth. (April Musser, Atlanta)

This foolish girl walked out of the store with jewelry she didn't pay for — I wonder if she likes the bracelets she's wearing now. (Marjorie Streeter, Reston; Lisa Younce, Key West, Fla.)

Busted for both prostitution and possession! High ho, high ho, it's off to jail you go. (Bird Waring, New York)

He thought his plagiarism would go undetected — but high ho, high ho, it's off to jail he goes. (Jay Shuck)

And Last: Looks like this joker has been submitting his entries under a pseudonym. Maybe he just needs to go away for a few months to figure out why they call it a "pen" name. (Brendan Beary)

Next Week: Huddled Messes, or Grin Cards

THE TV COLUMN

Live From Pasadena, It's Lorne Michaels and Tina Fey

TV COLUMN, From D1

spirit we hadn't given him credit for in the past.

"These are our customers," Reilly continued. "We don't like [ticking] off the customers. And, by the way, I get the e-mails, okay? I wake up in the morning and I get 'Dear Moron.' That's not unique to serialized shows," he said. "Any show that gets canceled has people who are upset or people who are angry who have invested in it. That's the nature of what we do."

Reilly also stoutly denied NBC would be offended by any digs at the network Aaron Sorkin might take in his new NBC series "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip," about a show a lot like NBC's "Saturday Night Live" and the network bean counters who love/hate it.

"The accuracy — we thought, 'My God, he's moved into the building,'" Reilly said of the pilot episode, which begins with an on-air rant by a soon-to-be-sacked producer regarding TV shows in which people are forced to eat worms (NBC's "Fear Factor") and pretend to be Donald Trump (NBC's "Apprentice").

"Aaron has the ability to capture an authentic environment, and we laughed at anything that came — cut close to the bone, and we appreciated the quality," Reilly insisted.

"We don't think any of the nearly 200 critics in the room actually bought it, but it was a noble effort.

After that, he said he wasn't sure any of the show's barbs were actually aimed specially at NBC — surely he's seen "Fear Factor" and "The Apprentice" — and that Sorkin was "looking at this backdrop as a broader context to make social commentary [about] the culture at large and pop culture in particular."

Yeah, he had lost critics too, by then.

Here's an interesting way for a network to tick off a couple hundred TV critics at Summer TV Press Tour 2006: Blow off questions about possible changes to "SNL" this coming season, telling them to wait a day for "SNL" executive producer Lorne Michaels and head writer Tina Fey to come before them to plug their new prime-time "SNL" spoof "30 Rock" — knowing that Fey will announce that night on Jay Leno's show that she's leaving "SNL." Appearing on NBC's "Tonight Show With Jay Leno" on Friday, Fey said she would not return to "SNL" so she can focus on her upcoming "30 Rock,"



BY REED SAXON — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lorne Michaels and Tina Fey talk up the upcoming NBC show "30 Rock." The show is one of two on the network's fall schedule that are based on its "Saturday Night Live."

which, like Sorkin's new series, is a behind-the-scenes look at a late-night comedy show bearing an uncanny resemblance to "Saturday Night Live," broadcast by a network bearing an uncanny resemblance to NBC. In this case, the parent company is actually called NBC Universal K-Mart.

"I want to stop doing 'Saturday Night Live' so I could spend more time with Star Jones," Fey cracked, making it abundantly clear why it was time for her to leave "SNL." Even so, it's too bad Fey didn't save the news for her Q&A session the next afternoon, because the session could have used a pulse.

Instead, critics had to make do with Michaels informing them he'd test different combinations of players for the "Weekend Update" segment to replace Fey and that he was not happy to be losing her but if it resulted in another good TV show it was a small price to pay.

And when one critic reminded Michaels that decades ago "SNL" was

considered guerrilla television, but now there are "SNL" books, documentaries and an Aaron Sorkin-penned NBC series about it, Michaels insisted the process of putting on the show was still a very exciting, very tense experience.

"Clearly, if I figured out how to do it well and it was down pat, I wouldn't still be here," he said.

The critic, who wasn't buying that, asked Michaels if he thought the show had lost its "outlaw status."

