

The Washington Post

NEWS | LOCAL | POLITICS | SPORTS | OPINIONS | BUSINESS | ARTS & LIVING | GOING OUT GUIDE | JOBS | CARS | REAL ESTATE | SHOPPING

Week 824: Jestinations

Saturday, July 4, 2009

We've asked for mottoes and slogans for states and countries; now it's time to give a boost (emphasis on the "boo") to cities and towns. **This week, give us a slogan for any city or town**, as in the example in the cartoon. Don't go through the atlas and make puns on every unknown burg on the globe; we're not looking to run a list of puns, as we did for our contest for sports team names. For those who can't resist that urge, send us no more than your 25 best entries. This boost to our chambers of commerce was suggested by Kelley Bielewicz of Newark, Del., who recently got three blots of ink in her very first appearance on this page.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the book "Punk Shui: Home Design for Anarchists," which at least semi-seriously includes such decorating tips as cutting your couch in half with a chain saw and letting the stuffing dribble out.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). 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, July 13. Put "Week 824" 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 Aug. 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 Honorable Mentions name is by Beverley Sharp; the revised title for next week's contest is by Mae Scanlan.

Report From Week 820, With Guest Judge Dave Barry

In which we asked you to write some questions and answers to and from Mister Language Person, the great grammarian who appeared in numerous Dave Barry columns back in the day when newspapers had ads and subscriptions and Dave Barry. As promised, Dave has chosen the winners from a list of finalists selected by the Empress, and he even comments on each of his top four.

The Winner of the Inker

Q. Please demonstrate how to use euphemisms.

A: Correct: "Our hamster Mr. Buttons became rabid, so we had to put him down."

Incorrect: "Our hamster Mr. Buttons became rabid, so we had to put him down the toilet." (**Kevin Dopart, Washington**)

Mister Language Person explains: **This beautifully illustrates the First Principle of Humor, as defined by Aristotle: "It should have a hamster, and it should have a toilet."**

The winner of the dress made from two Loser T-Shirts:

2. Q. What is a non sequitur?

A. I'll say! (**Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park**)

I picked this one because I love chocolate.

3. Q. What is "hyperbole"?

A. It's what takes place for two solid weeks leading up to the Superbole. (**Beverley Sharp, Washington**)

I picked this one because it is the funniest thing ever written in any language in the history of the universe.

4. Q. I seem to have upset some people by saying, "I've got this thing. And it's bleeping golden. I'm just not giving it up for bleeping nothing. . . . I can always use it. I can parachute me there."

Should I have said, "I can parachute myself there"?

By the way, nice hair! -- R. Blagojevich (**Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge**)

I picked this one, even though it does not have an answer, because the author paid me to.

Also Winning the Approbation of Dave

Q. Has there ever been an appropriate anagram created for the phrase "a vinyl toilet stain"?

A. Yes. Top anagram scientists report that they were finally able to produce exactly one: "style invitational," whatever that means. **(Craig Dykstra, Centreville)**

Q. What does "penultimate" mean?

A: This word is commonly misused, so let me clarify it with an example:

"The penultimate word in this sentence is is." **(Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)**

Q. I need to learn how to spell "hemorrhoids." Never mind why.

A. "Hemorrhoids" is made up of two parts: "hemor," meaning "things that guys think are hilariously funny," and "rhoids," meaning "big and lumpy." Remember: The "rr" in the middle stands for "rump rocks." **(Jennifer Hart, Arlington)**

Danglers: Less Honorable Mentions

Q. Which of these is grammatically correct: "she waxed indignant" or "she waxed indignantly"?

A. Both, actually, since it can refer to the time Mrs. Language Person removed my back hair. **(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)**

Q. I work for a guy who says "orientate" when he means "orient." Do I let the dude's mistake go, or do I point it out to His Holiness?

A. Hey, nobody's infallible. **(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)**

Q. When I complained to my neighbor about his Confederate flag, he said, "Sorry you was offended." I corrected his grammar, but he looked mad. Now I've noticed that the apostrophe and comma are missing in his "Youll Pry My Gun From My Cold Dead Hands" bumper sticker on his pickup. What's the best way for me to remind him of the importance of good spelling and grammar?

A: Some people learn best from seeing their errors corrected in writing. Using large, easy-to-read capital letters, scratch your note of correction into the finish of his vehicle. **(Megan Durham, Reston, a First Offender)**

Q. I'm always hearing about how the Senate can't do anything unless it has a quorum. What is a quorum?

A. A slight buzz. **(Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)**

Q. What are the differences in the phrases "at three locations," "at three different locations" and "at three completely different locations"?

A: The second makes clear they are not three of the same location, while the third makes clear that the different locations are not located together. **(Russell Beland, Fairfax)**

Q. They say that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder"; is that true?

A. Well, that's just ridiculous. It's GROSS in there! **(Beverley Sharp)**

Q. What does "negligent" mean?

A. It's a legal term referring to skimpy underwear, e.g., "She looked negligent in her diphthong." **(Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)**

Q: We often hear of "abject poverty." Does someone ever have "abject wealth"?

A: Donald Trump. **(Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)**

Q: My husband is never in a subjunctive mood anymore. Is it me?

A: Would that it were. **(Jennifer Hart)**

Q: Could you demonstrate correct usage of the word "impact"?

Wrong: "The business model was impacted by the grim economic scenario."

Right: "I found whomever wrote the above sentence and had an impact upon him, by impacting his head in a junkyard car-crushing machine." **(Jennifer Hart)**

Q. Can you suggest a good name for my rock band?

A. Sorry, nothing's coming to mind. **(Jeff Contompasis)**

Next Week: Spit the Difference, or Sim-Hilarities

[View all comments](#) that have been posted about this article.