

The Style Invitational



THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 716: The Hard Spell

Lovers of language go totally nuts Over one of life's stranger enigmas: How does a noun meaning "rumbling guts" Sound rumbly itself? Borborygmus!

This past week 286 boys and girls gathered in Washington for the annual National Spelling Bee, in which the talent, tenacity and mental toughness of some of our nation's brightest youngsters are channeled for years toward the goal of memorizing thousands of letter combinations, many of which they will never encounter again outside the spelling bee world. (There is absolutely no relevance to the fact that at least two current Style Invitational Losers have been top winners in the National Bee.)

So give this year's participants a chance to read their winning or losing words in a different context (if not actually a sensible one): **Write a humorous poem featuring one of the 75 words we've selected from this year's National Spelling Bee** (see box below right). It doesn't necessarily have to define the word, as does the example above (from last year's words) by Washington Post Funny Poem Writer Gene Weingarten. It can't have been already published in print or online.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives a bar of "Touch Me Please Virginity Soap," made in Thailand (presumably for people who can't make up their minds) but sent from the country of Oman. And that's not all: In case Touch Me Please is working a little too well, we include a trial-size envelope of "Garlic Shampoo" ("Formula for Hair Loss & Hair Grow" — also for the conflicted, we guess).

Note: The person we referred to last week as Robert Kirkpatrick has informed us that he would prefer to be called Robert Kurlantzick, inasmuch as that is his name. We will graciously accede to this but only because it is a way cooler name.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called that 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, June 11. Put "Week 716" 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 July 1. 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 Andrew Hoenig, who also wrote today's Honorable Mentions name. The revised title for next week's contest is by Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

REPORT FROM WEEK 712

In which we asked you to take the winning horse names from Week 708 and "breed" them to produce grand-foals: Once again, the entries stamped in by the thousands. Some Losers proved astonishingly adept at incorporating the various elements of the sire's and dam's names into that of the foal: For example, Brad Alexander of Wanneroo, Australia, bred Coito Ergo Sum with Nein to Fife to produce Lay Off Macduff, a play on the line "Lay on, Macduff" from "Macbeth." See, "coito" means "I lay" (in the bedroom sense) in Latin; while "nein" is German for "no," hence "lay off"; and to top it off, Macduff's title is Thane of Fife. Whew. Wonderfully clever . . . but funny? Eh.

4 Duck! + Doctor Do Little = Quack!
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.; Nancy Israel, Bethesda)

3 Popular Mechanics + Calleth Us Dudes = ClickethNClacketh (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

2 The winner of the skull models (yes, we found two): Halitosis + Chicks in the Mail = Malodor Bride (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis; Russell Beland, Springfield)



BELMONT STEAKS

Angina Monologues + Kermit Loves Bert = Heart Felt (Andrew Hoenig, Rockville)

Angina Monologues + Six Hundred Ninety = Whoa, Bad LDL (Russell Beland)

Auto-da-Fay + Executioners Thong = BurnTheOtherCheek (Pam Sweeney)

Bermuda Triangle + It's in English = Shorts Tory (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Bird B-I-R-D Bird + First Flying Class = S-P-L-A-T (Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)

BVD STD + Bermuda Triangle = Clap Trap (Pam Sweeney)

Calculated Risque + Duck! = AFLAC! (Michael Mason, Fairfax)

Calculated Risque + Executioners Thong = Hangs Right (Scott Susser, Hillside, N.J.)

Call Them Globes + Calleth Us Dudes = Earth Quakers (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

Call Them Globes + Zippo = Great Balls Afire (Chris Doyle)

Calleth Us Dudes + Auto-da-Fay = Dudebaker (Harvey Smith, McLean)

Chicks in the Mail + Bird B-I-R-D Bird = B-R-I-D-E (Ben Aronin, Washington)

Coito Ergo Sum + It's in English = I Boink, So I Am (Jay Shuck, Chris Doyle)

Coito Ergo Sum + MrPocketProtector = Effin' Know-It-All (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Coito Ergo Sum + Sigh Young = Pitching Woo (Mel Loftus, Holmen, Wis.)

Creme de Meth + Conversion = Creme de Methodist (Chris Doyle)

Doctor Do Little + Coito Ergo Sum = Push Me Pull You (Harvey Smith)

Duck! + Executioners Thong = Goose! (Mary Lee Fox Roe, Mount Kisco, N.Y.)

