

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 981

In which we asked you to come up with funny test questions and/or answers for applicants for a particular job: Some entries were more like job interview questions but otherwise met the stated parameters of acceptability within our evaluative rubric. In other words, close enough because they were funny.

THE
WINNER
OF THE
INKIN'
MEMORIAL

Job: Suicide prevention hotline

Q. A caller claims he has nothing left to live for. What do you do first?

A. Remind him not to end a sentence with a preposition.
(Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

2 Winner of the tacky seashell sculpture of a motorcycle-riding cat:

For a Metrorail station manager:

Q. The elevators are broken at the Bethesda station, and two escalators have just stopped running, too. What do you do first?
A. Do? (Ellen Ryan, Rockville)

For a car salesman:

Q. What are your salary requirements?
A. I'll have to check with my manager. (David Genser, Poway, Calif.; Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)

For a vice presidential candidate:

Q. Do you have any skeletons in your closet?
A. Literally? (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)



Quizzically challenged: Honorable mentions

For a voice-over for a pickup truck commercial:

Q. How rough and gravelly should your voice be when discussing the manly attributes of this vehicle?
A. From sunup to sundown, uphill in the burnin' desert or pert' near buried in blindin' snow, my throat'll be winchin' up ever' last deep-fried rumble from the hardworkin' depths of my galvanized diaphragm and torquin' it through my wise and leathery lips. (David Ballard, Reston)

For a cable guy:

Q. What is the significance of 11:59 a.m. in our industry?
A. Time to begin your 8 a.m.-to-noon installations. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

For a tabloid journalist:

Quotes are:
A. The words the subject said.
B. The words the subject would have said if he were more interesting.
C. The words the subject would have said if he hadn't been made up. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

For an office worker:

Instead of "casual Fridays," we have "Austrian Tuesdays." Do you own a pair of lederhosen? (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

For a lawyer:

Q. The Supreme Court has just denied your emergency request to stay your client's execution. What do you do?

A. Send a final invoice to death row. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

For a Metrorail announcer:

Q: Do you grelphmb or do you prefer to hakkjxjz? (Roy Ashley, Washington)

For a New York deli waitress:

Q. Do you scream "just hang on, will ya" before or after you throw the menu on the table? (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

For a psychic hotline operator:

Q. Did we hire you tomorrow? (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

For a résumé consultant:

Q. How would you describe bagging groceries?
A. Food industry user experience coordination in conjunction with retail point-of-sale process facilitation. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

Q. A teller provides the most direct contact with our bank's customers. How would you project goodwill to them?

A. Free samples. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

For a drama critic:

Please explain why "Macbeth" sucks. Make it all about you. (David Genser)

For a porn actress:

Q. Are you good at faking it?
A. Are you kidding? I used to date Tom Witte. (Tom Witte)

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 985: What art art thou?

The Style Invitational's Almost Forever Cartoonist, Bob Staake, has taken to posting on Facebook like a . . . well, like a compulsive Facebook poster, delighting his 4,999 "friends" not only with off-the-wall, often tasteless status lines ("I'll never snort bath salts with a monkey again, I'll never snort bath salts with a monkey again") but also with various samples of his many book projects and cartoons — including ones for the Invitational. The problem is that most of Bob's "friends" aren't familiar with the Invite, and he'll often post the cartoon from one of our contests without a caption or any other context, thus prompting a rushed explanation and link from the Empress. **This week: Tell us which Style Invitational contest any of these Bob Staake cartoons might be illustrating** — either one of our real contests or one you make up. Usually, the cartoon illustrates a sample entry for that week; your entry may either describe the contest and provide the example, or treat the cartoon as an illustration of the contest's concept itself. If you're new to the Invite, you'll want to look at the dozens of past contests and cartoons posted at wapo.st/StyleInv.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy, along with a copy of that week's print Invitational signed and dedicated by the Bobster himself. Second place also receives the Bobographed paper as well as a tin of Zombie Mints — "Mmmm! Brain Flavor!" (or at least, really, "artificial meat flavor"; tastes just like artificial meat, we guess), donated by Loser Pie Snelson.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Tuesday, Sept. 4; results published Sept. 23 (online Sept. 21). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 985" 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/inviterules. The subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Kathy El-Assal. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

STYLE CONVERSATIONAL

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