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The Style Invitational

By the Empress

Style Invitational Week 1054: Dead Letters — our obit poem contest; plus the year in redo



Bob Staake for The Washington Post - The late Mikhail Kalashnikov.

By Pat Myers, Published: January 2

Mikhail Kalashnikov has died. He designed the AK-47. Let's hope Saint Peter lets him slide (After all, he helped fill Heaven!).

As we welcome Little Squalling Infant 2014, it's the Style Invitational's tradition to mark the other end of the life "cycle" by "honoring," in verse, those who just missed the chance to assist in the delivery. **This week: Write a short, humorous poem commemorating someone (or maybe even something) who died in 2013,** as in the example above from Washington Post Oddest Oddest Gene Weingarten. It doesn't have to rhyme, but poems that do rhyme, as well as those with a consistent meter, tend to work better as light verse. Song parodies are not forbidden. As always, long poems have to be funny enough to justify taking up a lot of space, and they're more likely to run only online.

The Style Invitational

The Style Invitational is The Post's weekly humor/wordplay contest, serving up since 1993 an

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second

The Post Most: Lifestyle

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- 2 Carolyn Hax: Furniture isn't the only thing weighing down this potential relationship
- 3 To the players in Abscam, the real-life 'American Hustle,' the bribes now see...
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- 5 Carolyn Hax: Adult sibling can make her own dating decisions

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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.

Archive 

 Style Conversational  E-mail



(Bob Staake) - For Week 1010, cartoon captions: A rare public appearance by the least popular Doody sibling, Hidey. (Danielle Nowlin)

place receives, in honor of the holiday of Epiphany, a hotel-minibar-size bottle of “anointing oil” that Loser Marleen May picked up in Israel. It contains “myrrh, frankincense, and spikenard” (you’ll have to provide your own pyrite). And since we’re feeling especially gift-bearing, we’ll toss in a small container of Doctor Wacko’s Silly Sludge. “Stretch it! Pour it! Watch it drip!”

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired “Whole Fools” [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, either the [Po’ Wit Laureate](#) or [Puns of Steel](#). First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Jan. 13; results published Feb. 2 (online Jan. 30). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 1054” 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/InvRules. The subhead for this week’s honorable

mentions is by Mark Raffman; the alternative headline in the “next week’s results” line is by Kevin Dopart. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, and click “like” on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday ..

Report from Week 1050

our annual look back at most of the year’s previous contests, in which we invited readers a second chance to enter:

THE WINNER OF THE INKIN’ MEMORIAL

Week 1036, “Liffs,” place names used as new terms:

Natchez: More than merely. “Peepa talk funny’n lotta places, natchez Miss-sippy.”
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

2. Winner of the *Dead Sea souvenir T-shirt featuring a sunbathing ibex*:

Week 1009, write something about someone using only the letters in the person’s name:

Manti Te’o: I meet a mate; I mention a moment, an intimate tete-a-tete, a time; I omit to note I met mate on Net, mate ain’t animate, mate a man . . . An Onion meme? I nominate me. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

3. Week 1003, repurposed ad slogans:

“Because you’re worth it” (L’Oreal) . . . for Dollar Tree. (Kristen Rowe, Silver Spring, Md.)

4. Week 1012, current-events limericks:

Said Obama, “The people will hail
My ‘Affordable’ Act and regale
Me with hearty huzzahs!”
The reality was:

When he rolled the thing out: Epic fail. (*Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.*)

Mulligan stew: honorable mentions

Week 1000, change a word by one letter: Momfoolery: Mrschief. (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)

Week 1003, repurposed ad slogans: For Depends: “You’re soaking in it.” (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

For a chastity belt: “Look, Ma, no cavities!” (*Roy Ashley, Washington*)

Week 1004, 2012 obit poems:

It’s time we accorded Neil Armstrong his due —
Assuming his death wasn’t falsified, too. (*Brendan Beary*)

The Ravens won the Super Bowl,
But Art Modell was not around;
His owner’s suite — God rest his soul —

Was two yards underneath the ground. (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Week 1005, joint legislation:

The Yoho-Kaine-Kildee-Payne Act to legalize “medical prostitution.” (*Kelley Rogers, Darnestown, Md., a First Offender*)

The Pocan-Cotton-Holding-Titus Act regulating the thickness and resiliency of bra fabrics. (*Michael Jacobs, Columbia, Md.*)

Week 1006, superheroes: Eye-Tee: Has the ability to slow or disable any software and hardware by “upgrading” it. (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

Week 1007, crossword clues: ARROGATE: Woodward and Bernstein investigate the team-name brouhaha. (*Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.*)

Week 1008, rearrange the words in a movie title:

“Sheba, Come Back Little”: A man sends his spouse to a fat farm. (*Howard Walderman, Columbia, Md.*)

“Club Dallas Buyers”: When a Black Friday riot breaks out, Texas mall cops take matters into their own hands. (*Mark Raffman*)

Week 1009, write something using only the letters in the person’s name:

Donald Trump: Rump on top. (*William Kennard, Arlington, Va.*)

Week 1010, cartoon captions (see cartoon on left side of this page): A rare public appearance by the least popular Doody sibling, Hidey (*Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge, Va.*)

Week 1015, bogus music trivia: “Vuvuzela” is Zulu for “butt trumpet.” (*Jeff Contompasis*)

Week 1016, “breed” two racehorses from a list of 100 and name the “foal”:

Really Sharp x Palace Malice = Etui, Brute? (*Christopher Lamora, Los Angeles*)

Week 1019, headlines using just one vowel not counting Y:

[‘Fast’ Star’s](#) Car Crash: Macadam 1, Man 0. (*Mark Raffman*)

Toronto’s Rob Ford on [D.C. Sports Show](#): Boozy Bozo’s Sooo Not Sorry! (*Mark Raffman*)

Week 1020, “grandfoals”:

Urine the Money x A Penny Urned = Second Kidney Sold (*Danielle Nowlin*)

Round Yon Virgin x Unlimited Losses = Carol of the Bills (*Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.*)

Week 1023, haiku to be sent to Mars:

Here's greetings from Earth

Thirty minutes to your door

By Amazon drone (*Bruce Carlson, Alexandria, Va.*)

Week 1024, alphabet couplets:

E's for Enrolling in health care — now book me!