Egrets Only + Bird B-I-R-D Bird = Come Stay a Spell (Harvey Smith)

Executioners Thong + Conversion = Santa Monica (Steve Ettinger, Chevy Chase)

First Flying Class + Bermuda Triangle = Virgin Atlantic (Martin Bancroft)

First Flying Class + Chicks in the Mail = Eggs Flew Young (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Friar Tuckered + Coito Ergo Sum = Made Marian (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

Halitosis + Doctor Do Little = Breath Eliza (Harvey Smith)

Halitosis + MrPocketProtector = Offensive Lineman (Mike Hammer, Arlington; Brad Alexander)

Halitosis + Nats Blow Another = CantGetToFirstBase (Harvey Smith)

Kermit Loves Bert + Premium Logger = Dont Ax Dont Tell (Laura Bennett Peterson, Washington; Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

More Cowball! + Months Ending in R = Prairie Oysters (Mary Lee Fox Roe; Rick Haynes)

Nein to Fife + MrPocketProtector = Barney Google (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

Orion's Belt + Call Them Globes = Castor & Bollocks (Kevin Krist, Washington)

P.A.T. on the Back + It's in English = Honourable Mention (Brad Alexander)

P.A.T. on the Back + Zippo = Nice Try. Get Lost (Brad Alexander)

Popular Mechanics + Call Them Globes = Among Other Things (Bill Verkuilen, Brooklyn Park, Minn.)

Popular Mechanics + Premium Logger = Regular Feller (Ross Elliffe, Picton, New Zealand)

Savior Breath + TriumphOfTheWilly = Church Organ (Mae Scanlan)

Savior Breath + Creme de Meth = The Last Upper (Ned Bent, Oak Hill)

Savior Breath + Halitosis = CouldItBe . . . SATAN? (Larry Pryluck, Amissville, Va.)

She's Not Dead! + Doctor Do Little = OK Now She's Dead! (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.; Russell Beland)

She's Not Dead! + Coito Ergo Sum = ThinkingOfEngland (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Six Hundred Ninety + Zippo = My Entries; My Ink (Barry Koch)

Sleeping Thickness + Halitosis = Morning Breadth (Steve Fahey, Kensington; Peter Metrinko)

The Story of Eau + Zippo = Water Torch (Chris Doyle)

Wyatt AARP + Coito Ergo Sum = Sexagenarian (Harvey Smith)

Wyatt AARP + Kermit Loves Bert = Achin'-Back Mtn (John Kustka, Prince Frederick)

Wyatt AARP + Sleeping Thickness = Guns N Dozes (Suzanne Stewart Moseman, St. Paul, Minn.)

Wyatt AARP + Spenthouse = Shooting Blanks (Jon Reiser)

Zippo + Auto-da-Fay = Light My Friar (Andrew Hoenig)

Next Week: Painings, or Art Drecko

Words From the 2007 National Spelling Bee

For Week 717 of The Style Invitational, write a poem using any of these words (or a closely related form of the word, such as plural or past tense). Many of the words are not listed in a standard desktop dictionary, but almost all of them can be easily found online through a search engine.

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| abseil | erinaceous | leucoryx | paranosmia | rascacio | theologaster |
| acariasis | exsiccate | logogriph | partitur | reseau | tourneur |
| aniseikonia | fauchard | lomilomi | peirastic | retarius | umami |
| apocope | flebile | meralgia | pelorus | rigaree | ungulate |
| apozem | furfuraceous | mneme | perstringe | ruderal | vituline |
| araneiform | genizah | myoclonus | polyphydont | saimin | volplane |
| beccafico | girole | noctilucous | pschent | sardoodledom | wafture |
| biwa | grogard | oberek | punaise | schuhplattler | ylem |
| bouleuterion | helzel | onychomycosis | pygopodous | scytopedispic | yosenebe |
| burelage | hirudiniasis | ophidian | quillon | sejant | zeugma |
| cannetille | illeist | ornithichnite | quipu | serrefine | |
| encolure | lambdacisms | otate | radome | straminous | |
| epaulement | | oubliette | randkluff | strigil | |

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

East dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ Q 10 8 6 3 2
♥ K J 4
♦ 4 2
♣ Q 7

WEST
♠ 9 7 4
♥ 8 7 6 5
♦ 7
♣ A 6 4 3 2

EAST
♠ K 5
♥ None
♦ K J 9 6 5 3
♣ K J 10 9 8

SOUTH
♠ A J
♥ A Q 10 9 3 2
♦ A Q 10 8
♣ 5

The bidding:

East	South	West	North
1 ♠	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
2 ♣	3 ♥	4 ♣	4 ♥
5 ♣	5 ♥	6 ♣	Pass
Pass	6 ♥	All Pass	

Opening lead: ♦ 7

"All I want from my partners," Cy the Cynic said, "is what any reasonable player would want: good results. Don't tell me

about the labor pains: Just show me the money — I mean, the baby."

