

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 729: Otherworldly Visions

"I'm not proposing tax relief because it's the popular thing to do, I'm proposing it because it's the right thing to do."
— George W. Bush

Plain English version:
"I'm proposing it because it's a right popular thing to do."
(Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

This handy translation landed big ink in 2000, in what was helpfully numbered Week IX, even though the Invitational was by then seven years old. In this campaign season, further clarifications are in order. **This week: Take any sentence in an article or ad in The Washington Post or on washingtonpost.com from Sept. 1 through Sept. 10 and translate it into "plain English," as in the example above.** Please specify what article the sentence is from, and what date and page. If necessary, briefly explain the context of the sentence.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a pack of Genuine Panda Poo paper from the San Diego Zoo, stationery made from the bamboo-rich fibers of you-know-what, donated by Intermittent Loser David Smith of Santa Cruz, Calif.

Other runners-up win their choice of 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, Sept. 10. Put "Week 729" 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 Sept. 29. 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 is by Kevin Doherty, who borrowed it from Eric Murphy. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Anne Paris of Arlington.

REPORT FROM WEEK 725

In which we supplied several "captions" and asked you to describe the cartoons they would accompany: The Empress posted this contest, at the Czar's suggestion, with some trepidation, concerned that dozens of descriptions of undrawn cartoons would just be too tedious. She concedes that her fears were unfounded, and therefore owes the Czar the heart cut out of her chest. Invitational Cartoonist Bob Staake chose this week's top four winners from the entries below, and will personally deface each winning sketch with his signature as a prize.



4 A small error in pronunciation can have huge consequences. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)



2 Old dog learns new trick. (Dan Colilla, Pittsburgh)

3 Bob just wasn't a "word person." (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)



AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER
"No, no, Sonia! It was supposed to be a harmonica!"
(Cy Gardner, Arlington)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

A THOUSAND WORDS NOT WORTH A PICTURE

Bob just wasn't a "word person."
Bob drowning in fast-flowing river, frantically signaling with his hands, while people on the riverbank look befuddled: "Um, movie? Two words?"
(Bird Waring, New York)

Bob Dylan singing, "Lay, lady, lay. Lay across my big brass bed." Woman correcting him: "It's LIE!"
(Randy Lee, Burke)

Bob's car races under a highway sign reading: "Danger! Bridge Out! Piranha-Infested Acid Pool! STD-Infected Cannibal Zombie Pederasts! Life Insurance Salesman of the Quarter!"
(Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

A man and a woman are at a restaurant as the waiter takes their order. The man is standing, dressed as a mime, imitating a chicken.
(Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

A man is throttling the Microsoft paper clip.
(Beth Baniszewski, Somerville, Mass.)

Bob is doing the Sunday crossword by filling in the boxes with Sudoku numbers.
(Cy Gardner)

"Just remember, no underpants!"

A director addresses a line of women. Sign behind them says "Today's Workshop: Be Like Britney."
(Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

"David," a muscular model posing in Jockey shorts, is advising Michelangelo as the sculptor begins chiseling the marble right below the waist.
(Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

Guerrilla leader stands in front of a group of men in fatigues. Sign says "Commando Debriefing Session."
(Marty McCullen; Michael Mason, Fairfax)

A woman is shopping for pet clothes. Her Chihuahua peeks its head out of her purse and says . . .
(Jean Sorensen)

A small error in pronunciation can have huge consequences.

Two men stand outside an office building that is swarming with emergency personnel, a hazmat team, etc. One guy says: "Well, that's the last time I call maintenance about the ant tracks in my office."
(Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)

A man in Arab garb sits at a bar, liquid dripping from his head and face, an empty glass on the bar next to him, as an attractive Western-attired woman storms angrily away. He says to the bartender, "All I said is that she looks like a hour!"
(Mike Fransella, Arlington)

God looks down in exasperation as Noah tries valiantly to get all the animals balanced on the big wooden arch he has built, as the storm approaches.
(Tom Lacombe, Browntown, Va.)

