

Style Invitational

by Pat Myers

Report from Week 967

in which we asked you to create a new "portmanteau" phrase by combining two overlapping phrases or names that each contained two or more words: Even though the Empress deigned to allow hyphenated terms as two words, lots of Losers still were inept at the task of counting to 2, and instead combined two single words, such as Microsoft and softball. This week they get to count to zero.

THE
WINNER
OF THE
INKIN'
MEMORIAL

Player piano player: Someone who doesn't realize he's entirely useless. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

2 Winner of the Laotian liquor with a big scorpion inside: Bed, Bath & Beyond the Pale: "Now she's even decorating the garage!" (Mark Richardson, Washington)

3 Presidential debate-and-switch: "Thank you for that thoughtful question. I'll now pretend to respond while answering an entirely different, self-serving question." (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

4 Runner up yours!: The sore loser's greeting of congratulations. (Jason Russo, Annandale)

one down for the team. (Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge)

TV dinner jacket: An unbuttoned flannel shirt. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

Jehovah's Witness Protection Program: Makes your home invisible to door-to-door visitors. (John Simson, Silver Spring, a First Offender)

See it through the grapevine: Deaf people gossip, too. (Dixon Wragg, Santa Rosa, Calif.)

Passive voice mail: "The phone can't be answered right now. A message may be left by you at the beep." (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Never Never Landover, Md.: Home of the Losing Boys. (Ann Martin, Bracknell, England)

German shepherd's pie: Processed burglar. (Lawrence McGuire)

Rock-and-role reversal: "Paul buried me." (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Model T Party: Engine of political change started by cranks. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Glamour shot clock: It tends to run out about age 35. (Pam Sweeney, Burlington, Mass.)

Poison IV fluid: Way worse than nasal drip coffee. (Nandini Lal, Bethesda)

Couch potato famine: The game's into overtime, and the chip bowl is empty. (Barry Koch)

Sympathy for the Devil in the Details: An OCD support group. (Mark Richardson)

See more honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/inv971.

Still running — deadline Monday night — is our "tailgater couplets" light-verse contest: See wapo.st/inv970a.

Pizza hut-hut-hut: What quarterbacks yell to draw those really fat defensive linemen offside. (David Genser, Poway, Calif.)

Mister Happy Meal: It's never as filling as they make it out to be. (Dayna Fellows, Bethesda, a First Offender)

Nature abhors a vacuum cleaner: Traditional Amish saying. (David Ballard, Reston)

The Olive Garden of Eden: "Of the fruit of that tree thou shalt not eat — but you can have all the salad you want." (John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)

Writer's block party: Inviting all of the neighbors over to throw wadded paper into the wastebasket. (Jason Talbott, Pendleton, Ore.)

Shotgun wedding gown: A maternity dress. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Human sacrifice bunt: Really laying

Standing their middle ground: honorable mentions

Red, white and blue movies: Porn on the Fourth of July. (Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)

Victoria's Secret Service: Check out our new line of South American hose! (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

Open Secret Service: Its answer to Mae West's "gun in your pocket" question is "both." (Harold Mantle, Lafayette, Calif.)

Garbage pickup line: "What's a girl like you doing in a dump like this?" (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

The Family Circus Maximus: Watch Billy, Dolly, Jeffy and P.J. fight to the death! (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Unforeseen-event planner: God. (Diana Oertel, San Francisco, a First Offender)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 971: Double booking

Front cover: The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Back cover: The Very Full Robin
Front: The Hobbit
Back: The Bobbitt, a shorter tale

The author Yann Martel, a couple of years ago, planned to publish what he called a "flip book," but he didn't mean the kind you pull your thumb across to watch the pictures move. He meant that he'd write two complementary books inside the same covers — one starting in front, the other on the back. (Martel evidently changed his mind, although he did end up writing a book about an author who did this.) Anyway, as Loser Kevin Dopart suggests: Come up with a double book with a humorous connection; the first title must be an actual book, while the other may be your own fictitious title (as in Kevin's examples above) or a second real book. Feel free to add a short description if that enhances the humor.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins a very special item, created by Jolene Mosley and donated by Andrea Kelly; it is like the ones sent to male members of Congress during the recent all-male hearing on birth control funding. Loser Anne Paris describes it as "a lovely hand-knitted replica of intimate female parts, suggesting what Martha Stewart would be inspired to create if she went to the gynecologist while stoned," while fellow Loser Craig Dykstra called it, more succinctly, a "she-cozy." (You may choose a standard runner-up prize instead.)

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, a yearned-for Loser Mug or the new, ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 21; results published June 10 (online June 8). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 971" in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/StyleInvThe. The subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Mae Scanlan. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

3 STYLE CONVERSATIONAL Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join us at washingtonpost.com/stylconversational.



RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES FOR GOSPEL MUSIC ASSOCIATION

OH, MARY(S): Tina, left, and Erica Atkins-Campbell perform.

POP CD REVIEW

Mary Mary Go Get It



When they first started out, the gospel duo Mary Mary was one of a few acts — there are now many more — marrying secular, urban rhythms to faith-based messages. Their new compilation disc, "Go Get It," a dressed up greatest hits package of old hits, remixes and a few new tracks, charts the duo's evolution from sassy, boundary-nudging crossover queens to, er, sassy, boundary-nudging crossover queens.

Sisters Erica and Tina Campbell may not have changed their sound much since their debut in 2000, but they've definitely raised their profile: They're now television stars, with their own reality show, "Mary Mary," on the WE Network. Musically, they remain comfortably consistent, fond of middle of the road funk, the mildest of hip-hop exhortations and too much Auto-Tune. Everything they do sounds, endearingly, about 18 months out of fashion. Because Mary Mary's idea of a remix doesn't resemble, say, Skrillex's idea of a remix, even the most overhauled songs on "Go Get It" remain stubbornly resistant to alterations to their DNA. Some, like "God Bless," one of a very few

Mary Mary tracks that can be accused of possessing an excess of virtue, actually sound de-funked.

If "Go Get It" proves anything, it's that Mary Mary are much better when they're having fun, when they're serving up beefy, danceable tracks like their entry level '00 hit "Shackles (Praise You)" than they are at wan finger snap ballads like "Little Girl." The duo's boisterous '08 hit "God in Me," caused the sisters some trouble for its alleged preaching of prosperity gospel (otherwise known as the "Jesus must love me because He gave me so much bling" school of theological thought). It survives without much noticeable tweaking, its controversial lyrics intact.

— Allison Stewart