



The Washington Post

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1105: A lit obit of fun — write a poem for the late of 2014

And the winners of our contest to enter any of the year's previous contests



In memory of Frank Jobe, who pioneered “Tommy John” surgery on pitchers’ arms. This week we present the

annual obit-poem contest. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers December 31, 2014  [Follow @PatMyersTWP](#)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the smorgasbord of results in our yearly retrospective contest, Week 1101.)

***Orthopedic surgeon Frank Jobe (1925-2014),
who pioneered reconstructive surgery for baseball pitchers***

**A doctor often earns his fame
When a cure (or illness) gets his name.
But one poor doc struck out upon
The mended arm of Tommy John.
Still on he sliced, in his scrubs and robe
All in the name of the patients of Jobe.**

As surely as life goeth to death, and one year cycleth on to the next, so doth the Invite bring forth its obit-poem contest, a.k.a. Dead Letters. This week: **Write a humorous poem of no longer than eight lines about someone who died in 2014**, as in the example above by Staff Elegist-in-Doggerel Gene Weingarten. There are lots of lists online of the newly departed; just Google “notable deaths 2014.” There’s an art to being clever without being vicious; you don’t get to hope or predict that the person is going to burn in Hell, for example, because he’s from the Other Party. Your poem isn’t required to rhyme, but we’ve found that the year’s cleverest poems almost always do.

Winner gets the [Inkin’ Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a handsome [ceramic salt-and-pepper set in the shape of outhouses](#), with little green roofs. And they are helpfully labeled “Full of P” and “Full of S.”
Donated by Loser Elden Carnahan.

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, Jan. 12; results published Feb. 1 (online Jan. 29). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include “Week 1105” 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 is by Brendan Beary; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Kevin Doport. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

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^ **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 . . .](#)

JEST ONE MORE TIME: THE RESULTS OF WEEK 1101, OUR ANNUAL RETROSPECTIVE CONTEST

For Week 1101, as we do every winter, we invited readers to enter, or reenter, any of the past year’s contests, with the option of using more recent subject matter. To the Empress’s total lack

of surprise, she received far too much great stuff to run this week, an embarrassment of riches. She'll be happy to be thus embarrassed regularly. Do take a few minutes to marvel over the long-form parodies and poems at the end.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

From Week 1051: Create an anagram — *a text with the letters rearranged* — *of some text referring to something in the news:*

Original: “ ‘A word to the wise ain't necessary — it's the stupid ones that need the advice.’ — Bill Cosby”

Anagrams to: A word to the ladies, evident by nasty tactics he uses, is: Don't be alone with this creep. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

2nd place and the woman-and-sniffing-dog salt-and-pepper shakers:

Week 1076, double dactyls:

Narrative-parrotive,

S. Rubin Erdely

Charged UVA with some

Odious acts.

Too bad the whole thing proved

Unverifiable:

Seems that a Rolling Stone

Gathers no facts. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

3rd place

Week 1085, items for particular gift shops:

T-shirt at the NIH gift shop: “My Doctor Went to West Africa and I'm Pretty Sure All I Got From Him Was This Lousy T-Shirt.” (Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park, Md.)

4th place

Week 1067, alter a quote slightly and attribute it to someone else:

“Sonny, little chance of reign.” Queen Elizabeth, to Prince Charles. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Left-unders: honorable mentions

Week 1053, Questionable Journalism: *Take a sentence from The Post and make up a question that the sentence could answer:*

Sentence in The Post: “It’s like taking a brain circuit that controls your ability to learn how to walk and hooking it up to your vocal muscles.”

Q. How do pundits describe Joe Biden’s speaking style? (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

A. You’re having an enforced “social occasion.”

Q. What term does Dick Cheney prefer instead of “rectal feeding”? (Frank Osen)

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Week 1055, neologisms formed by adding or substituting K:

Gerald Fork: You’re not sure why, but the darn thing keeps falling on the floor. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

Pro bonko: Describing a freebie given by a lady of the evening. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.; Roy Ashley, Washington)

Week 1057, bogus sports trivia:

Since 2016 is a leap year, the Rio de Janeiro Summer Olympic Games have been moved to 2017.
(Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

During World War II, Harvard College looked the other way while football players were allowed to take either Latin or Greek, instead of having to take both. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Week 1062, poems on the news:

You're a guest of Uncle Sam and CIA!

We'll make sure that you have water every day!

And, perchance, if you are needing

Some encouragement with feeding,

Rest assured we'll be behind you all the way. (Nan Reiner)

Week 1058, good/bad/ugly:

Good: Your flight arrives early!

