

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1372: Trash talk, 1880-style

+ Add to list

Mock someone in a ‘Balliol rhyme.’ Plus winning captions for Bob Staake cartoons.



Jan had reached an age where she just wished her periods would go away.
Sam Mertens, winner of Style Invitational Week 1368

This week's winning caption. See other inking captions for this cartoon and three others below. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers

Feb. 20, 2020 at 9:32 a.m. EST

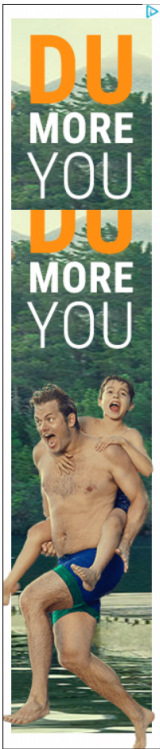
(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning cartoon captions)

They say of me, the Awesome Trump,
The Constitution's what I'll dump.
I'm sure there'll be no lasting harm in
Storing it beside the Charmin.

This week's contest was suggested by Longtime Loser Matt Monitto, who told the Empress about a form of doggerel called [Balliol rhyme](#), named for the Oxford college where seven campus cutups in 1880 published “[The Masque of B-II – I](#),” a set of 40 trash-talking quatrains about various academics and politicians, including the head of the school, Benjamin Jowett:

*First come I. My name is J-W-TT.
There's no knowledge but I know it.
I am Master of this College,
What I don't know isn't knowledge.*

Balliol authorities seemed not to find this amusing, even with the coy little hyphens. We, however, see 2020 potential. **This week: Write a quatrain or — heck — two of Balliol rhyme about some person. The rough rules:**

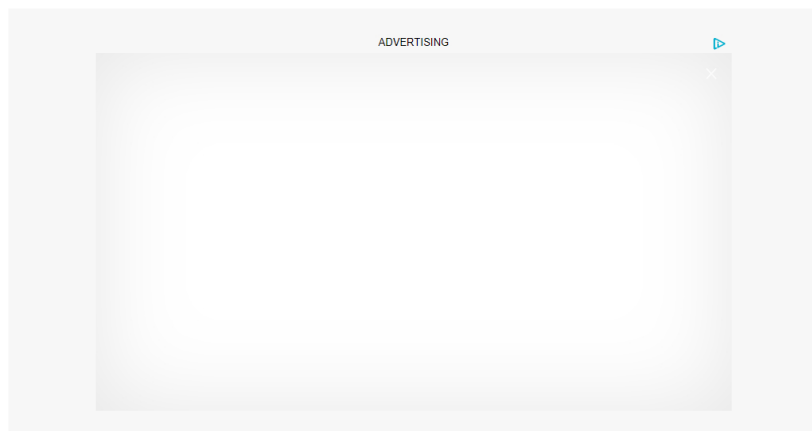


Most Read Arts & Entertainment

- 1
- Perspective

Watching ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ with 18,000 teenagers was one of the most profound theater experiences of my career





Each verse is four short lines, rhyming AA/BB, with four accented syllables in each line, as in Matt's example above as well as the original. They're in first person, in the voice of the person being mocked. Most use the name of the person in Line 1, but others use other lines — and you may omit the name entirely and instead put it in a title. We probably won't use the hyphens.

Submit up to a total of 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1372 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, March 2; results will appear March 22 in print, March 19 online.

Winner gets the [Lose Cannon](#), our Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a genuine **Bodily Fluid Clean-Up Kit**, a box including a disposable apron, mask, gloves and booties, along with a scoop and scraper, absorbent stuff, and various wipes and bags. I'm not going to say that all this is *required* when you write some really bad-taste entries that you need to get rid of immediately, but could it hurt? Donated by Registered Nurse Loser Marleen May.