Watson discovers Sherlock's secret. Watson sees Holmes surreptitiously reading "The Hound of the Baskervilles," and taking notes. Holmes thought bubble: "Ah, so that's what those footprints mean . . ."
(Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

When Harry met Sally Forth.

Billy Crystal and Sally sit at a restaurant table. Sally says: "I wouldn't know, I've never had one."
(Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)

Harry Potter and Sally sit at a restaurant table. Sally brandishes a wand, saying: "Okay, I point this at Ted and shout 'Enlargibus!'" Harry says, "Maybe twice."
(Martin Bancroft)

A large human hand kills something with a rolled-up comics section. Ants standing nearby look on in horror, as one of them screams, "HARRY!"
(Jay Shuck)

"No, no, Sonia! It was supposed to be a harmonica!"

A man, his feet in a puddle, stands in front of a dike where water spurts from a small rectangular hole. A cymbal and a guitar are stuck into other holes. A pile of discarded brass and woodwind instruments is to his left. A woman to his right holds out a triangle.
(Beth Baniszewski)

The Founding Fathers wept.

Beneath a sign that says "Welcome Continental Congress," a group of Founding Fathers stands in a circle, looking sadly at the pizza that John Adams has just dropped onto the floor.
(Jeff Brechlin)

Sign on the Capitol: "The Anheuser-Busch Capitol Building."
(Joseph Mat Schech, Colesville)

Next Week: Limerixicon 4, or Anapest Destiny

Ten Years Later, Princess Diana's Sons Recall an 'Entirely Genuine' Mom

DIANA, From C1

their military unit, near Buckingham Palace.

William read a biblical passage and Harry read a personal tribute from the two sons in which he described Diana's death as "incredibly shocking and sad" and remembered her as "fun-loving, generous, down-to-earth and entirely genuine."

"When she was alive, we completely took for granted her unrivaled love of life, laughter, fun and folly," Harry said. "She was our guardian, friend and protector. She never once allowed her unfaltering love for us to go unspoken or undemonstrated."

As the two princes spoke, the passage of time was evident in their broad shoulders, deep voices and adult demeanor, as well as in the graying of their father.

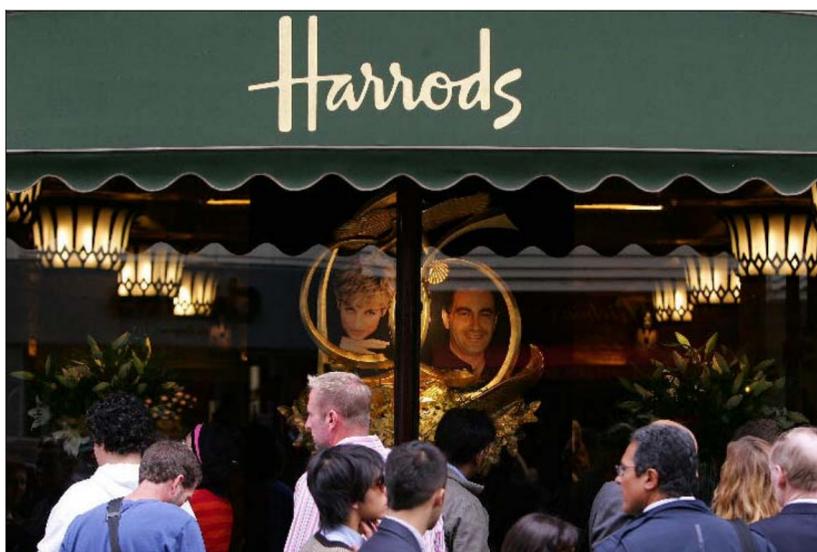
Others in the chapel seemed less changed since Diana's globally televised funeral. Queen Elizabeth II, in a lavender hat and dress, sat stonically in the front row, looking remarkably like her portrayal by Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren in last year's hit movie "The Queen," which dealt with the queen's handling of the aftermath of Diana's death. Prince Charles wore a dark suit and led the royal family procession into the chapel, flanked by his sons. Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip followed just behind them. Charles betrayed no emotion then or during the hour-long ceremony, during which he sat in the front row.

