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## Style Invitational contest Week 1044: You can't be too safe; plus some taxing returns

By [Pat Myers](#), Published: October 24

To avoid injury to the most important player on the field, defensive players are no longer allowed to tackle the quarterback. Instead they record a sack by trapping him in a burlap bag. Elementary schools: No nose-picking past the first finger joint. You can't be too careful these days, as Loser Mark Raffman points out. (He's a lawyer, of course.) This week: Come up with a comically safety-conscious rule for the workplace or elsewhere, as in Mark's examples above. I don't think we've done this contest before, though way back in 1995 we did have one for product warning labels (results here). Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. And, in time for the bizarrely early first day of Hanukkah this year, second place receives a pair of custom-made Loser Dreidels: 146-time Loser Nan Reiner has painted the "L," "oo," "Z" and "R" equivalents in Hebrew on one of them, and "L," "O," "S" and "R" in English on the other. 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, Nov. 4; results published Nov. 24 (online Nov. 21). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 1044" 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 was suggested by both Jeff Contompasis and Chris Doyle; the alternative headline in the "Next week's results" line is by Beverley Sharp. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev), and click "like" on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at [bit.ly/inkofday](http://bit.ly/inkofday).

### Report from [Week 1040](#)

which seemed like the perfect time for a contest for comical revisions to the tax code, until we realized, too late, that we'd already done such a contest six years ago (on April 15). We still had a fair number of filers, however, and some interesting returns in the contest's three categories, or "schedules":

#### The winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

*Schedule A: Suggest a novel way for the government to determine taxes: All states whose name is an anagram of "Taxes" must pay double the usual rates. This is only fair, since they will be seceding soon and we need to get as much as possible from them. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)*

**2. Winner of the [Porkin' Pigs](#) pair of coin banks:** *Schedule A: Levy an inheritance tax on the meek. (Mel Loftus, Alexandria, Va.)*

**3. Schedule A:** The men of America should be taxed on a scale based on the size of their "endowments." Not only would some men be happy to pay more in taxes, simply for the bragging rights, but those at the other end of the scale could use *some* kind of break. I'd have to take out a second mortgage, of course . . . (Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.)

**4. Schedule C: New ideas for what to check off \$3 for:** The \$3 checkoff should serve as the sole funding source for the Special Commission on Whether to Keep the \$3 Checkoff on Next Year's Form. (Ben Aronin,

Arlington, Va.)

## H&R blockheads: honorable mentions

*Schedule A: Novel ways for the government to determine taxes:*

You know how gambling losses can only be deducted from gambling winnings? What if instead we make it a coin toss? Heads, I get to deduct my gambling losses from my net income; tails, I don't get to deduct it at all. (*Josh Feldblyum, Philadelphia*)

Tax real estate developments with pretentious names on a sliding scale, with a surtax for fake Olde Englishe spellings, pointless accent marks, etc. Anything with "Pointe" in its name would be taxed \$50,000. A "Forest" where they bulldozed the trees would be taxed \$100,000, with \$20K more for each treeless street named for a tree. "The Shoppes" would pay \$250,000 per Shoppe. "The Mews at Royall Wyckombe" could cover the deficit this year. (*Minturn Wright, Washington, a First Offender*)

Assign a flat income tax by congressional district; the lower its representative's IQ, the more tax those constituents pay. Since we can't fix stupid, we can ensure you compensate the rest of us for it. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

To combat obesity in America, the government should provide a \$100 deduction for every pound of weight lost in a year. Of course, to defend against fraud, all taxpayers will have to enter into the Obama Weight Management Plan, but I don't see why that would be any problem. (*Jim Stiles, Rockville, Md.*)

Next year, all Americans should get to deduct the percentage of their taxes paid toward congressional salaries as a child-care expense. (*Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge, Va.*)

In support of the Style Invitational, the IRS should tax double-entendres at the single-entendre rate. (*Robert Falk, Takoma Park, Md.*)

*Schedule B: What a well-known person might want to deduct as a business or medical expense:*

Jay Leno would like to deduct the cost of the microwave he uses to warm over his jokes. (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

e.e. cummings and will.i.am seek a capital depreciation allowance. (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

"I would like to deduct my foam finger as a business expense, notwithstanding that the foam finger had no business being anywhere near my business." — M. Cyrus (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

*Schedule C: New ideas for what to check off \$3 for:*

I'd happily donate \$3 toward rebuilding handicapped parking spaces so that any car parked in them undeservedly will spontaneously burst into flames (but only after the occupants have departed, so we don't accidentally make any new handicapped people). (*Craig Dykstra*)

Let people check off \$3 to be used for a lottery ticket, with a prize of tax exemption for life! \*  
\*Certain restrictions apply: You must be over 18, blind, with at least four dependents, an income of no more than \$20,000/year . . . (*Heather Spence, New York*)

It's only right to give \$3 for the Personal Injury, Malpractice & Product Liability (PIMPL) lawyers: "Give a little back to those who have taken so much." (*Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.*)

*And Last:* I would like to check off \$3 for the Style Invitational, thereby personally financing an entire year's worth of Loser prizes. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

**Still running — deadline Monday night — our Week 1043 contest for celebrity reality shows that would be even more comical than the actual "Vanilla Ice Goes Amish." See**

**[bit.ly/invite1043](http://bit.ly/invite1043).**

*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:** [What'd I Say?](#), or **Wouldn't It Be Loserly**, our Week 1041 contest to answer a question that's part of a song lyric or title.

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