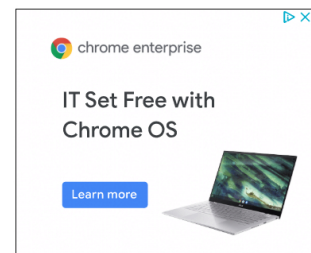
Other runners-up win their choice of our [“For Best Results, Pour Into Top End” Loser Mugs](#) or our [“Whole Fools”](#) Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, [“Too-Weak Notice”](#) or [“Certificate of \(de\) Merit.”](#) First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline “4 Toon Kookies” is by Jon Gearhart. 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; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column, published late Thursday afternoon, reviews each new contest and set of results. Check it out at wapo.st/conv1372.

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



- 2 Perspective**
Don't be afraid to let children read graphic novels. They're real books. 
- 3 Review**
Ten books to read in March 
- 4 Review**
Coronavirus feels like something out of a sci-fi novel. Here's how writers have imagined similar scenarios. 
- 5 Review**
In 'Disfigured,' a writer explores the damaging ways fairy tales shape our view of the world — and ourselves 

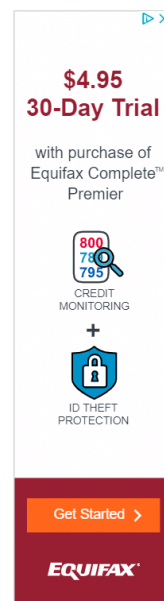


Read These Comments newsletter

The best comments and conversations at The Washington Post, delivered every Friday. Join the conversation.

[Sign up](#)

By signing up you agree to our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)



Podcast

Post Reports

The Washington Post's daily podcast: unparalleled reports, expert insight, clear analysis. For your ears.

Add to [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#)





Four toon kookies: Cartoon captions from Week 1368

[Week 1368](#) was yet another chance to make some sense, or at least semi-sense, out of cartoonist Bob Staake's inspired nonsense with captions for four pictures. Lots of people went for plays on "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs" for Picture A; timeshare salesmanship for Picture C; and Emperors' New Clothes for Picture D.

Special big-deal note! With his four blots of ink in last week's results, (**Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.**) reached the 500-ink mark to become the 14th member of the Style Invitational Hall of Fame, according to [the standings](#) meticulously kept by Loser Elden Carnahan at nrars.org. The FDIC lawyer/Ultimate player/improv comedian/choir singer/runner/dad of two younguns got his first couple of inks in 2012, but almost all the rest come from just the past few years; it's a rare week when his name doesn't show up at least twice in the Invite — including 14 wins and 40 runners-up. Read more about Duncan, including a sample of his favorite entries, in this week's Style Conversational at wapo.st/invite1372.



PICTURE A

The winner of the Lose Cannon: Jan had reached an age where she just wished her periods would go away. (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)



At least King Kong was wearing his boxers when he backed up to Matilda's window. (*Jack McCombs, Fairfax, Va.*)

The smoke billowing from upstairs didn't upset Dora half as much as seeing that her husband had hung the curtains outside. (*Barbara Turner, Takoma Park, Md.*)

It was the third time this month that the elusive "HH" had tagged her windows. (*Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.*)

As she was getting on in years, Gertrude suspected that she might have gone dotty. (*Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

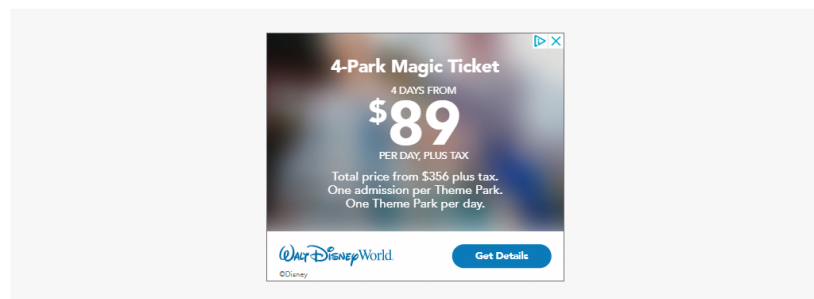
only the freshest
milk and cream.



