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The Style Invitational

By the Empress

Style Invitational: As we primp for our 20th anniversary, we bring out the dead (poems)

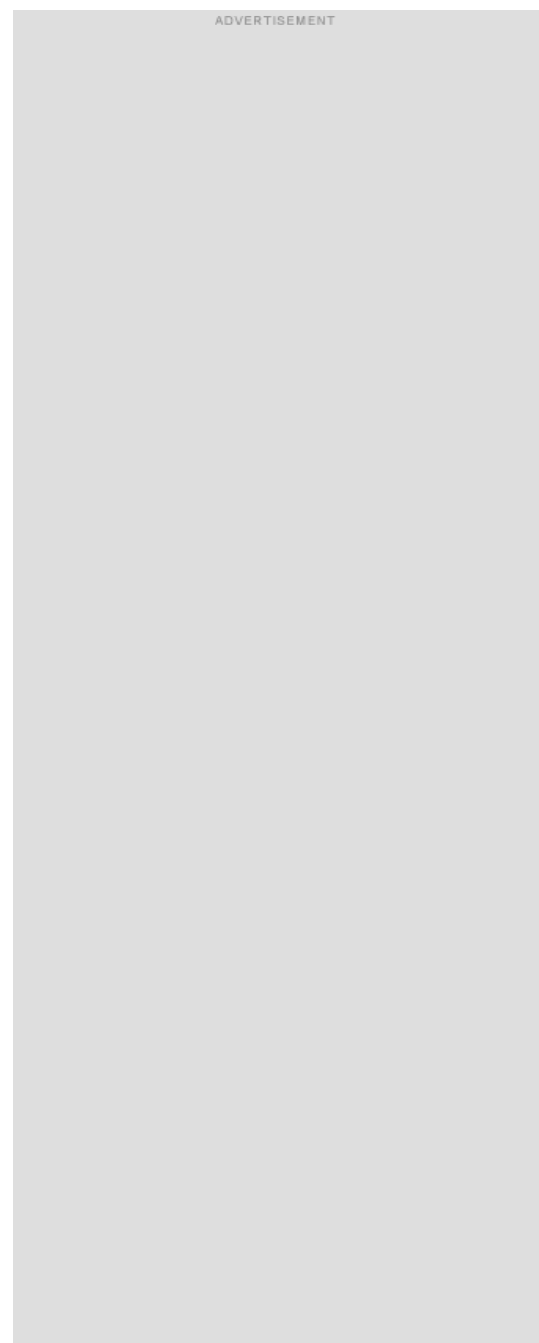


Bob Staake for The Washington Post - In memory of Ferdinand A. Porsche, the subject of our winning obit poem.

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By Pat Myers, Published: January 31

There's no new contest this week, because four weeks from now — on March 3 (Feb. 28 online), when the results would have run — the Empress will devote this entire space (and more!) to a celebration of the Style Invitational's 20th anniversary. We'll look back at the Invite's greatest hits, especially from the past 10 years: the best of the song parodies, neologisms, horse names, limericks, "joint legislation," cartoon captions and dozens of other classic contests. We'll also tell you about the Losers, the unlikely community of contestants that's been active since Year 1 with a calendar of social events, a vigorous competition for most ink, a set of meticulous online standings, and a Facebook page that numbers almost 500 members. And there just might be a few peeps from the Czar, the E's predecessor and the originator of this contest, whom she mercifully sent into retirement



nine years ago.

(Note to readers of the print edition: The Web address given on this week's Sunday Style page to The Style Conversation, my weekly online column about the new contest and results, doesn't work this week, while the page is undergoing some improvements. (It goes to last week's column instead.) Instead, access it [here](#).

The Style Invitational

The Style Invitational is The Post's weekly humor/wordplay contest, serving up since 1993 an irreverent mix of highbrow and lowbrow -- haughty and potty -- in genres ranging from neologisms to cartoon captions to elaborate song parodies. A new contest appears at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational every Friday.

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Report from Week 1004

Our annual contest for poems about those who died in the previous year: Frequently noted was that Dave Brubeck is taking five and much longer; that Sherman Hemsley moved on up; that Robin Gibb's no longer stayin' alive; that Vidal Sassoon and Phyllis Diller were hair today, gone tomorrow; and that go-go pioneer Chuck Brown was, of course, gone-gone.

In a rare but not unprecedented move, we present two Inkin' Memorials today; the second one, a song parody, appears only online so we could include a link to a YouTube clip of the 85-year-old original song.

The winners of the Inkin' Memorials

Ferdinand A. Porsche (1935-2012), designer of the Porsche 911

When Porsche first designed his car, he cleverly employed
The insights he had garnered from the

works of Sigmund Freud.

A car, as Porsche understood, was outwardly metallic,
But in the heart of man it was organic flesh, and phallic.

And so he built it long and strong, he built it fast and loud,
To make the rich unmanly man feel powerfully endowed.
Though Freud had said that now and then cigars are just cigars,
Ferdinand, the businessman, knew cars are not just cars.
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Jean Harris, convicted of the murder of Scarsdale Diet doctor Herman Tarnower

(To "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man")

Fish gotta sink, birds gotta fall;
You gotta love me or no one at all.
Can't help pluggin' that man of mine.

Life is a banquet; that's what they say.
How could you take my sugar away?
Can't help pluggin' that man of mine.

Hungry, weak, and sad
Makes a girl go mad.

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Haven't had one taste! But you've been free – to cheat on me.

