



Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1102: Let's get Sirius: Think up a new radio channel

Plus creative product reviews for everyday stuff sold on Amazon.com



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers December 11 at 12:01 PM 

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning Amazon.com product reviews of Week 1098)

Ping-Pong Radio: Play-by-play and analysis of global table tennis tournaments. Station doubles as a metronome if commentary is disabled.

Punxatonic: For a few weeks around Groundhog Day, this station plays such fare as “Me and My Shadow,” “Muskrat Love,” “Here Comes the Sun” and “How Much Wood Could a Woodchuck Chuck?”

Banging and Twanging: The best guitar riffs from 1970s adult films. Perfect background music to accompany your homemade videos.

While broadcast radio stations become more and more similar — it's not that unusual to find three local stations playing “Animals” simultaneously — the satellite and online radioverse finds more and more niches: There's [Silver Fox Wiccan Radio](#), advertising “magickal music, inspiring invocations, guided visualizations, meditations and wyse words.” Or you might enjoy [Spectro Radio](#), “The Happiest Station on Earth. Disney music from the Disney parks, Disney movies, and more.” (We might not.)

But of course, there's always room for something else to “narrowcast”: This week, at the suggestion of 178-time Loser Mike Gips: **Suggest a new radio channel and describe it**, as in Mike's own examples above.

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives an unbelievably fabulous prize, even though it is in no way applicable to any Style Invitational readers: It's the 2015 **Dull Men of Great Britain calendar**, published by the Dull Men's Club. Each month features a Dull Man and his passion: Mr. July, for example, is David Morgan Burford, Traffic Cone Collector; April's Dull Man has a

museum in his home of 20,000 milk bottles. The large wall calendar also highlights such occasions as Rubber Eraser Day (April 15) and the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America Convention (July 22). But that is far from all! Loser Melissa Balmain, who donated this calendar, managed to get it personally inscribed by Leland Carlson, the Dull Men's Club's highest official — the assistant vice president: “Dear Loser: Be happy with second place — it's the second mouse that gets the cheese.”

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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 designed by Bob Staake: 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, Dec. 22; results published Jan. 11 (online Jan. 8). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include “Week 1102” 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 headline for this week's results and the honorable-mentions subhead are both 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.

^ **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 . . .](#)

CONTESTIMONIALS: THE AMAZON PRODUCT REVIEWS OF WEEK 1098

In Week 1098 we invited you to write a creative review of one of five products offered via Amazon.com.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

“Universal Paper Clips 72210”: Universal paper clips, my tentacle! Instead of neatly fastening documents here on Naxerine Bb, these paper clips instantly melted due to the heat of our binary suns. Amazon's delivery service, however, was surprisingly good. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

2nd place and the solar dancing turkey

“Pringles Original, 5.68 Oz.” My Pringles can came in the mail and it worked great as a maraca. But did you know that one side of it comes off fairly easily? The styrofoam-like innards slid out of my maraca and onto the floor, and the dog ate some. Should I call poison control? (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

3rd place

Pringles: They're the best rehydrated potato flake, maltodextrin, disodium inosinate, monosodium glutamate, wheat, corn and potato flour, pressed amalgamate chiplike food product on the market! I'd eat them even if they didn't have “natural flavors.” (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

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4th place

“Westcott 12-Inch Wood Ruler, Beveled Edge”: I have been teaching at Our Lady of Mercy for 45 years and have found this ruler to be quite satisfactory for students who cannot conjugate a Latin verb properly. Also great for “making room for Jesus” during the slow songs at school dances. Five stars! (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

Removed from cart: honorable mentions

UNIVERSAL PAPER CLIPS 72210

The silver color and “smooth finish” are so classy, I’ve been using them as gifts to friends as tie clips, earrings, credit card holders — and my wife has literally been speechless since she laid eyes on her anniversary necklace! (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

This product is hopelessly confusing. I can never tell whether the small inside loop is supposed to go on top, or the big outside end. Where is the instruction manual? (Ken Gallant, Conway, Ark.)

Very disappointed — one star. First, they’re *not* made from paper. Second, they don’t clip anything — not my hedges, not my coupons, not my nose hair. (Bruce Niedt, Cherry Hill, N.J.)

Drop the double-daggered stapler!

Skip the scalding hot-glue gun!

Toss the tacks and tricky tape

That sticks and rips when it's undone!

Dodge the punch and crushing grip

Of lever-action binder clip!

Instead use these, which barely dent,

And keep your work nonviolent. (Peter Shawhan, Silver Spring, Md.)

(See two more odes to paper clips at the bottom of this column.)

WHITE CLOUD COTTON BALLS, JUMBO, 200 CT

They are *really* soft, that's true. But as a die-hard White Cloud customer, I really wish they stuck to their traditional toilet paper. I'm never quite sure the cotton balls are all out. (Mike Gips)

I can't believe you call them durable for everyday cleanup — when I used them to scour my frying pan, they fell apart in a minute! (Edward Gordon, Austin)

I could not be happier! My kids wanted a white Christmas, so I ordered 8 billion bags — and Amazon got them here way early, by drone! — Byron Brown, mayor of Buffalo (Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.)