Bad: The attendant doesn't say a cheerful "bye-bye!" at the door.

Ugly: You break your ankle on the emergency slide. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Week 1065, alter an "x-and-y" phrase:

The Sorrow and the Putty: All that's left of many well-intentioned home repair projects. (Frank Osen)

Thee and Crumpets: An English church breakfast. An Irish church breakfast: Green Eggs and Hymn. (Christopher Lamora, Los Angeles)

Burger and flies: What to get when your buddy says, "Let's get some grub." (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Week 1051, anagrams:

"Democrats are still wobbly after the punch they took in November"

anagrams to: " 'Knee Obama in the crotch' vote trends up well for the lobbyist army." (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

This whole thing ...

In fourteen hundred ninety-two
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.
He had three ships and left from Spain;
He sailed through sunshine, wind and rain.
He sailed by night; he sailed by day;
He used the stars to find his way.

Anagrams to this whole thing:

(Raged slap:)

In nineteen hundred ninety-nine
Dan Snyder thought, “Yes, this is fine
To buy a club with such a name.”
(His tribe said there’s no R-word shame.)
This hothead badly had us “hail!”
Offended us — we hope he’ll fail. ...(Sued) (Kevin Dopart)

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Week 1064, if a moment of history had changed:

If English colonists had cultivated marijuana, then today there would be no movement anywhere to legalize tobacco* (*except by the U.S. Congress, which would insist that it be legal in the District of Columbia). (Mark Raffman)

Week 1054, obit poems:

“The Fast and the Furious” actor Paul Walker:

He met his end while in a car,
Though he was not the driver,
Had he but lived up to his name
Perhaps he’d be aliver. (Danielle Nowlin)

Week 1061, crossword words and clues *for a partially filled-in grid:*

SW- - DL - AN: SWORDLEAN: To prepare to take the blame, as in “Uh-oh, looks like his chief of staff had better swordlean.” (David Ballard, Reston, Va.)

WA - R - - - EA - - - : WALRUS HEARSE: Paul-bearer. (Kevin Dopart)

Week 1059, add words in parentheses to a song title:

“(Isn’t It Redundant to Say) The Sound of Music” (John Shea, Philadelphia)

“(I Want to Read Joe Klein’s Columns Online, but) Time Won’t Let Me” (Roy Ashley)

Week 1048, Ask Backwards: *we give a phrase and you write a question:*

A. The Two and a Half Wise Men

Q. Why is a gingerbread creche a bad idea? (Kevin Dopart)

The Two and a Half Wise Men

What would you call the Redskins’ front office if you added two and a half wise men? (Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

The Wicked Witch of the Waist

Who was the sworn enemy of Oz — and of Lbs? (Steve Honley, Washington)

Week 1084, limericks *featuring words beginning with fi- through fo-:*

“With foreplay, she’ll always want more!”

I’d heard that so often before . . .

But I didn’t hear right,

And I wasted the night

By trying to have sex on the floor. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

A foreigner here on vacation

Asked Doc to perform a castration.

But when he realized

That he meant “circumcised,”

'Twas too late — they were lost in translation. (Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

Week 1067, change one letter in a quote:

“Shall I part my hair behind?” — T.S. Eliot

“Shall I part my hairy behind?” — Jim Carrey (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

Week 1056, new weather terms:

Ocr-ice: Black slippery patches that you don't notice until you're airborne. (David Friedman, Arlington)

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Week 1066, “breed” two horses on a list of the year's Triple Crown nominees, and name the “foal”:

Scotland x Twenty Percent = Plaid the Fifth (Barry Koch)

Hoppertunity x Deceived = Kermit the Fraud (Jeff Contompasis)

Charge Now x Undertaker = Layaway (Jeff Contompasis)

Guggenheim x Undertaker = The Wright Stiff (Rob Huffman)

All Tied Up x Almost Famous = Larry Houdini (Roger Dalrymple, Fredericksburg, Va.)

So Lonesome x Wildcat Red = Onan O'Brien (Danielle Nowlin)

Week 1081, stupid questions for Yahoo Answers:

Why is Sunday considered the first day of the week when Saturday always happens a day earlier? (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

At airports, do they use actual dentists to perform cavity searches? (Robert Schechter)

Week 1074, describe a stage or movie musical with a parody of a song from another musical:

Here is “Fiddler on the Roof” summed up to the tune of “Oklahoma!” — followed by a song about “Oklahoma!” to “Anatevka” from “Fiddler”!