Whenever Shirley wore her T-Bone Steak Perfume, all the dogs in the neighborhood pressed their noses to the window. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

Edna spends another sleepless night in dread of the Purple-People Eater. (*Kathleen Delano, Arlington, Va., a First Offender*)

It wasn't what she imagined it would be. But as evening fell, Cruella DeVil settled in for her first night in hell. (*Hildy Zampella, Alexandria, Va.*)



So it was true, Marge realized: The garden club *had* blackballed her. (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

Life inside a giant colander was usually tranquil. But Fran was always on alert for the horror of another Pasta Night. (*Sam Mertens*)

After Connie rubbed her little lamp and made a wish to get ink, she realized she should have specified: “ ... in the Style Invitational.” (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)



PICTURE B

Oh dear, I must have mixed up the grandbaby with the recycling. Nancy will be so upset.” (*Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.*)

“Harold, I think our ride to hell is here.” (*John Kupiec, Fairfax; Bird Waring*)

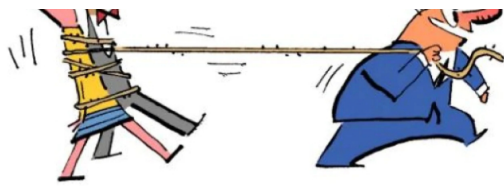
“Damn, I knew it was a mistake to put all our eggs in there.” (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

[Ralph Ellison's](#) origin story is not widely known. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

“Hmm, the basket's empty. Maybe it's a lostling.” (*Bruce Niedt, Cherry Hill, N.J.*)

“Hey, I left a red ball labeled ‘B’ in that basket, and now it's gone.” (*Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.*)





PICTURE C

AD

Second place and the card game Fart! The thankless job of the congressional whip is supplemented high on the Hill by the lonely voteherd. (*Jeff Contompasis*)

Third place: “She said she wanted to see other people, so I’m bringing her you guys.” (*Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.*)

“HOV lane, here I come!” (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

“No one leaves this dealership before I go a mile to put a smile on your face!” (*Martin Bancroft*)

“Yep, this is how we handle shoplifters here on Rodeo Drive.” (*Larry Yungk, Wyoming, Ohio*)

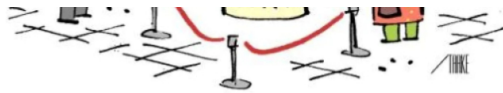
Following the impeachment, Mitt and Susan are forced to practice goose-stepping as part of their re-indoctrination. (*Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.*)

Faced with photographic evidence, Weinstein’s lawyers argued that the couple begged him to give them a rope massage. (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

“All right, you two, let’s give those Date Lab readers a happy ending, okay?” (*Kerry Humphrey, Arlington, Va.*)

“I knew you’d get in trouble for stealing Art Garfunkel’s toupee.” (*Barbara Turner*)





PICTURE D

Fourth place: The Last Pillar of Democracy was the final exhibit at the Newseum.
(Stephen Dudzik; Ellen Ryan, Rockville, Md.)

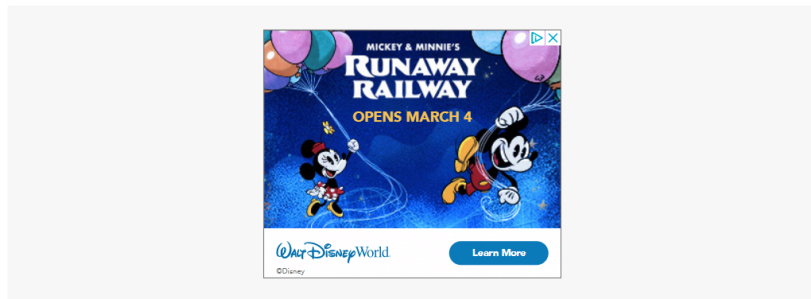
“So what if it’s been stolen? Let’s just get [another banana](#) — who’ll know the difference?”
(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

The Trump Library displays the partially finished “Two Corinthians.” (J. Larry Schott, West Plains, Mo.)