These make excellent ear swabs: Just glue two of them to each side of a pencil and *voilà!* — Prince Charles (Mike Gips)

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In past winters, my snowmen were always a bit ... lacking. Fortunately, I ordered Jumbo Size White Cloud Cotton Balls early and was ready for the surprise November snowfall. No snow eunuchs this year! (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

[with Pringles] If you want to surprise your little happy campers, try squeezing melted chocolate and a White Cloud cotton ball between two Pringles. They'll never forget their first n'mores!

(Kevin Dopart)

WESTCOTT 12-INCH WOOD RULER, BEVELED EDGE

This ruler is not accurate! I tested it out with my boyfriend (he's an engineer) and he swears it's off by two inches. (Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

It looked good when I bought it, but when I used it to redesign my bathroom, it clearly was defective. My toilet is now hanging over my bathtub, and the hot-water spigot on my sink still doesn't fit right. I was planning on using this ruler to perform surgery on my cat, but now I'm going to have to rethink that. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

THIS RULER IS ReALLY HARD TO USE. DO YOU HAVE ONE WITH LARGER NUMBERS AND MORE SPACE BETWEEN THE MEASUREMENT LINES? (Dave Prevar, Annapolis, Md.)

I am very disappointed in this company's lack of quality control. I only discovered the variance in "twang-tone" *after* I bolted a dozen into my Ruler Twang-a-Phone (patent pending). (Todd DeLap)

You know what they say — Westcott rulers rule, and Eastcott rulers drool! Go Westcott!! And you Eastcott sissies better not get on here and write negative reviews and that means you tyler i know where you live!!!! (Danielle Nowlin)

PRINGLES ORIGINAL 5.68 OZ.

I was pleasantly surprised at how crunchy and fresh-tasting these Original Pringles were, considering that they've been sitting around in a can for the past 47 years (quite a good price for such a rarity, too!). It's a testament to the advances in food processing and preservatives that made Pringles possible. (Scott Berkenblit, Baltimore)

This product is an essential part of my survival kit: I use the empty can to hold water, create animal traps, or make a loud popping noise signaling my presence. The one time I actually

brought some chips with me, they attracted a bear, but I did use the can to store my severed left thumb and an ear. (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

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These arrived all twisted out of shape. The only way to straighten them out was to leave them in a steam room overnight under a brick. Hardly worth the effort. (Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.)

I have never found a use for the chips, but the container makes a perfect gerbil casket. (Robyn Carlson, Keyser, W.Va.)

Whenever you find yourself at a social gathering trying to explain the determinant of the Hessian matrix of a differentiable real function of two variables, nothing beats an Original Pringle as a perfect visual aid. This has proven so popular that I always bring a full 5.68-ounce can. Party on! (Kevin Dopart)

I travel a lot for work and I always stash a can of Pringles in my suitcase — as a precaution against ninjas. In hotel rooms I position the chips on the floor around my bed, and the paraboloid shape leaves enough space between chip and carpet to make a life-saving crunch when stepped on by a murder-minded member of the Iga clan. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

SOLAR DANCING TURKEY

I bought six for Thanksgiving so we could each have our own little turkey. My plan was we'd watch them dance, and then we'd wring their necks, pluck and gut them, and toss them into the fryer. The ad never said THESE TURKEYS ARE PLASTIC. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church, Va.)

I bought this for Grandma to keep her company in the nursing home. It saved us a bunch of visits and she really seemed to enjoy it — the workers said she'd cry out, "Shake it, birdy" and "You're my only friend." When she died we learned she had changed her will and left her estate

to a solar-energy company in Fresno. I probably wouldn't buy one again. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)

There was that company with a solar turkey that didn't even dance, and it got a half-billion-dollar investment from the Energy Department. Buy this one and start writing your grant proposal! (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Dances just like chicken. (Julia Shawhan, Silver Spring, Md.)

TWO MORE ODES TO PAPER CLIPS

The Universal paper clips, a hundred to a box,
Are always at my fingertips; they're great for picking locks.
They also come in handy when I scratch a lotto ticket,
Or hang a picture, dig a booger, shish-kebab a cricket.
Their uses run the gamut, and those final two are crude,
So in case you've been offended, please allow me to conclude
With how well they mark the pages in a book of Baptist psalmody
And offer up a bit of snark for Amazon.comedy. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

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Once atop my desktop clutter, all my papers chanced to flutter,
Flapping, flying, swooshing, swishing, scattered on my office floor,
Then I, in my frantic fretting, pawing through the mess upsetting,
Spied a box of something tucked away inside my desktop drawer —
Universal paper clips? I think I know what these are for. . .
Messy papers? Nevermore! (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our yearly retrospective contest. See bit.ly/invite1101.

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