F's for the Fifty-three times that it took me. (*Danielle Nowlin*)

*G is for GOP overwrought drama.

H is for Handshake by Castro, Obama. (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

K is for Karma — they'll reap what they sow.

L is for Lawsuit, when Karma's too slow. (*John Shea, Philadelphia*)

M for Mandela: huge chains he helped break.

N for the nut job who “signed” at his wake. (*Nan Reiner*)

O's for Obama--his selfie was swell!

P's for POed (as in: “Look at Michelle!”). (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

Week 1026, “You might . . .”: You might want to cut back on the coffee if you have trouble finding a vein for your French IV drip. (*Jeff Contompasis*)

You might be too much of a cat person if everyone says you and your cat are beginning to look alike. And it's because you've had plastic surgery to look like a cat. (*Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.*)

Week 1027, paired building elements at particular places: At the Statue of Liberty: Sign on benches: “Your Tired”; sign on trash cans: “Your Wretched Refuse” (*Beverley Sharp*)

Week 1029, a song parody to describe a movie:

“Silver Linings Playbook” (to [“Puttin' on the Ritz”](#))

Dad's an OCD high roller,

Son's been in the bin (bipolar),

Life's the pits — givin' mom the fits.

There's this girl who's sad and fragile—

Thinks she'll make the son be agile

Dancer of the hits—though she is a ditz.

But she rouses him out of his stupor,

And soon he's dancing just like Bradley Cooper — super-duper ... (*Frank Osen*)

“Gravity” (to [“Around the World in 80 Days”](#))

Around the world filmed in 3-D:

The spinning scene, on Imax screen

Has really sickened me.

The plot is hard to take, indeed,

The most absurd that I have heard

Since Bullock starred in “Speed”

When Clooney shows up by her side,

Thought he was toast, now he's a ghost-ly
Kind of tour guide.
No more will I twirl all around the world,
For I have hurled my lunch on you. (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.*)

Week 1031, words within words: R'amen': God's gift to the starving grad student.
(*Pam Sweeney, Burlington, Mass.*)

Will'iam Christ'opher: The actor rose above his Father Mulcahy role, providing all-you-can-eat fish dinners to the "M*A*S*H" crew. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

N'oven'a: Lighting every candle at church after your girlfriend tells you she's nine days late. (*Mike Ostapiej, Mount Pleasant, S.C.*)

Week 1033, Limericks featuring a word beginning with fa-:

After foolishly downing a jawful
Of food that included a waffle
And over a pound
Of fava beans, ground,
I could honestly say I falafel. (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

Week 1036, Liffs:

Azerbaijan: Describing "In My Life," "Come Together" and other "Lennon/McCartney" songs that Paul had no hand in. (*Brendan Beary*)

Michigan: What you'll do on your next turn after losing a round of beer pong. (*Danielle Nowlin*)

Richmond, v., past tense: "The governor left office under a cloud, but he soon richmond into a good law firm and seats on some well-paying boards." (*Mike Barnes, Arlington, Va., a First Offender*)

Budapest: Enlightening bug. (*Nan Reiner*)

Bahrain: What Noah said on Day 39. (*Mae Scanlan, Washington*)

Week 1041: answer a song-lyric question:

Q. Is you is or is you ain't my baby?
A. So, I guess you don't exactly need to be an English major to be on the Maury Povich show. . . (*Brendan Beary*)

Week 1042, neologisms with the letter block s-a-n-e in any order: Sinsane:
Realistic about what you can get away with. (*Fred Dawson, Beltsville, Md.*)

Week 1044, comical safety rules:

To deter skin cancer, tanning on public beaches will be allowed only at night. (*Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.*)

Week 1045, pair a line in a song with a question:

A. And the sign said longhaired freaky people need not apply.
Q. What sign was recently ripped down at the Red Sox employment office? (*Cate Magennis Wyatt, Waterford, Va., a First Offender*)

A. Get a good job with more pay and you're okay.
Q. Congressman, what advice do you have for the millions of Americans affected by the cut in food stamps? (*Douglas Goralski, McLean, Va., a First Offender*)

A. 8-6-7-5-3-0-9.
Q. What did the countdown clock read just before launch on healthcare.gov? (*Jeff Contompasis*)

And Last: A. “Gangnam style, eh-h-h sexy lady.”

Q. What could be less stylish than the Style Invitational? (*Heather Spence, New York*)

And Even Laster: **Week 1030, cinquains:**

SI

Limericks, puns

Scatological fun!

But there is no Swimsuit Issue.

(Thank God.) (*Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.*)

Still running — deadline Monday night — our Questionable Journalism contest, in which you take any line from a newspaper article and pair it with a funny question it might answer. See bit.ly/invite1053.


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 (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: Love the Tiny Tail Stain, or Lose in the Shuffle, an anagram contest. See bit.ly/invite1051.

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