“We thought it best to remove the ‘Spirit of Justice,’ as its presence might be perceived as [critical of certain people](#).” (Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)

Ancient Greek spreadsheets only had one column. (J. Larry Schott)

Art lovers were stunned at the brilliance of “Exhibit Closed for Cleaning.” (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)



The famous Nothingburger in the Fox News Hall of Fame. (Jeff Hazle, San Antonio; Dawn Reed, Virginia Beach, Va., a First Offender)

“Psst! He’s hiding it behind his back.” (Tom Murphy, Bowie, Md.)

Despite having been on display at the Louvre for 114 years, Rodin’s “Le Piédestal” continues to puzzle first-time visitors. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Still running — deadline Monday, Feb. 24: our contest to make new words from given ScrabbleGrams racks. See wapo.st/invite1371.

DON’T MISS AN INVITE! Sign up [here](https://tinyletter.com/TheEmpress) (tinyletter.com/TheEmpress) to receive a once-a-week email from the Empress as soon as The Style Invitational and Style Conversational go online every Thursday, complete with links to the columns. **Important:** The email now comes directly from the E, so even if you used to get the newsletter every week, you may need to sign up again. Sorry — it takes just a second.

0 Comments



Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post’s page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. Follow [Twitter](#)

Read These Comments newsletter

The best comments and conversations at The Washington Post, delivered every Friday. Join the conversation.

Sign up

By signing up you agree to our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)



The Post Recommends

6 questions about traveling with marijuana, answered

The laws regulating the substance are changing constantly, but here's what to know if you show up at an airport with pot or CBD products, even with a state-issued medical ID card.



Stuffed chicken rolls make a weeknight dinner that's pretty enough for company

Thinly sliced chicken breasts and a few common pantry ingredients come together in this lovely, easy supper.



Mustard, cream and lemon make for fast and flavor-packed pork chops

The easy-to-make sauce of cream, mustard, lemon and pepper gives this dish a wonderfully hearty flavor that calls to mind popular German dishes.



PAID PROMOTED STORIES

Recommended by **Outbrain** | ▶



The Most Overrated Wrestlers In History

The Delite | Scripps



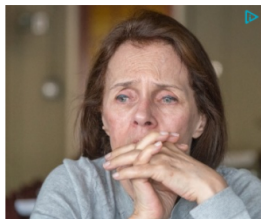
Expect Better at Hilton

Hilton Hotels and Resorts



Maryland Launches New Policy For Car Used Less Than 50 Miles/Day

Comparisons.org



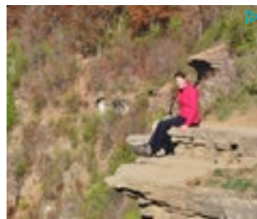
Maryland Seniors On Medicare Are Getting a Big Pay Day

Comparisons.org



How To Empty Your Bowels Every Morning - Top Surgeon Explains How

gutcleanseprotocol.com



[Pics] Mom has no idea why vacation photo went viral, then she sees the background

Top5

Posting as eldencarnahan

Terms of Use

- Policies and Standards
- Digital Products Terms of Sale
- Print Products Terms of Sale
- Terms of Service
- Policies and Standards
- Privacy Policy
- Submissions and Discussion Policy
- RSS Terms of Service
- Ad Choices
- Do Not Sell My Info

Get Us

- Home Delivery
- Digital Subscription
- Gift Subscriptions
- Mobile & Apps
- Newsletters & Alerts
- Washington Post Live
- Reprints & Permissions
- Washington Post Store
- Photos & Books
- e-Replica

Contact Us

- Help
- Contact
- Reader Representative
- Advertise
- News Service & Syndicate
- Submit a Correction

About Us

- In the Community
- Careers
- Newspaper in Education
- Today's Paper
- WP BrandStudio
- Events