"I've heard your partners express those same sentiments," I mumbled.

All it takes to keep Cy happy is for everything to go right. As North, he might have doubled when West saved at six clubs: North-South would collect 300 points at least. But Cy passed the decision to his partner — no doubt so whatever happened would be South's fault.

Against six hearts, West led his singleton diamond, and South won with the queen and led a trump to dummy, observing East's discard. He led a spade to his jack, took the ace, led a trump to dummy and threw a diamond on the queen of spades.

South could then have finessed with the 10 of diamonds but feared West would ruff. So South ran the trumps. With three tricks to go, he had A-10 of diamonds and a club, and dummy had a spade and Q-7 of clubs. East, who had to keep the K-9 of diamonds, bared his king of clubs.

South then led a club. If East won, he'd have to lead a diamond, letting South finesse. If instead West put up the ace of clubs, he'd crash East's king, and West would have to give dummy the queen of clubs. Making six!

Cy is a hard man to please. He made only two comments: "What took you so long?" to South, and "I did well not to double six clubs" to himself.

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XL, From D1

large retailer to enter the niche, now served by a handful of mom-and-pop catalogue and online retailers offering a limited selection of products with little marketing glitz.

For Peggy Howell, a 300-pound woman who runs an online store featuring art with positive depictions of heavy people, LivingXL could help her more easily find products that give her confidence.

"When I'm trying to buy lawn chairs, I want to get one that's wide and sturdy," Howell said. "My sister and I share a home in Las Vegas, and whenever we go to a party or an event, we take our special collapsible lawn chairs. We know we'll feel secure in them, and comfortable."

"You can find these kinds of specialty things once in a while, but they're not always easy to find," she said. "When you do, you tell all your friends."

LivingXL is the new incarnation of SuperSizeWorld.com, a Vancouver, Wash.-based online store that Casual Male bought for \$400,000 last October. Casual Male Chief Executive David Levin learned about the business while reading an article on obesity last fall during a business trip.

The switch to a new name was in keeping with the company's re-branding of its stores last year from Casual Male Big & Tall to Casual Male XL — a move that dropped the word "big" to eliminate a term often seen as a code word for "fat" in the euphemism-rich world of retail branding.



David Levin of Casual Male Retail Group, which bought SuperSizeWorld.com.

"We knew from our Casual Male stores that they didn't like 'Big & Tall,'" Levin said, "and they certainly wouldn't like 'SuperSize,' especially with that movie 'Super Size Me' — a 2004 documentary about an independent filmmaker's experiment eating nothing but McDonald's food for 30 days."

Levin is trim but says he understands the daily challenges heavy people face, in part because the company convened a focus group of overweight people to develop the catalogue.

The group helped Casual Male navigate the idiosyncrasies of marketing lifestyle products to heavy people, who often feel stigmatized about their weight even though they're greater in number than ever before. An estimated two-thirds of American adults are overweight or

obese, compared with 47 percent from a survey done in the late 1970s, according to federal statistics.

A public health advocate welcomes the marketplace's efforts to reach out to the growing ranks of overweight people, but also cautions against instilling any sense of complacency among heavy folks. Obesity raises the risk of heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and some cancers.

"It's a balancing act between assisting people coping with the results of being obese and not losing track of the public health message about being more active and eating healthier diets," said Jeff Levi, executive director of the Trust for America's Health, a Washington-based nonprofit. "But if we stigmatize obesity, it makes the public health challenge that much more difficult."

Many heavy people favor shop-

ping from the privacy of their homes over searching store aisles for such hard-to-find items as oversize bath towels and seat belt extenders (which allow overweight people to buckle up for commercial airline flights).

"Anyone who sells in the large-size market knows how many customers are traumatized by their size," said Bill Mabrey, president of Amplestuff, a Bearsville, N.Y.-based online and mail-order catalogue that he describes as "a mom-and-pop store" with less than \$200,000 in sales a year.

"Often, people who need this stuff have a sense of hopelessness, and some are even afraid to go out in public because there's no place they can go and sit down in a chair without breaking it," he said.

Casual Male, which had \$468 million in revenue last year, last month mailed 350,000 catalogues nationwide in the first of seven LivingXL editions to go out this year. The company expects to send out 2.5 million catalogues with items ranging from 500-pound capacity bicycle seats to large-button television remote controls and extra-strong clothing hangers.

Even with LivingXL's emergence, the market is still wide open, said Mabrey, of Ample Stuff.

"My response to them is 'Welcome aboard,'" Mabrey said. "My suspicion is that between their sales and our sales, we'll only have reached 1 percent of the total market. Most fat people — excuse the term — have never heard of either of us."

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