

Entertainment

# Style Invitational Week 1383: Questionable Journalism

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Take a sentence in an article or ad out of context (hey, doesn't everyone?). Plus groaner puns on song titles.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

May 7, 2020 at 10:20 a.m. EDT

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the inking puns on song titles and lyrics.)

**Sentence in The Post:** “The worst enemy is an invisible enemy.”

*Question it could answer:* Come on, Jaden, why don't you want to play hide-and-seek?

**A. “It’s going to be a little subdued, and it’s definitely going to be stressful,” Kopp said. “But we can ride.”**

*Q. What did Harley racer Kody Kopp predict about the new Flat Tire Motocross Grand Prix?*


**A. “S--- is a great source of information.”** (from the article “Sewage Scans Could Detect Outbreaks”)

*Q. What unpopular opinion did one White House reporter offer, only in code, about Sarah Sanders?*

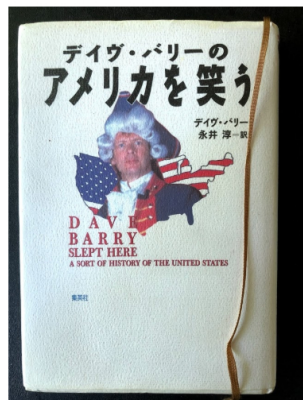
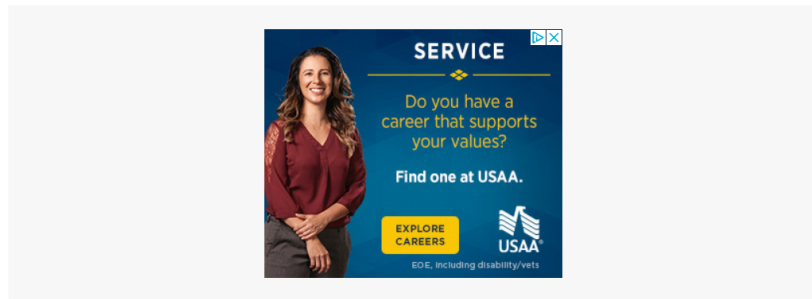
It’s one of our recurring contests — first appearance: Week 254, 1998 — and one particularly

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good for people whose current calling, at the behest of their country, is Sitting Around at Home:



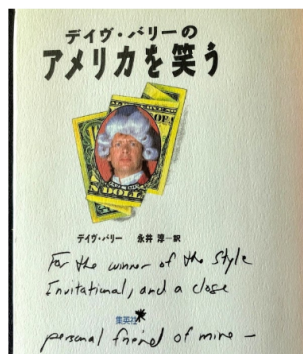
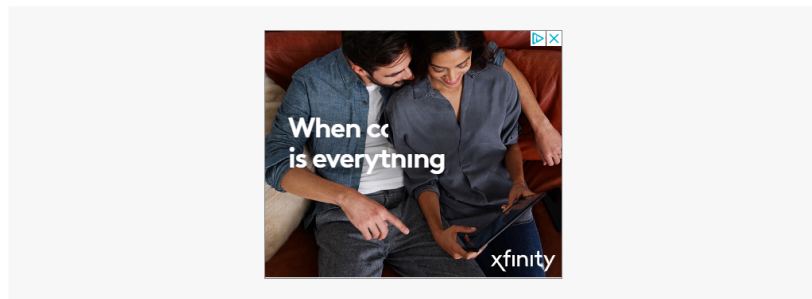
This week's second prize: Dave Barry's take on American history, the Japanese Language version. But it's autographed!

**This week: Choose any sentence (not a headline) in an article or ad in The Washington Post or another publication dated May 7 through May 18, and write a question that it might humorously answer,** as in the examples above, which the Empress found on a page or two of the May 4 Post. You don't have to use the entire sentence (and you can use two consecutive ones, as in the second example) but don't drop words out of the middle that would change the meaning of the sentence. Please include the publication name, date and page number of print papers and magazines, and a link to the Web page for online ones.

Submit up to 25 entries at [wapo.st/enter-invite-](http://wapo.st/enter-invite-1383)

**1383** (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, May 18; results will appear June 7 in print, June 4 online.