Herman, you might have avoided my barbs
If you had just let me snack on some carbs.
Can't help pluggin' that man of mine.
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

2. **Winner of the toilet-shaped coffee cup:**

Edward Archbold, who died after winning a roach-eating contest

Hey, the next time that someone approaches
With a contest to eat the most roaches,
Though the prize may be nice,
I suggest you think twice,
'Cause it might be your big *buenas noches*.
(Nan Reiner)

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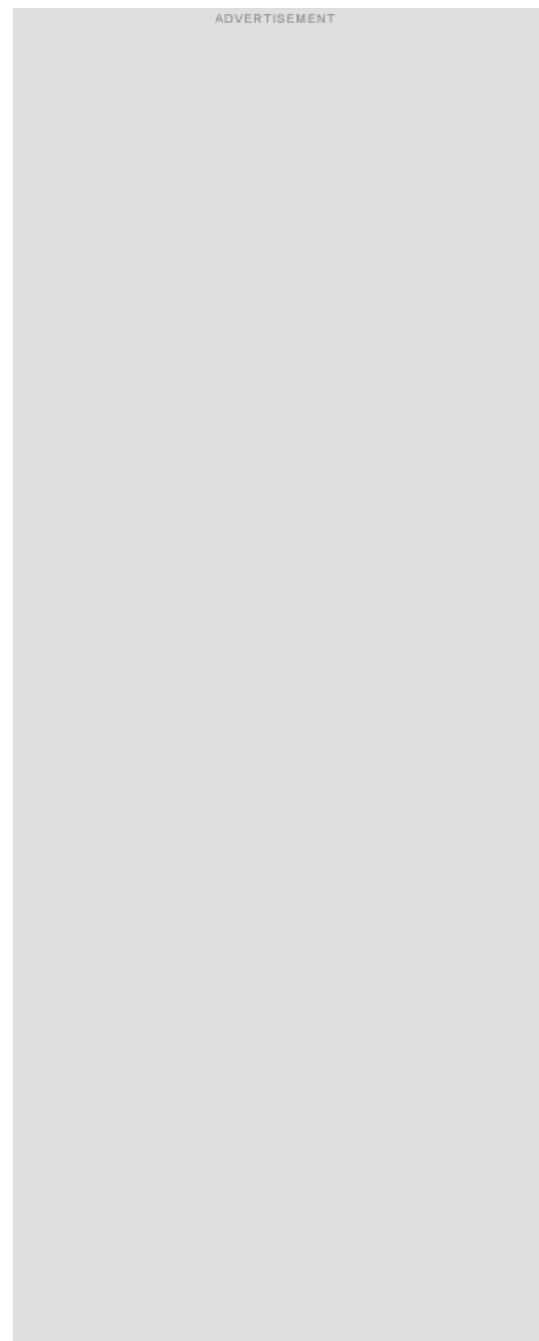


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3. A eulogy for **Sally Ride** is not off-base;
I wouldn't halt one, though perhaps I'd pause it
To ponder how she managed a career in space
Yet all the while remaining in a closet.
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)


4. **Thomas Kinkade**
Go very gentle into that good night
With houses quaint where Pollyanna lived.
"Rage? Nah," said the Painter of the Light.
(Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)



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Donna Summer and Robin Gibb

People stuck in the '70s fervently shouted,
"By music we won't be misled!"
But two passings have shown what the sane never doubted:
That disco is certainly dead. *(Matt Monitto, Elon, N.C.)*

Joe Paterno, once revered,
Whose earthly days are through,
Will sadly be remembered most
For what he *didn't* do. *(Mae Scanlan, Washington)*

Jack Klugman
For years you entertained us by annoying Felix Unger;
But all things pass (and you, alas, weren't getting any younger).
With neatnik versus total slob, will either one convert?
I guess you get the last laugh, 'cause you're both immersed in dirt. *(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)*

Letitia Baldrige, etiquette expert and Jacqueline Kennedy's chief of staff

(To "Camelot")

It's true! It's true! The transcripts make it clear:
Civility's gone AWOL this year.

The House and Senate almost come to blows now;
Repubs and Dems don't ever vote as one;
We're sad to say that that's the way it goes now

Digging deeper: honorable mentions

Marvin Miller, head of the Major League Baseball Players Union

When crafty Marvin Miller led the MLBPA, 'Twas then that players' salaries went rocketing away.
He made some people very rich, but there's one problem: That's
The reason that it costs a hundred bucks to see the Nats. *(Nan Reiner)*

Earl Scruggs saunters up to the Heavenly Gate.

There's a banjo audition. How easy is that?
Saint Peter's on harp and his playing sounds great,
But an angel joins in on guitar — and he's Flatt. *(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)*

Murray Lender, of the People Chosen,
Made a fortune large in bagels frozen.
We'll always miss him dearly, even though he
Made us like his product: round and doughy. *(Kathye Hamilton, Annandale, Va.)*

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The politicians say just what they think now;
They're slandering their colleagues just for fun;
But frankly, we get dizzy from the stink now
In Washington.

Washington! Washington! I know it sounds a bit absurd,
But in Washington, "etiquette" is now a dirty word.

To tell the prez "You lie!" is off the "rude" charts,
"Go (blank) yourself" are words that tend to stun;
Ms. Baldrige, please come back --
It seems we've lost the knack
Of treating people civilly right here in Washington. *(Beverley Sharp)*

Ray Bradbury

Ray's friends flew like madmen the length of the drive
And arrived at the funeral parlor at 5.
"Alas," said the owner, "it's over and done:
I did the cremation at 4:51." *(Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)*

I heard you at the Fillmore, heard you at Winterland,
I heard you with Bob Dylan, I heard you with the Band,
You took a load off Annie, you took a load for free.
Financially, O **Levon Helm**, you took a load off me. *(Nancy Lasner, Washington, a First Offender)*

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