

The Washington Post

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1097: Futz your sign — 'Clarify' a horoscope

And winning ideas for businesses to squeeze a few more bucks out of us



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers November 6 at 2:43 PM 

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the results of our contest for novel ways for businesses to squeeze a little more out of us)

“Push has definitely grown into shove by now.” (Aries, Nov. 2)

And your butt has grown into a beanbag chair. So yup, it’s time to start that diet.

“You’ll have a lot to share, and so will others.” (Virgo, Nov. 1)

And we hope you don’t mind monitoring your temperature twice a day.

Here’s another thing, besides The Style Invitational, that’s in The Washington Post but you can’t get in the New York Times: the daily horoscope. How *do* Manhattanites plan their days? Hall of Fame Loser Stephen Dudzik suggests we take advantage of this reliable source of essential information by harking back to (a.k.a. ripping off) a 2002 contest that ran in the Canadian paper the Globe & Mail, and gave ink to Steve (“ ‘You are the centre of attention this week.’ Means: They found the bodies”): **This week: Select a line from one of the horoscopes appearing anytime from Nov. 6 through Nov. 17 in the Washington Post’s daily Style or Sunday Arts & Style sections or on washingtonpost.com** (click on Entertainment, then Horoscopes; also available at www.astrology.com; hover on Horoscope and choose Daily Overview or Daily Extended) **and “clarify” it with a translation or extra “information.”**

Winner gets the [Inkin’ Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives . . . money! *Packs* of money! The first pack is a set of *four* erasers depicting various denominations of euro notes — brought directly from Ireland by Loser John O’Byrne when he came to a Loser brunch — and *two* mini-packs of tissues with \$100 bills pictured on them, donated (unused!) by Loser Jeff Contompasis.

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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 in one of our two new Bob Staake designs: either [“The Wit Hit the Fan”](#) or [“Hardly Har-Har.”](#) 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, Nov. 17; results published Dec. 7 (online Dec. 4). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include “Week 1097” 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 Beverley Sharp. 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.

The Style Conversational The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

AND FOR OUR PREMIUM READERS, THE RESULTS OF WEEK 1093

In Week 1093, we asked for inventive ways that businesses could squeeze some more money out of consumers. While the Loser community proved to be imaginative nickel-and-dimers — especially when it came to airlines — it’s hard to compete with reality: Several entrants noted that Michael O’Leary, CEO of the super-budget Ryanair, had not only planned to charge for toilet use, but [also suggested getting rid of the copilot](#): the airline would just train a flight attendant in

landing planes, and “if the pilot has an emergency, he rings the bell, he calls her in.”

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The winner of the Inkin’ Memorial

Did you hear that downtown restaurants will begin charging a “corkage fee” to breast-feeding moms? (Gordon Cobb, Marietta, Ga.)

2nd place and the crocheted cat-butt-motif coasters

Taking a cue from public radio, the Redskins have started weekly “Scoring Drives,” taking pledges and scoring when certain goals are met. It’s . . . not going well. (Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.)

3rd place

It’s never too early to start ensuring that schools will recognize your child’s gifts. And for an appropriate fee, OB/GYNs would guarantee new parents an [Apgar score](#) of 10. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

4th place

The revolving door between Congress and lobbying firms will soon be coin-operated. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

The badder business bureau: honorable mentions

A \$1 “circumnavigation fee” to avoid the greeter at Wal-Mart. (Douglas Raybeck, Amherst, Mass.)

Instead of emergency-room triage, use an auction to determine who gets treated first: “Physicians are standing by right now. Who will be next? Do I see a bid of \$50?” (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

“Would you like to buy ketchup with that?” (Bradley Jamison, South Riding, Va.)

Starbucks could offer customers a choice: room-temperature brew or paying the coffee sleeve surcharge. (Todd DeLap)

Did you hear about the sandwich shop’s new gluten-free option? For an extra charge, they’ll hold the bread. (Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.)

At the Golden Jade Dragon Restaurant, the first chopstick is free. (Todd DeLap)

Put Your Child to Work day at the coal mine. (David Friedman, Arlington, Va.)

