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Style

# Style Invitational Week 1036: Just for liffs — turn a place name into a new word



Engaging in extreme anchorage on the evening news: a runner-up in the liffs contest of Week 144. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**, Style Invitational editor  
August 29, 2013

**Anchorage:** The often inane banter you hear on the evening news.  
(Mike Hammer)

**Bora Bora:** A tiresome person who keeps repeating himself. (Paul Kondis)

**Assateague:** The condition in which one tires of sitting in the same position for too long. (Bob Sarecky)

**Peoria:** The ecstatic feeling one gets from relieving a full bladder.  
(Everybody)

They're called liffs — or that's what Douglas Adams and John Lloyd called them in a [1983 book](#) — and the ones above come from the last time the Invitational looked for them, way back in 1996. Not that there are so many new place names to choose from this time, but the Czar gave ink to only 38 liffs for Week 147 (see them at [bit.ly/invite150](http://bit.ly/invite150)). So: **This week: Use a real place name, from anywhere in the world, as a new term.** The Empress's hunch: The humor is likely to work better if it's a well-known location.



Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy.  
Second place receives, given our jet-



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Mr. Zip: Diabolical government spy or diabolical work-shirking-encourager? Two Losers chime in. (U.S. Postal Service)

setting theme, something that reader-not-Loser Eileen Booth found in a Korean teashop: a box of something called Green Apple Vium+; the text is almost all in Korean except for the name and the word “supplement.” But a handy diagram shows 12 apples equaling what seem to be six poops. We suggest that the winner just put it on the mantel or something.

**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, Sept. 9; results published Sept. 29 (online Sept. 26). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 1036” 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 Beverley Sharp; the alternative headline in the “Next week’s results” line is by Danielle Nowlin. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://on.fb.me/invdev).

## Report from Week 1032

in which we asked for “hidden messages” in public monuments, artworks and other cultural icons:

### The winner of the Inkin’ Memorial:

F is the sixth letter of the alphabet; assigning the other proper numbers gives you  $F+A+M+I+L+Y = 6+1+13+9+12+25 = 66!$

There are 6 letters in CIRCUS.

So: FAMILY CIRCUS: 666!

Now, look at the hidden message in the members of this “wholesome” family:

GrandMa; JeffY

Dolly; BARfy; Kittycat;

BiLly; P.J.: Peter JOhn; GRanDdad:

**MY DARK LORD!** (*Jeff Shirley, Richmond*)



Don't give up the hat! See Elden Carnahan's honorable-mention analysis of the seal.

### 2. Winner of the [dried baby](#)

**blowfish with hat:** Uranium-Nickel-Tellurium-Darmstadtium-Tantalum-Tellurium-Sulfur-Oxygen-Fluorine-Americium-Erbium-Iodine-Calcium! That's

UNiTeDsTaTeSOFAmErICa, clearly the formula for the most dangerous, volatile compound in the world. — Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iodine-Radium-Nitrogen (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

**3.** The New York Yankees are Satan's favorite team. You've got A-Rod (No. 13) and Jeter (No. 2) and thus  $1+3+2=6$ . Then you've got a payroll of \$231 million — and  $2+3+1=6$ . And “Yankee” — how many letters? That's 6-6-6. Damn Yankees, indeed. (*Mark Raffinan, Reston, Va.*)

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4. Check out his bare-chested getup: he's wearing nothing but jeans with a leather belt, and a big hat. And he's carrying a big shovel — with the tip pointing up. Uh-huh! Finally, there's the start of his name: "S-M: OK"!

It's as plain as the big, moist nose on his adorable furry face. No, [it's not only you!](#) (*Jeff Shirley*)

#### **Guffawly logic: honorable mentions**

The White House is at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. 1600 is not only a square in itself it is a product of two squares, 16 and 100. Pennsylvania is the home of the Quakers and Ben Franklin. Nixon was a Quaker. Do I have to draw you a picture about the Quaker conspiracy to make holy war on the country? (*Edmund Conti, Raleigh*)

Some think the odd curves and edges of the [Sydney Opera House](#) convey a secret message, but actually it was originally intended to be shaped like an egg; its current form immortalizes the shame of the intern who delivered the scale model to the builder but failed to secure the box carefully on his bike. (*Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge, Va.*)