Michaels pooh-poohed the whole "outlaw" thing, saying much has been made of it, but "we were always a comedy show and we're still a comedy show," defined every year by the people who make the show, and the people who came in last season "represent their generation."

Loosely translated: yes.

Fey, who has been head writer of the show since 1999 and also co-anchors "Weekend Update," regaled critics with an adorable story about how when news of Aaron Sorkin's "SNL"-esque show

broke, she was at home, and friends called to tell her how sorry they were that her show was not going to happen, but then NBC Entertainment chief Kevin Reilly called her to assure her he believed in both her "SNL" series and Sorkin's, "Studio 60"; that there are two such shows on the NBC fall schedule is "so beyond my control I don't have time to worry."

Besides, Michaels jumped in, Sorkin's show is called "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip," and is 60 minutes long, while their show is 30 minutes long and is called "30 Rock" so "people will be able to clearly distinguish it."

He was, of course, kidding. We think.

You won't see much of the fictitious "The Girlie Show" on which Fey's character, Liz Lemon, is head writer on "30 Rock." That's because "30 Rock" is a workplace comedy, only this workplace is a "little more interesting and a little more dangerous than a regular workplace."

Speaking of outlaw status, when asked if he would be patient with "SNL" as it tried to find its way after losing Fey, Michaels said because of "massive cuts" in the budget at NBC, decisions will be easier and more clear. And while Fey's leaving is a "huge hole" in "SNL," other people will step up and that the nice thing about doing this show is that there's always next week.

NBC could have knocked out critics with quick blows to the head, but this Q&A did the trick.

Madonna may be getting snubbed by U.S. radio pop stations, but she's being embraced by NBC for the November sweeps. The network will air her two-hour concert event from her sold-out "Confessions on a Dance Floor" North American tour, which Billboard magazine says may wind up being the top-grossing tour ever by a female artist. Reilly called it a network first.

The NBC special will be taped, not live, and she will not revise her act for the broadcast, Reilly told TV critics. She will do her show as usual and NBC will decide which numbers are appropriate for broadcast and which are not. "We're not going to make piecemeal edits," he said.

U.S. radio has largely snubbed the first three singles from Madonna's latest album, though "Confessions on a Dance Floor" has sold a healthy 1.5 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, Billboard reported.

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

West dealer
Both sides vulnerable

NORTH
♠ Q 10 8 3
♥ Q J 7 2
♦ A 5 2
♣ 7 3

WEST

♠ 4
♥ A 9 8 3
♦ Q J 10 9 6
♣ K J 6

EAST

♠ 2
♥ 10 6 5
♦ K 8 7 4 3
♣ 10 9 8 5

SOUTH
♠ A K J 9 7 6 5
♥ K 4
♦ None
♣ A Q 4 2

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	Pass	3 ♦	Dbl
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	6 ♠
All Pass			

Opening lead: ♦ Q

The "Morton's Fork Coup" gets its name from an episode in English history. Cardinal Morton, King Henry VII's treasurer, extracted money from nobles around London with the following approach: If they lived well, they must have plenty of money to contribute to the royal coffers; if they lived frugally, they must have plenty saved. Whatever their life-style, they were impaled on "Morton's Fork."

In today's deal, East's raise to three diamonds was preemptive. After South doubled, North's cue bid of four diamonds suggested fair values and asked South to choose a trump suit.

At six spades, South seemed doomed to lose two tricks. He could force out the ace of hearts and discard two clubs on the ace of diamonds and dummy's second heart winner, but would still lose a club to the king.

Do you see how South makes the slam?

In a Morton's Fork Coup, declarer gives a defender a choice of losing options. Let South ruff the first diamond, deferring his discard on the ace, and draw trumps. South then leads the four of hearts through West, whose opening bid marks him with the ace.

West is impaled. If he plays low, South takes the queen and discards the king of hearts on the ace of diamonds. South loses only one club to the king. If instead West grabs his ace of hearts, dummy plays low. If West returns a diamond, South discards a club on the ace, comes to his king of hearts, returns a trump to dummy and throws two more clubs on the Q-J of hearts.

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