



The Washington Post

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1113: It's birthday parody time! Plus fake D.C. trivia.



Give Fred Dawson (not actual size) or anyone else a different birthday song or a song for another occasion in this week's parody contest. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers February 26 

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning fake facts about Washington from Week 1109.)

Sixty-four-time Loser Fred Dawson celebrated his 70th birthday last Sunday. Fred has famously self-deprecating humor; once he sent the Invite a photo called "[Looking Down Toward My Feet](#)," which showed no feet but instead an expansive view of Fred's expansive middle. (It won the contest "Humiliate Yourself for Ink.") And so the Empress wasn't surprised when he told her he didn't want "Happy Birthday" sung to him at his party, but instead had written a show tune parody: "I am sixty-nine, going on seventy, starting to sound a wheeze/ There is no dodging, soon I'll be codging/ But first I should learn to geeze . . ."

Fred also knows bad art when he sees it — he famously donated to the Invite a portrait he painted that, in the early days of Google, showed up at the top of a search on "[world's ugliest painting](#)" — and so he realizes that someone else in the Loser Community just might come up with a slightly better parody than his. **This week: Write a song celebrating someone's birthday or other personal occasion (rather than, say, a holiday), set to a familiar tune.** As in all our parody contests, songs that run in the print paper tend to be very well-known melodies, while ones that run just online can link to a clip of the tune in question. Contrary to her usual policy, the Empress won't complain if an entry this week is credited to two people; still, she's just sending out one prize for it (does she look as if she's made of magnets?).

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the latest in our series of incongruous snow domes; this one's a souvenir of that Alpine attraction New Orleans, [complete with a crawfish](#) that doubles as a ring toss game: shake the dome until the little ring lands on a little snowy orange pincer. Donated by Queen of the Snow Domes Cheryl Davis.

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



The Big Cheesy: A souvenir from the Alpine climes of New Orleans, with a ring toss thrown in. This week's second prize. (Pat Myers/The Washington Post)

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 night, March 9; results published March 29 (online March 26). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include “Week 1113” 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 Chris Doyle; the

honorable-mentions subhead is by Jeff Contompasis. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. “Like” the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook 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.

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[And the winners of the Style Invitational from four weeks ago . . .](#)

MR. MYTH GOES TO WASHINGTON: THE D.C. FICTOIDS FROM WEEK 1109

In Week 1109 we asked for bogus trivia about Washington and its environs; several people hastened to offer the fake fact that Washington has a football team. And I'm happy that my ban on "hot air" jokes about politicians resulted in only two entries making "hot air" jokes about politicians. If you're new to the D.C. area and don't get some of the references below, click on the links within the entries.

4th place:

Michelle Obama collects USDA subsidies for not growing wheat in the White House garden. (Thad Humphries, Washington, Va.)

3rd place:

The [headquarters of the U.S. Department of Education](#) was designed to resemble a large, nondescript office building. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)



Belly laughs: Fred Dawson's self-portrait "Looking Down Toward My Feet," winner of a 2006 contest to "humiliate yourself for ink." Happy 70th, Fred.

2nd place and two trivia books:

At the oddly named [D.C. State Fair](#), the Congressional Budget Office sponsors the Guess Your Height and Weight Within an Order of Magnitude Booth. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

During an attempt to attack Washington in July 1862, Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson became so ensnared in "an infernal circle of carriages and waggons surrounding the city. . . that sits forever unmoving" that

he gave up and turned back toward Richmond. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

DMVetoed: honorable mentions

After Nixon visited China in 1972, the Smithsonian removed the exhibit of the panda that Teddy Roosevelt had killed in 1892 with a big stick. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

The D.C. flag has three red stars over two red bars, symbolizing city's two bars for every three people. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

D.C.'s transit system was originally the Washington-Harbor Area Train Service and Metropolitan Transit Authority, but it was felt that the acronym WHATSAMATA was just asking for it. (Frank Osen)

The Marine Corps Marathon course follows the typical cab route from the Arlington Cemetery Metro stop to the Iwo Jima Memorial. (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.; those are the marathon's start and finish points)

.From 1751 to 1871, Georgetown residents prevented any bridges from being built over Rock Creek to prevent ruffians from the West End from visiting. (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

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The Capitol dome is named after Rotunda, the Roman goddess of pork. (Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park, Md.)

President Ford always declined invitations to attend shows at the Lincoln Theatre. (Kristen Rahman, Silver Spring, Md.)