**Winner gets the Lose Cannon,** our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a true collector's item: the book "**Dave Barry Slept Here: A Sort of History of the United States**" — autographed by Dave Himself and inscribed, "For the winner of the Style Invitational, and a close personal friend of mine." The thing, though: (a) The winner/"close personal friend" is Elden Carnahan, who won this book in Week 122, in 1995; he regifted it during a little Kondo-binge despite the potential loss of his close personal friend, who had inscribed it before the winner was chosen; and (b) the book is entirely in Japanese, except for the title on the cover and, of course, Dave's inscription.



**Other runners-up** win their choice of our "**For Best Results, Pour Into Top End**" Loser Mug or our "**Whole Fools**" Grocery 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](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline "Your Wit Parade" is by Chris Doyle; Jeff Contompasis wrote the honorable mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational

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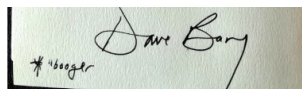
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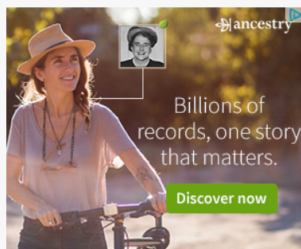
Despite this almost personal inscription, Week 125 winner Elden Carnahan regifted this book to the Empress.

Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://on.fb.me/invdev).  
 “Like” the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](https://bit.ly/inkofday); follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

**The Style Conversational:** The Empress’s weekly online column — published late Thursday afternoon,

May 7 — reviews each new contest and set of results. Check out this week’s Convo at [wapo.st/conv1383](https://wapo.st/conv1383).

And from *The Style Invitational* four weeks ago . . .



## Your Wit Parade: Song puns from Week 1379

In [Week 1379](#) the Empress asked for jokes — either short-form, like riddles, or long-form shaggy-dog stories — whose punchline was a pun on a song title or lyric. Beware: These entries are firmly in the Groaner Pun genre. If you don’t like groaner puns, go do the sudoku and come back next week. Meanwhile, if you don’t get which songs are being referenced, check the E’s answer key in this week’s Style Conversational at [wapo.st/conv1383](https://wapo.st/conv1383).

### 4th place:

Gene officiated NFL games for a living and, to his family’s irritation, couldn’t seem to leave his work at the stadium: When one of the kids did something wrong, he’d blow a whistle and throw down a yellow flag. His wife pleaded with him to stop this nonsense: **“You don’t have to live like a ref, Eugene.”** (*Hildy Zampella, Alexandria, Va.*)



### 3rd place:

My wife might have overdone it at the tanning salon today, but I know Eleanor was just trying to look hot for my birthday tonight. And after a romantic dinner, even when she’s turned yellowish-brown ... **there’s no place better than under my umber Ella.** (*Michelle Christophorou, London*)

### 2nd place and the electronic mini- Screaming Goat:

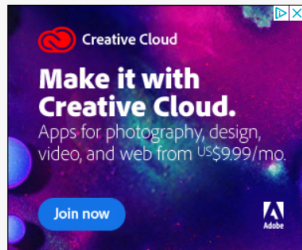
Allergies, you say? I think not. Clearly, Army Special Forces are out to get me, constantly showering me with dust from drones that makes me sneeze and snuffle. Yes, I’m convinced:



**Ranger ops keep pollen on my head.** *(Ken Liss, Brookline, Mass.)*

## And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

An F5 tornado tears through Louisiana's capital and levels several blocks of the city's businesses — including McGee's Dispensary, a cannabis shop that collapses on top of its owner and his girlfriend. Uninjured but unable to get out, the couple decide they have nothing left to lose, and they get **buzzed in flattened Baton Rouge waitin' for a crane.** *(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)*



## Musical notes: Honorable mentions

Before gaining fame as the wizard of the Beach Boys, Brian Wilson attended the San Francisco Culinary Institute, even winning awards for his omelets. At graduation, the dean presented him with his victory certificates, but not what he'd really hoped for: the traditional gift basket full of gourmet delights. As Wilson lamented later: **"I'm picking up goodbye rations; she's giving me egg citations."** *(John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)*

