

# Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

## Report from Week 1023

in which we invited you to propose some haiku for NASA to put on the DVD it's going to send up with the MAVEN craft bound for the Martian atmosphere. The deadline is July 1 for the real NASA contest for Mars-bound haiku (three will be chosen by public vote); feel free to submit your own Invite entries, either inking or non-. We think there's a snowball's chance on Venus that an Invite-winning or

-Losing entry will get NASA ink, but we'd be thrilled to be proved wrong. By the way, both we and NASA are using the broadest, most ignorant definition of haiku: anything with three lines and 5-7-5 syllables. We've learned that irreverent 17-syllable poems are (slightly) more precisely called *senryu*, but we figured that your average Martian wouldn't know that term.



**2** Winner of the man-shaped bottle filled eerily with green and white sand: Oh mighty red orb, Please align with Jupiter. Powerball tonight! (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

**3** This is a haiku Under NASA's new budget. (Danny Bravman, Chicago)

**4** MAVEN's first message: "Mars exists. Rule 34. Porn pix to follow." (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

## Mirthlings: honorable mentions

We would like to know:  
Do you guys have candy bars?  
Do you call them "Earth?" (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.; J. Calvin Smith, Ranger, Ga.)

Earth teachers are mean.  
Please enroll me in Mars school.  
Mom says pick me up. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

This haiku cost us  
34.5 million  
bucks per syllable! (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

When you visit Earth,  
Please bring your own shirts if you  
Need three sleeves or more.  
(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

We come here in peace.  
We want to learn your culture.  
Do you have oil?  
(John Duffy, Manassas, a First Offender)

Can you tell me what  
You have done with Ray Walston?  
He's my favorite. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

Loneliness abounds  
In the vast heavens we share.  
Need mail-order brides? (Mike Gips)

Lonely, spinning orb  
Adrift in the vast cosmos . . .  
Are you impressed yet? (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

If you come, be sure  
To get a flu shot first, 'cause  
CVS ran out.  
(Larry Neal, McLean, a First Offender)

You look lonely, Mars.  
You can have our tired, our poor  
And all our old folks. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)

Our spaceship traveled  
To Mars and all you get is  
This stupid haiku. (Julia Shawhan, Silver Spring)

You folks like haiku?  
We also brought some fruitcake.  
Now, where is your gold? (Rob Huffman)

We were not afraid  
To boot out Pluto — so you  
Just watch your step, pal.  
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Would you like for me  
To return that probey-thing  
That you left inside? (Beverly Sharp)

NASA accepts no  
Responsibility if  
You choke on this disc.  
(Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)

We've no receipt but  
We'd really like to return  
Dennis Kucinich. (Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge)

Our Four Horsemen are  
War, famine, disease, and death.  
What do your guys do?  
(Jim Blue, Darnestown, a First Offender)

Over the rainbow  
We launched without ruby shoes.  
Need Wizard of Mars. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

The Moon shot was faked.  
The Mars probes are also.  
This didn't happen. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

Arriving Tuesday.  
Don't fuss — will bring everything.  
I packed the sand wedge. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Earthling can't find job  
Desperately want to work  
Willing to commute  
(Bella Portillo, Silver Spring, a First Offender)

Well, hello, Martian!  
I see they were wrong about  
"Little" green men. ROWR! (Danielle Nowlin)

We hope Amanda  
Bynes is one of you. It would  
Give us much comfort. (Sneha Kannan, Potomac)

Hello Martian friend.  
I was once Nigerian  
Finance Minister . . . (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

We, the Blue Planet,  
Unsuited by gaseous clouds,  
Unlike Uranus. (John Kupiec, Fairfax)

Expect more of us  
When 55-year-olds learn  
They're 29 here. (Kevin Dopart)

Property of Earth  
Please drop in any mailbox  
Postage guaranteed (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Better not attack:  
We can drive you raving mad.  
We will speak Haiku. (Nan Reiner)

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

# Week 1027: Built for two

**Entrance and exit at WSSC headquarters: Inflow and Effluent Hot and cold faucets at a movie studio: Megan Fox and Danny DeVito**  
Way back in 1995, one Stephen Dudzik suggested a contest for Week 145: to come up with funny names for the men's and women's restrooms in various places. The results were a riot. At the Sigmund Freud Museum: Cigars and Ashtrays (by Jean and Bob Sorensen); at a Catskills resort: Ladies and Germs (Jonathan Paul). (See more of them at [bit.ly/invite145](http://bit.ly/invite145).)

Eighteen years later, Steve has just entered the Style Invitational Hall of Fame with his 500th ink, and he's back with another idea, an expansion of his old one: **Give humorous related names for any pair of features in a given building, organization, etc.**, as in Steve's own examples above: entrances and exits, up and down escalators, left entrance and right entrance, anything you can creatively pair up for a good joke. You might even offer some more men's rooms and ladies' rooms, as long as they're different from the ones in the Week 145 results. The paired features don't have to be utter opposites, and if you think of something that might have three elements rather than two, I'm inclined to be flexible.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln-statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets the weird gadget pictured here, modeled by 32-time Loser Marleen May at last month's Flushies, the Loser Community's annual awards lunch, and donated by 122-time Loser Nan Reiner. It's intended to be a head massager (and we'll sterilize it before sending it out), but we believe that its springy little prongs are better used for, say, roasting grasshoppers over a campfire. *Anything* rather than sticking your head with a bunch of pointy wires.

**Other runners-up** win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders receive a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, July 8; results published July 28 (online July 25). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 1027" 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](http://wapo.st/inviterules). The subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Nan Reiner. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev).

**Still running — deadline Monday night — our "You might be . . ." joke contest. See [bit.ly/invite1026](http://bit.ly/invite1026).**



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