

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1135: The meter's running: What in life needs a timer?

Plus the winning ideas for surplus stuff like 8-foot tires and bowling alley wood

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ATM, lady, does not stand for All the Time is Mine. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers July 30

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winners of our contest for ideas for repurposing surplus industrial materials)

Limit: 60 seconds or one transaction at the ATM, whichever is shorter.

Penalty: Your account and PIN get uploaded to hackerhangout.com.

Limit: 30 seconds to pay up in the cafeteria line.

Penalty: You have to sit for five minutes with your meal in front of you, but not eat.

Washingtonians might not be as frenetic and impatient as New Yorkers, but for a bunch of bureaucrats, we don't have much patience for those who carry on their lives at a languid, la-di-da pace — especially when they're in front of us in the line at the post office, and it doesn't seem to occur to them that at the end of the transaction, they are expected to produce some sort of payment for the shipment of the package they'd failed to wrap properly in the first place; that must explain why they have not, in the previous many minutes, done some research into which little hidey-hole of their multi-pocket handbag is holding their collection of loose coins and shrink-folded \$1 bills. Loser Mike Gips of Bethesda (by way of New York) suggests this week's contest: **Suggest actions in daily life that should require a time limit — maximum or minimum — and come up with a an appropriate penalty for running over (or under)**, as in the examples above. The entries don't have to be written in as short a form as these, but don't write more than a short paragraph.



Whacks eloquent: 254-time Loser Nan Reiner with this week's second prize before donating it; various Invitationalana fills the background. (Selfie by Nan Reiner)

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place — perhaps apropos of this week's contest — receives a top-of-the-line [inflatable head-hatchet](#), complete with attached headband and decorated in a cartoony splashing-blood motif. Donated by Loser Nan Reiner. The Empress [primly donned](#) this hatchet in a restaurant at a Loser brunch; late arrivals had no trouble finding the Style Invitational table.

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 night, Aug. 10; results published Aug. 30 (online Aug. 27). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1135" 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 Tom Witte; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jeff Shirley. 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.

[And the winners of the The Style Invitational contest posted four weeks ago . . .](#)

LAUGHEDOVERS: RECYCLING IDEAS FROM WEEK 1135

In Week 1131 we listed some items available from RepurposedMaterialsInc.com — everything from mineral oil to Jersey barriers to a

hockey rink — and asked for some imaginative ideas for using them singly or in combination. Many people suggested using the synthetic turf to accompany that non-crabmeat for an all-fake “surf and turf.”

4th place:

100-foot diameter military cargo parachutes: Your Mama can use one as a skirt. Well, more of a miniskirt. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

3rd place:

Purple linen napkins: Sew 50 of them together to make a Baltimore Ravens uniform. Or sew two together to make a Baltimore Ravens cheerleader uniform. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

2nd place

and the [ceramic outhouse “sculpture”](#):

Plastic ballot boxes: To keep illegal immigrants far away from Donald Trump, use the plastic ballot boxes to build a thick wall around him. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

And the winner of the Inkin’ Memorial:

10-milliliter glass vials: Want to see how clever squirrels really are? Make a glass harp — that set of glasses that makes music when you put water in the glasses and rub the edges — and set it up in front of a screen with a walnut behind it. When the squirrel learns to play “Anticipation,” the screen opens and it gets the nut — and you’ll get a zillion views on Instagram. You do have to be patient; it took more than 10 minutes for the ones in my yard to solve it. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Re(f)used: honorable mentions

Boardwalk boards: Surprise the wife and cover your bedroom ceiling with boardwalk boards, throw some sand and seaweed on the bed and relive some [Drifters magic](#). (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

Bowling alley wood: Great for kitchen countertops and tables — especially when paired with repurposed pinsetters that automatically serve and clear away your meals. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Bowling alley wood: Roof your house with it: Based on my experience, anything that lands on it will quickly end up in the gutter. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.; Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Carpet tiles: Perfect vehicles for very small genies. (Beverley Sharp)

Carpet tiles: Install them on a brick patio in the D.C. area and you’ll quickly have a mushroom farm growing out of the carpet just a step away from your kitchen door. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Carpet tiles: To avoid the expense of carpeting *and* to make a fashion statement, glue carpet tiles to all your shoes. (Jeff Shirley)

Carpet tiles: Make a home exfoliation spa! 1. Cover the kid’s slide in the backyard with carpet tiles. 2. Disrobe. 3. Slide down four times: front, back, left, right. 4. Did we forget to recommend a privacy screen? (For extra exfoliation, substitute the **asphalt shingles**.) (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park, Md.; Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Escalator handrails: They’ll fit perfectly as handrails for Metro’s stairs. (Ben Aronin; Matt Monitto)

Escalator handrails: Advertise a handrail as the world’s largest piece of licorice, and charge skeptics to take a bite because really, who could tell? (Jeff Shirley)

Concrete barriers and planters: Always dreamed of living in a building as warm and welcoming as the [HHS headquarters](#)? Some of

these will give you that same friendly ambiance! (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

A plastic hockey rink: How many times have you said, “Let’s play plastic hockey!” and you had no rink? (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)

Jersey barriers: Okay, Christie’s contained. Now we need two dozen other state barriers. (Ellen Ryan, Rockville, Md.)

Purple linen napkins: Start a blog called Build the [Purple Line](#) Now! Ask for supporters to buy your “Purple Line Flags” and display them on trees and utility poles in their neighborhoods. Then buy another truckload, paint a red slash on each napkin, and start a blog called No Purple Line in My Backyard! (Joseph Mat Schech, Colesville, Md.)

Purple linen napkins: Finally I can make curtains to match my Chivas Regal bag duvet cover! (Barbara Turner)

Purple linen napkins: A new line of “Mankinis by Prince.” (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.; Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Plastic pallets: The Republican National Committee should stock up now — disposable platforms will be essential after the primaries. (Kevin Dopart)

Fire hose and mineral oil: Elephants may still be vulnerable to poachers and loss of habitat, but with enough of these, you can cross constipation off their list of worries. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Particle board: States with awful health-care systems can use them to build cheap coffins; they can even call the boards “death panels.” (Kevin Dopart)

Ski lift cable: Research proves that children who have ski lift cable running directly from bed to bus stop have fewer absences and tardies. (Rob Huffman)

10-ml vials: Fill them with Coke, then advertise “97 percent less high-fructose corn syrup compared to our regular can of Coke!” (Joseph Mat Schech)

8-foot-diameter tires: Cruise lines need new life rings for their American passengers, especially on the final days of the cruise. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Combination of items: Use the carpet tiles on the walls to upgrade the soundproofing of your rumpus room. Use the climbing rope, rubber sheets and mineral oil to upgrade your rumpus. (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Odor-eater fabric: Instead of parchment when publishing “The Best of The Style Invitational: Premium Collector’s Edition” . . . (Kevin Dopart)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 3: Our “air quotes” wordplay contest. See bit.ly/invite1134.

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