Springsteen played college campuses until the terrible "Hazard From Harvard" incident, where piles of beer cases from the sponsor, Miller, were used as concert seats. One tower toppled and fatally injured a freshman from Sweden. The coroner's succinct summary: **"Blonde dead by the Lite."** *(Kevin Dopart, Washington)*

What do you call the evening when Dick Cheney retired and the Secret Service escorted him to an undisclosed location in Florida? **The night they drove old Dick C down.** *(Alex Steelsmith, Kailua, Hawaii)*

AD

Before he met with Kim Jong Un, officials warned the president not to agree to anything the North Korean leader said — not just in words, but by gesture or even expression. Trump assured them, **"He can't read my ocher face."** *(Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.)*

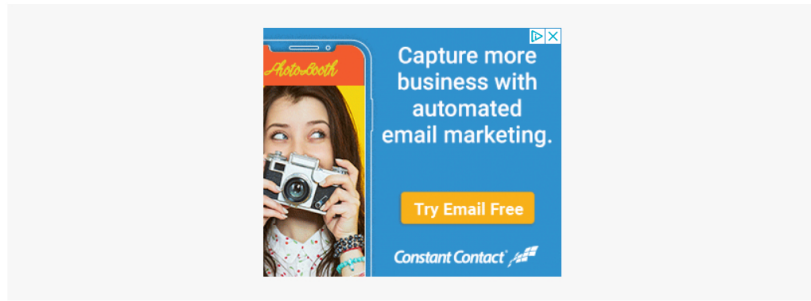
What did Joan Jett call her private Pacific atoll? **Isle of Rock and Roll.** *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

A chimp dressed in royal attire walks into a London pub and orders a pint. The aged, half-blind bartender says, "And who do we have here — the queen's consort, Prince Philip?" "Heavens no," the chimp replies, **"I'm her ape, old man! I'm Henry."** *(Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)*

We square dancers had to cancel our whole season — you can't very well social-distance



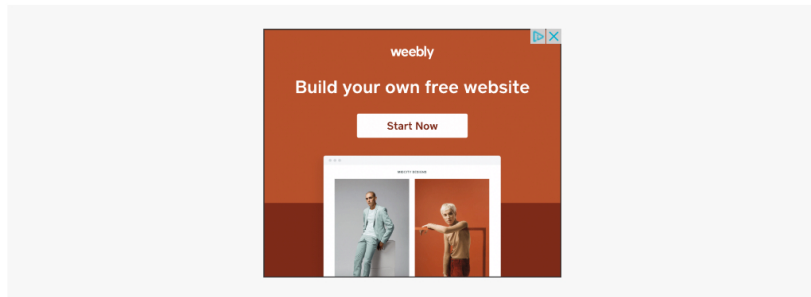
while doing the allemande and do-si-do. I'm afraid **it's the end of the whirls as we know it.** (*Jerry Birchmore, Springfield, Va.*)



My buddy and I broke quarantine with a picnic in the park — and what a mistake that was: No sooner was the blanket down than the bugs found us. Then the sky darkened, it suddenly got really blustery — and a strong gust carried my pal off! A patrolman came by and asked, “All right, who all is here?” I answered, **“The ants are. My friend is blowin’ in the wind.”** (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

What did Hermione say to Harry when his love spell failed to enchant her? **“You can’t always get what you wand.”** (*Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.*)

A giant, man-eating toad caught a fisherman and was about to eat him when the fisherman offered to bring him fish instead. The toad agreed under one condition: It couldn’t be just any fish, but seven silver hake from the Pacific Ocean. The fisherman took his skiff back out to sea, caught the seven hake and started back. “Where are you going?” his mate asked. **“I’m gonna toss my hake to the old round toad.”** (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)



What did the lyricist of “Man of La Mancha” vow to do when the composer wanted to cut a verse from “The Impossible Dream”? **To march into hell for a heavenly clause.** (*Alex Steelsmith*)

What did Keith Richards complain to his therapist while trying to kick his coke habit? **“I can’t get nose satisfaction.”** (*Alex Steelsmith*)