When selling Matchbox cars, offer undercoating for just \$3 extra (\$10 value!) (Mark Raffman)

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Sea World has added a restocking fee to the price of each ticket to cover the cost of new trainers. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

Ten cents per minute allows you to select the music played while you’re on hold. (Larry Powers, Falls Church, Va.)

A small-town hair salon: Charges extra for *new* gossip. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

It’s not really true that Verizon will be imposing an erroneous-charge-removal charge. (William

Kennard, Arlington; Kevin Tingley, Vienna, Va.)

“Sewer-usage surcharge” on every box of bran flakes. (Will Cramer, Herndon, Va.)

For an extra dollar you can try on clothes in the dressing room without the camera. (Jennifer Dickey, Silver Spring, Md.)

Trash collectors might solicit tips by leaving a self-addressed envelope in the house’s mailbox, including a sample of that day’s trash to make sure the envelope will be noticed. (Mark Raffman)

A gynecologist: Ladies, we’ll warm up the speculum for just \$25 more! (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

The cable company has raised its rates now that it’s carrying the NSA’s surveillance channel. (Beverley Sharp)

The firm’s office manager announces that the broken shredder won’t be repaired after all, but will be replaced by her Labrador. (David Friedman)

At the beach, they’d like to sell \$5 Day-Glo anti-drowning wristbands that guarantee you an expedited rescue. Those without wristbands must wait for the next available lifeguard. (Kathleen DeBold, Burtonsville, Md.)

If “Jeopardy!” contestants end up in negative numbers, make them pay in cash before they leave the set. (Mark Raffman)

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Businesses know that time is money, and that’s why they’re planning to have the toilet paper in employee bathroom stalls retract into the wall exactly four minutes after the stall is entered. (Mike Gips)

Airline barf bags are now \$3 and you’d better have exact change ready! (Frank Mann,

Washington)

GPS Fee-for-Direction Surcharge: “I am recalculating . . . your toll. Please swipe card, or I’ll keep saying, ‘Yes we’re there yet, but I won’t tell you where.’ ” (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

A manhandling charge for the extra effort it takes to damage your checked bag. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Fan Fail Fee: To encourage cheering, charge ticket holders \$2 each time the home team is scored on. (Kevin Tingley)

Doctors’ offices could add a surcharge if you want a gown that ties in the back. (Roy Ashley)

For an additional \$7.50, the proctologist will give you a souvenir photo of your colonoscopy. (Kathleen DeBold)

When airline toilet charges do get instituted, there can be alternative “personal waste” bags to be used behind a curtain in the back. Passengers must take their bags with them when they leave. (Mark Asquino, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea)

On cruise ships, premium lifeboats could come with plasma TV screens and free WiFi. (John O’Byrne, Dublin)

\$50 constituent service fee: Some new members of Congress, noting that voters elected them to “scale back government,” remind citizens of this when they call the office. (Mark Asquino)

To reduce traffic congestion, charge motorists \$1 for stopping at red lights. (Kevin Tingley)

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Traffic camera film development fee. It’s needed for the rush processing. (Jonathan Hardis, Gaithersburg, Md.)

Delivery of Washington Post Style Invitational Loser magnets will henceforth require a \$5 fee to defray “administrative costs.” (Free for Amazon Prime subscribers!) (Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

AND SOME TRUE STORIES

A 30-day trial of antivirus software with every copy of Windows 8. (Thad Humphries, Washington, Va.)

Airlines blasting the air conditioner and then charging for a blanket. (Jennifer Dickey)

A Seattle movie theater charges a \$3 “amenity fee” not to play commercials before the movie. (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)

A 1991 Wall Street Journal article reported that some companies were targeting special mailings to people who had signed up to be taken off junk mail lists: “ ‘Their mailboxes would be wonderfully uncluttered,’ said one leading data executive.” (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our Bob Staake cartoon caption contest.
See bit.ly/invite1096.

Next week’s results: Tour de Fours XI, or TAXIng Our Brains, our contest to coin a new word that includes the letter block T-A-X-I, in any order but with no other letters between them. See bit.ly/invite1094.

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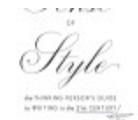
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