“Fiddler” to “Oklahoma!” ([clip of Nan Reiner singing her parody](#))

Aaaah-natevka, where the candles burn each Friday night,
And we love Shabbat, though we ain’t got lots of dough to celebrate it right.
Aaaah-natevka, where the Cossacks gallop all around;
With the czar’s pogrom, at night they’ll come, and they’ll burn our houses to the ground.
Such tsuris our lives won’t destroy,
But I’ll plotz if my girl weds a goy!
And so I pray... tradition we’ll obey... because you may be dreck, but you’re mine, Anatevka.
Anatevka – Oy, vey! Can’t stay! Must go away! Anatevka! Oy, vey!

“Oklahoma!” to “Anatevka”

([Nan singing](#))

Oklahoma, Oklahoma, corn-is-high-as-yer-eye Oklahoma,
Where roamin’ dogies all get kitched.
Oklahoma, Oklahoma, guess-I-shall-chase-a-gal Oklahoma,
They’re all jest waitin’ to git hitched.
Laurey lassos Curly, so the story ends.
Farmin’ folk and cowboys will be friends – in Oklahoma.
Yippee-ay for Oklahoma: Giddy-up, clippy-clop Oklahoma.,
Durn territory – now durn state! – of mine.

**“The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas,”
to “Chim-Chim-Cher-ee” from “Mary Poppins”**

Pim-pimpany pim-pimpany pim-pimperee,
A Texan will buy what he can’t get for free.
Pim-pimpany pim-pimpany pimp-pimp-eroo,

So why can't a girl make a dollar or two?
She'll blow him a kiss and there's more that she'll do ...

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When you're in Texas and want "company,"
A fine little brothel is where you should be;
Ladies with feminine charms amply blessed,
For messing with Texans is what they do best.

Pim-pimpany pim-pimpany pimp-pimp-peree,
If you want to get lucky, there's just a small fee.
Pim-pimany pimp-pimpany pimp-pimp-peroo
Come on, Mr. Lone Star, and stand straight and true.
Are things bigger in Texas, or is it just you? (Mark Raffman)

“Peter Pan” to “Defying Gravity” from “Wicked” (start clip at 1:20)

London is gray and dreary, nothing but gloom and woe.
I'll bring you to a place where children never have to grow!
Think something happy, Wendy; we're taking a flying leap!
(Too bad it's only cables — theater budget's cheap.)

And see how I'm defying puberty;
You, too, can try defying puberty
While we're in Never Never Land.
(Look at us soar through the sky,
You're taking me higher and higher!)

I'm staying young forever; I'll never lose a step.
We'll battle Captain Hook (who looks a bit like Johnny Depp).
But now the fairy's dying; Even though I'm bawling loud,
I know she'll live, because there's children in the crowd....

Who see how I'm defying puberty.
I wish you'd try defying puberty,
And stay in Neverland.

(skip to 4:35)

So if you'd care to join me, make sure your hair's not gray,
For if you've filled your figure, "fairy dust" will get you put away.
But if you've got a daughter, then she can walk my trail!
Farewell, dear Wendy; tell the audience the tale...

About how I am defying puberty.
I'll say goodbye, defying puberty,
Because I'll stay in Neverland.
And no one in a nurse's dress
Will dabble, tinker, fix, or mess
With my pituitary gland! (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

And one more obit poem from Week 1054:

David Frost

Once upon an evening dreary, while I sat there, feeling weary,
With my TV dinner growing cold upon my shaky tray,
Suddenly, upon the screen there were two men whom I had seen:
A Brit and an American both staring in a serious way.
I sat there, thinking, "What a day!"

A president and interviewer, the latter known, perhaps, by fewer,
But nonetheless a person whom the viewers all had learned to trust.
I set upon my pepper steak and couldn't take a bathroom break:
Transfixed was I by what I heard and saw. To sit there was a must.
And Nixon looking so nonplussed.

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As o'er the course of several hours, engendering from Nixon glowers,
That dedicated journalist kept up his questions, damn the cost.
It shouldn't be a mystery why those interviews made history:
Tenacity was emblematic of the late, great David Frost. (Christopher Lamora)

And Last: Week 1053, Questionable Journalism:

A. Between them, they clock between 110 and 120 hours a week on average.

Q: How many hours do Kevin Dopart and Frank Osen waste writing Style Invitational entries?
(John O'Byrne, Dublin)

Still running — deadline Monday: Our contest to compare two entities with the same three-letter abbreviation: See bit.ly/invite1104.

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