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The Style Invitational

By the Empress

Style Invitational Week 1062: The news could be verse — plus good/bad/ugly jokes



Bob Staake for The Washington Post

By Pat Myers, Published: February 27

In Colorado and Washington state Pot's now out of cops' control, So when their teams met on a date They just smiled and shared a Bowl.

Some people want their news as terse and mobile-friendly as possible. Here in Loserland we sometimes take a more leisurely approach. **This week: Write a rhyming poem about something currently in the news**, as in the example above by Washington Post Go-To Font of Poetry Gene Weingarten. Don't write about someone's recent death, as we have another contest for that. Poems getting ink in Invite contests tend to run four to eight lines, but there have been shorter and longer ones mixed in. Longer poems have to be especially good. To the Empress, "rhyming" refers to "perfect rhyme" or "true rhyme," in which the last *accented* syllables of two lines must rhyme with each other, and the unaccented ones that follow are identical or, rarely, rhyme with each other. "Loser" rhymes with "boozier" and "refuse her" and "use her," but not with "boozers" or "looser" or "closer" or — hey, the Empress gets this stuff all the time — "master." For those who read this contest and somehow haven't deduced this: The Style Invitational is a humor contest.

The Post Most: Lifestyle

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The humor can be dark and pointed, but this isn't the place for gushy paeans or bitter but unwitty diatribes; we avoid the screedy.

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.

Archive 

 Style Conversational  E-mail



This week's second prize features a tasteful blue and gold print ...



... if by tasteful you mean "decorated with hundreds of little Viagras."

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives another wildly enviable pharmaceutical-company promotional prize donated by Earl Hughes, who recently supplied the fabulous EneMan mascot from Fleet that we award to today's second-prize winner. This one, at a distance, looks like a perfectly decorous blue and gold print necktie. But sidle up close to the necktie-wearer and you'll notice that the little blue dots in the print are actually little blue Viagra pills, each with the Pfizer stamp. Presumably the fabric of this tie is always crisp and firm, or at least for up to four hours.

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, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, March 10; results published March 30 (online March 27). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 1062" 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. This week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Kevin Doport; the alternative headline in the "next week's results" line is by Kathy El-Assal. 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 1058

in which we asked for jokes in the "good/bad/ugly" format. Many people sent in jokes that were basically "good news/bad news," without a third element that was significantly worse than the second. One too-frequently submitted idea: Good: You won the lottery. Bad: You're a fictional character. Ugly: In the Shirley Jackson story (or in "The Hunger Games").

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Good: You get to spend a summer's day at a beautiful beach.

Bad: It's awfully crowded and noisy.

Ugly: It is June 6, 1944. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

2. Winner of the plush EneMan figure:

Good: You have a full set of beautiful, healthy teeth.

Bad: Which is being used to identify you.

Ugly: Well, your head. (*Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.*)

3. Good: Your brother just had successful facial reconstruction surgery.

Bad: His wanted poster is displayed all over the country.

Ugly: He's your twin brother. (*Neal Starkman, Seattle*)

4. Good: You've won a trip to Paris.

Bad: It's 1793.

Ugly: You're treated like royalty. (*Nick Culp, Arlington, Va., a First Offender*)

Triple dreckers: honorable mentions

Good: You've been chosen to take the first ride in the newest BMW.

Bad: You only get to make one, very short trip.

Ugly: You've seen what happened to the other dummies. (*Steve McClemons, Arlington, Va.*)

Good: You have a new fur coat.

Bad: It's from your ex-husband.

Ugly: He got custody of the cats. (*Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.*)

Good: You hedged your collateralized debt obligation with a credit default swap.

Bad: You don't really know what that means.

Ugly: Your broker figured you didn't. (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Good: Florida Orange.

Bad: Agent Orange.

Ugly: Boehner Orange. (*Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.*)

Good: Getting to the end of a race.

Bad: It wasn't a record.

Ugly: Compared with other genocides. (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

Good: Seven men are interested in you.

Bad: They're all pretty short.

Ugly: Dopey, bashful, grumpy and sneezy, too. (*Ellen Ryan, Rockville, Md.*)

Good: Scientists have discovered a cure for old age.

Bad: It works only for women.

Ugly: You are Prince Charles. (*Elden Carnahan, Laurel, Md.*)

Good: Your boss says your job is safe.

Bad: Because you're not going anywhere.

Ugly: And if there's one thing he knows, it's prison laundries. (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

Good: A woman who's a dead ringer for Marilyn Monroe is giving you a come-hither look.

Bad: She doesn't seem to want to talk to you.

Ugly: You are in Madame Tussaud's. (*John O'Byrne, Dublin*)

Good: Your state is raising taxes — but only on the 1 percent!

Bad: You are part of that 1 percent.

Ugly: It's the bottom 1 percent. (*Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.*)

Good: You made your live television debut.

Bad: You had limited screen time.

Ugly: The world has now seen Jim Cantore deliver a [knee to your crotch](#). (*Steven Steele Cawman, Poughquag, N.Y., a First Offender*)

Good: Trying an Italian courtship.

Bad: Being in a trying Italian courtship.

Ugly: Being tried in an Italian court. — A. Knox (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

Good: You have front-row seats for the new “Cabaret” revival on Broadway.

Bad: There's an announcement: “Due to an illness, Alan Cumming will not be performing tonight . . .”

Ugly: “The role of the Emcee will be played by Justin Bieber.” (*Chris Doyle, The Villages, Fla.*)

Good: You just woke up with a satisfied yawn after the BEST. NAP. EVER!

Bad: . . . to see your wife staring down at you. Boy, does she look upset!

Ugly: So do all the other people at your wake. (*Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge, Va.*)

Good: Your Mama jokes.

Bad: Overused Your Mama jokes.

Ugly: Accurate Your Mama jokes. (*Matt Monitto, Elon, N.C.*)

Good: Fortune cookies.

Bad: Your dinner date who ends each with “. . . in bed.”

Ugly: Your dinner date who ends each with “. . . rectally.” (*Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.*)

Good: They sent a car to pick you up at the airport.

Bad: The back seat is uncomfortable.

Ugly: So are the shackles. (*Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.*)

Good: I got a promotion.

Bad: After sleeping with the boss.

Ugly: It's a family business. (*Heather Spence, New York*)

And Last:

Good: Your wife's PR agency won the Microsoft account.

Bad: She didn't tell you about it . . .

Ugly: . . . before The Post published your Style Invitational entry about Bill Gates's ugly hair. (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our partial-crossword contest, in which you get to supply words as well as clues. See bit.ly/invite1061.

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: With Parens Like These . . . , or Hum Improvement, a contest to add some words in parentheses to a song title. bit.ly/invite1059.

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