The Secret Service was given responsibility for both presidential protection and financial crimes because it was more efficient that way with [Warren Harding](#) as president. (Mike Gips)

Young George Washington did not chop down his father's favorite cherry tree, as popularly believed. He TP'ed it. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

The Old Executive Office Building was recently expanded to provide space for both young and middle-aged executives. (George-Ann Rosenberg, Washington)

Ironically, at Verizon Center you cannot hear me now. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

If you stand atop the DAR Building with binoculars and look toward the White House, you are likely to learn more about snipers than you need to know. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

When specialists at the National Archives recently inspected the Declaration of Independence, infrared light revealed the partially obscured signature of a hitherto unknown Founding Father named Brian Williams. (Chris Doyle)

To save money, D.C. speed cameras are programmed to capture only two-digit speeds,. So if you go faster than 100 mph in the District, you can't get a ticket. (Dion Black, Washington)

The first athletic scholarship given by Georgetown University was to basketball player Joe Saxa of [La Jolla, Calif.](#) (Kevin Dopart)

In August 1965, D.C. cabdriver Mel Smith stopped for a pedestrian in a crosswalk. (Peter Jenkins, Bethesda, Md.)

Along with setting up a \$250,000 ["We DC" lounge](#) at Austin's South by Southwest festival, the Bowser administration has also authorized a second venue, "We Wasting Your Money." (Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

The Potomac River changes course every four to eight years, which is confusing to the native species, except for the bottom-feeders. (George-Ann Rosenberg)

Stand outside exactly 25 feet from a corner of the Pentagon, at dawn on the winter solstice, and you will discover your butt has frozen. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

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The Beatles' 1964 American tour was supposed to open in New York — until Beatlemaniac J. Edgar Hoover made a few calls. (Rachel Bernhardt, Silver Spring, Md.)

In 1774 the Maryland tobacco planter John Marva became the first delegate from the Eastern Shore to serve in the Continental Congress. Soon afterward, the land containing his plantation was named the Del.Marva Peninsula. (James Foster, Silver Spring, Md.)

Hundreds of people lost their lives during the construction of the Washington Monument, though none of them were on the site at the time. (George-Ann Rosenberg)

The Beltway expands about two inches every five years. (Art Grinath; Jon Graft, Centreville, Va.)

The National Space Museum became the National Air and Space Museum so that visitors could breathe. (John Kammer, South Riding, Va.)

If you rearrange the letters in the inscription on the Jefferson Memorial dome -- “I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man” — it will reveal a secret note Thomas Jefferson penned: “Oft have I sworn to love and honor forever that friend in fate — my pretty, young inamorata, Sally Hemings.” (Chris Doyle)

Before becoming being declared a “nuclear-free zone” in 1983, the town of Takoma Park, Md., had more than 50 missile silos hidden in various storm sewers and dumpsters. (Art Grinath)

The UFO that is frequently seen hovering over the Capitol building is actually Diogenes, [still looking](#) after all these years. (Ted Remington, Marion, N.C.)

The Air Traffic Control Association refers to the airport across the Potomac as [He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named](#) National Airport. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Despite the city's insatiable appetite for ticket revenue, a film buff on the D.C. Council slipped a little-known provision into the traffic law books: If a speed camera catches a [DeLorean going exactly 88 mph](#), the infraction is waived. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

ACNY, a New York rock band named for founders Angus and Malcolm "Colm" Young, met with little success for some reason, but finally reached stardom after the Youngs moved to Washington and changed the band's name to AC/DC. (Mark Richardson, Takoma Park, Md.)

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The D.C. Council has begun testing mule-drawn barges on the C&O Canal as a rapid-transit alternative to M Street traffic. (Michael Greene, Richmond, Va.)

The Washington Nationals have never revealed which nation. (Bruce Alter)

If you look closely at the statue of Franklin Roosevelt with Fala at the FDR Memorial, you will notice a small plastic bag peeking out of the president's pocket. (Michael Greene, Richmond, Va.)

The Washington Monument originally was landscaped with two round topiaries at the base. (Art Grinath)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our "SHARP" neologism contest. See bit.ly/invite1112.

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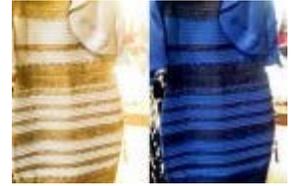
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