The guest list also included celebrities such as business mogul Richard Branson and singer Elton John, whose adaptation of "Candle in the Wind" — performed at Diana's funeral — became a global anthem to one of the world's most popular and recognized figures.

Diana, who was buried on the grounds of her family home, Althorp Park, has remained timeless, frozen in the world's memory at age 36. Her image still appears in countless newspapers and magazines around the world, and is a major tourist draw on tea cups and greeting cards in British souvenir shops.

Many Britons celebrated the memory of Diana, who was dubbed "the People's Princess" by Tony Blair. The former prime minister attended Friday's service along with Britain's current leader, Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and Blair's predecessor, John Major.

Many here believe that she was a much-needed shot of youth and



A moment of silence for Diana and Dodi al-Fayed is observed at Harrods, owned by Dodi's father, Mohamed

glamour for the royal family and that she was treated badly by the royals during her marriage to and subsequent divorce from Charles.

A poll published Friday in the Daily Telegraph found that only 49 percent of Britons polled respect the royal family. Only 6 percent said their opinion of the royals had improved in the decade since Diana's death, while 25 percent said it had declined, the newspaper reported.

The poll, conducted by the firm YouGov, found that 89 percent remembered where they were when they heard of Diana's death.

The delicate nature of the royal family's relationship with Diana's memory surfaced this week in the decision by Camilla, Prince Charles's new wife, not to attend the ceremony.

Diana once complained about Camilla, Charles's longtime mistress, to a television interviewer, saying there were "three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded."

Although invited by William and Harry to attend the service, Camilla, now the Duchess of Cornwall, said she believed her presence would be distracting.

Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, and her sister, Sarah McCorquodale, attended the service and McCorquodale gave a reading. The guests also included more than 100 representatives of charities Diana

was associated with, as well as the bridesmaids and page boys from her 1981 wedding to Charles.

One of the royals' leading detractors is Mohamed al-Fayed, father of Diana's boyfriend, Dodi al-Fayed, who also died in the crash. Fayed has consistently argued that the royal family was involved in the death of his son and Diana. Police investigators have concluded that the accident was caused by Diana's driver, Henri Paul, who was driving too fast after drinking.

A moment of silence in honor of Diana and Dodi Fayed was held Friday morning at Harrods department store, which is owned by Mohamed Fayed.

Many Britons found the public display of grief at Diana's death almost embarrassing. Critics here still find Diana's enduring legacy perplexing or even distasteful. Many found Diana to be tempestuous and immature and believe that



John Loughrey, 52, comes to Kensington Palace each year on the anniversary of Diana's death.

her image, particularly in the United States, has been polished beyond reason.

Critics said that Friday's memorial service, along with a memorial concert July 1, Diana's birthday, was excessive and that Britain needed to move on.

"This bothers me — it's all over the TV and newspapers, the 10th anniversary — it's just not that important," said Dennis Walton, who was walking by Kensington Palace on Friday. "She was just another person, even though it was a tragic death."

Walton likened Diana's following to that of Elvis Presley. He said people who visit Graceland and

promote Elvis's memory are, like Diana's legion of fans, trying to "live the moment forever."

But others outside Kensington Palace said the tributes to Diana have been deserved and appropriate.

"There was nobody like her, she was earthy and normal, but she had a magical quality," said Joanne Meritt, a real estate agent who came 30 miles from her home outside London to lay white lilies at the palace gate, just as she did 10 years ago.

Meritt said she is upset at critics who say the British overreacted to Diana's death. She said she came Friday in part to "show the establishment it was not mass hysteria 10 years ago."

During the service, Richard Chartres, the bishop of London, called for an end to divisiveness over Diana's memory.

"It is easy to lose the real person in the image, to insist that all is darkness or all is light," he said. "Still, 10 years after her tragic death, there are regular reports of 'fury' at this or that incident and the princess's memory is used for scoring points. Let it end here."

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