Consider "Ulysses Simpson Grant": Ulysses > James Joyce > Jimmy. Simpson > Homer > Ho. Grant > land grant college > Future Farmers of America > FFA. So who's buried in Grant's Tomb? Jimmy-Ho-FFA. (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

The Budweiser Clydesdales: These icons engender the warmest of feelings for something considered all-American. Little do people know they are the critical part of the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on consumers. How does Budweiser achieve that golden tone and crisp taste? Well, they don't call them "draft" horses for no reason. — Joseph Schlitz and Adolph Coors, Milwaukee (*Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia*)

The [Army Department seal](#) hardly needs us to reveal its aims: Note the Smurf's hat on a stick — either the Army is sticking up the hat hoping to draw fire, or it's saying it'll defend the hat and nothing else. (*Elden Carnahan, Laurel, Md.*)

The diamond shape of Washington, D.C., mirrors the two-axis political map of individual liberty vs. economic liberty, with its four corners representing statism (Hitler), liberalism (Rousseau), libertarianism (Paul) and conservatism (Reagan). Combine those initials — H-R-P-R -- and you get that rare phenomenon that transcends ideology in D.C: Bryce Harper, of course. (*Mark Richardson, Washington*)

Our [state seal](#) shows the danger facing the Old Dominion! That half-naked Amazon woman, lasciviously baring her breast, trampling the God-given rights of Virginia Gentlemen! That brazen hussy putting a spear through the very heart of our society! Carrying an enormous phallus, symbol of her true desire: the emasculation and ultimate extinction of men! We must keep this monster in her place, chained and pregnant! — R. McDonnell & K. Cuccinelli, Richmond (*Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.*)

If you take all the capital letters in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, you get WPUSOUJTWBLPCUSA, which stands for "Within preamble, uncover secret of U.S.: Jefferson told Washington, bomb launchers, plutonium come under Second Amendment." — W. LaPierre (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

It just happens to be the 50th anniversary of the benignly named "Zoning Improvement Plan," given that deceptively cute acronym "Zip code." But what is it but a nationwide, door-to-door government surveillance system putting Americans into zones, tracking YOUR correspondence? "Mr. Zip"



knows where you live and he has your mail! (*Lorraine McMillan, Alexandria, Va., a First Offender*)

The letters on [Mr. Zip's bag](#) are flat, which indicates an empty bag: USPS is promising to deliver only the one letter Mr. Zip has in his hand. He is smiling because he knows that's all he has to do in one day anyway, according to union rules. And showing him with a dislocated shoulder — from carrying an empty bag? — encourages postal workers to retire on disability for no reason. (*Elden Carnahan*)

The W in the Nationals logo is especially curly because they didn't think the logo would properly represent Washington if it didn't include a loophole. (*Danielle Nowlin*)

The so-called “scaffolding” on the Washington Monument is clearly meant to portray the Father of Our Nation wearing a condom, and thus to imply that he approved of non-procreative intercourse. The laugh, however, is on the liberals who perpetrated this slander: Historians agree that the wooden condoms of Washington's day were effective promoters of abstinence. (*Gary Crockett*)

And since the symbolism of the Washington Monument is obvious, I guess you can figure out what that makes the Beltway. (*Danielle Nowlin*)

Did you know that “Jeffrey” starts with the same two letters as “Jehovah”? And that “Bezos” could rhyme with “Jesus”? So if you put the two together you have a combination worthy of great reverence and respect. Not that anyone is sucking up . . . (*Mark Raffman*)

**And Last:** Pat Myers's name contains the anagram “pay me,” which explains the key to getting ink. (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.*)

**Still running — deadline Tuesday night — is our cartoon-caption contest. See [bit.ly/invite1035](https://bit.ly/invite1035).**

See the Empress's online column [The Style Conversational](#) (published late Thursday), in which she discusses today's new contest and results along with news about the Loser Community — and you can vote for your favorite among the inking entries, since you no doubt figured the Empress chose the wrong winner. If you'd like an e-mail notification each week when the Invitational and Conversational are posted online, [sign up here](#) or write to the Empress at [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) (note that in the subject line) and she'll add you to the mailing list. And on Facebook, join the far more lively group [Style Invitational Devotees](#) and chime in there.

**Next week's results:** [LimeriXicon](#), or **Fa- Be It From Us** ,, our annual contest for limericks featuring words from one specific sliver of the alphabet — this year it's words beginning with fa-.



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...her style is cuter and judge of the style in fashion, the Washington Post page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. [Follow](#)

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