The president didn’t much like his walk through the desert, since there were just sand and hills and rocks and things — and no greens. To brighten his boss’s mood, what did his friend Kanye suggest he build? **“A course with yo’ name.”** (*Kevin Dopart*)

Lucille Ball often vacationed on the South Carolina coast, wearing a wig and dark glasses to throw off autograph seekers. But a sharp-eyed fan once spotted her dining at the venerable Hyman’s Seafood in Charleston and rushed to a phone booth to tell her friend: **“Lucy’s in disguise at Hyman’s!”** (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

What did Jerry Lee Lewis say after reading the president’s Twitter feed? **“Goodness gracious, great bawls of ire!”** (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)

The night before the British invaded Washington in August 1814, setting fire to the Capitol and White House, the leader of the American militia delivered an inspirational call to persevere. Unfortunately, the Yanks turned tail and fled to the hinterlands, and so the words **“Fortitude battles our fear on the Mall. Fortitude battles our fear”** were ne’er remembered. (*Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.*)

Out at Olive Garden with her sister Shanna, Carrie Underwood has narrowed the entree options down to the osso buco and chicken parmigiana. When the waiter comes to take their order, she peppers him with questions about the two dishes. This goes on for several minutes until Shanna finally blurts out, **“Gee, sis, take the veal!”** *(Chris Doyle)*

A cartel of oil magnates was trying to decide where to focus its next big investment. They were considering many sites throughout the Persian Gulf, but finally one of them found some extremely promising data about Burgan Field, and insisted, **“Just Kuwait, when we dig in, just Kuwait.”** *(Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.)*

So many things to do before the wedding! Had to scrutinize my rental agreement to see if I could reduce my payment, then get that check off to the pro-choice group — and I was due at the church by 4! So I made a to-do list: **“Parse lease. Aid Roes. Marry in time.”** *(Duncan Stevens)*

The TV newsman Brit Hume single-handedly financed a sculpture festival in his hometown of Hoboken, N.J. It was a success for a few years, but he ran into financial trouble and eventually had to back out. Without his funding, the festival folded. A local newspaper headline read indignantly: **“How Can Hume End Hoboken Art?”** *(Chris Doyle)*

Tony-winning actress Joanna Gleason has extremely dainty feet, and has to specially order her footwear. One time, she asked her parents — did you know that her father was the host of “Let’s Make a Deal?” — if they could pick up the pumps she ordered, on their way home from their exercise class. So it was **from the Monty Halls of Zumba: the two shoes of triple-A.** *(Elliott Shevin, Oak Park, Mich.)*

One time I was distraught over a bad grade on a research paper about sheep. When I got home and saw the fireplace going, I couldn’t help myself. Before I realized what I was doing, **I was burnin’ the ewe essay.** *(Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.)*

Since all the fun venues are closed during this pandemic, I’m doing the next best thing: spending my time online watching digital videos of cardiovascular surgeries. Just **total e-clips of the heart.** *(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)*

Did you know that some Ivy League colleges used to hold wet T-shirt contests? In Philadelphia in 1964, one fraternity sent out an ad around campus touting “the most bosomy babes in town.” Those guys were **chest nuts boasting in an old Penn flier.** *(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)*

Why did the White House communications aide say he couldn’t take it anymore? **“Every day it’s endless schemes and secret threats of MAGA scenes.”** *(Chris Doyle)*

**And last:** What did the Empress say after staying up until 3 a.m. reading Invite entries? **“It’s been a har-daze night.”** *(Jesse Frankovich)*

**And Even Laster:** So, Empress, what did you say to the Style Invitational contestants at the Loser brunch after judging all the bad puns in this contest? **“I groaned and cussed ’em to their face.”** *(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)*

**Still running — deadline Monday night, May 11: our annual horse name “breeding” contest. See [wapo.st/invite1382](https://wapo.st/invite1382).**

**DON’T MISS AN INVITE!** [Sign up here](#) 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.

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

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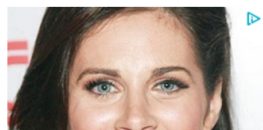
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