

Style Invitational Week 1209: Inventing facts—a fake-trivia contest about inventions

Plus Part 1 of our contest to revisit all the past year's contests



Presenting, above and below, our newest pair of Loser magnets. The slogans, by Tom Witte and Beverley Sharp, respectively, were honorable mentions themselves, in slogan contests back in 2007 and 2012. The Empress will start awarding them to the Week 1205 winners. (Design by Bob Staaque for The Washington Post)

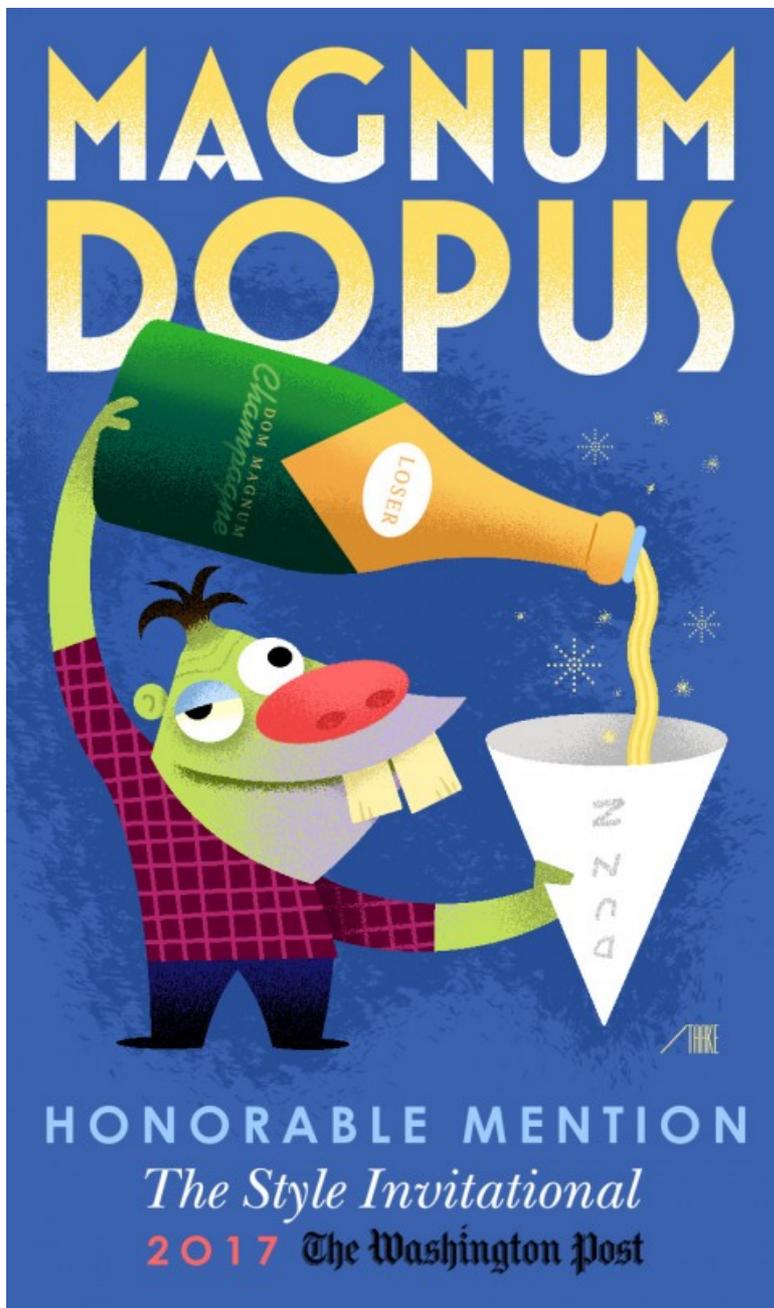
By Pat Myers • [Entertainment](#) January 5

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winners of our retrospective contest)

The first rice cake, as you might expect, was the consequence of an explosion in a Styrofoam factory.

The modern toilet paper roll was the brainchild of carnival worker P.B. Whipple: While winding layers of spun sugar onto a cardboard holder, he realized that cotton candy was remarkably similar to TP, though slightly less digestible.

The Style Invitational, bringing you fake facts before it was official government policy. Yes, it's yet another of our fictoid contests, this one suggested by 105-time Loser Melissa Balmain, who doesn't get the usual contest-suggestion prize of an ice cream date with the Empress because she's in Rochester, N.Y., and it's too cold there for ice cream: **Tell us a humorously untrue account of how a product or invention came to be, or got its name**, as in Melissa's examples above. Don't write huge paragraphs; Melissa's toilet paper roll fictoid, at 37 words, is plenty long for us.



Beverly Sharp was the first of several Losers to suggest this magnet slogan over the years. (Design by Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1209 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets, apropos of this contest, a board game called [Fact or Crap](#): You take a card that contains some bit of trivia (e.g., “The armadillo is the only animal to suffer from leprosy”) and you have to decide whether it’s . . . yup. Donated by Loser Marleen May.

Other runners-up win the yearned-for “[This Is Your Brain on Mugs](#)” [Loser mug](#) or our Grossery Bag, “[I Got a B in Punmanship](#).” Honorable mentions get one of the two new magnets shown here today. (Except for First Offenders, who receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener”: [FirStink](#) for their first ink.) Deadline is Tuesday night, Jan. 17; results published Feb. 5 (online Feb. 2). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week’s results is by Kevin Doport; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Tom Witte. 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](https://twitter.com/StyleInvite) on Twitter.

● **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. This week: Looking back at the whole collection of Loser Magnets since 2004.

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

#REHASHGAGS: WINNING DO-OVERS FROM OUR 2016 RETROSPECTIVE CONTEST

Week 1205 was our annual retrospective contest, in which the Loser Community could enter (or re-enter) any of the previous year's 50-some contests — often using more recent events for fodder. For Week 1206 we did the very same thing, so next week there'll be more of the same. Most of this week's inking entries are from various short-form contests, but you definitely should also check out the terrific song parodies.

4th place:

For Week 1150, to change a name by one letter:

Rahputin: State Department adviser, 2017 (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

3rd place:

Week 1162, Onion-style headlines:

M&M's to Replace Artificial Disodium 6-hydroxy-5-[(2-methoxy-5-methyl-4-sulphonyl)azo]-2-naphthalenesulfonate Red Dye With Natural 7- α -D-Glucopyranosyl-9,10-dihydro-3,5,6,8-tetrahydroxy-1-methyl-9,10-dioxoanthracenecarboxylic Acid (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

2nd place

and the [tote bag with a gotcha joke in Arabic](#):

Also for Week 1162:

McDonald's Apologizes for Cultural Appropriation, Closes All Branches Outside Hamburg (Michael Rolfe, Cape Town, South Africa)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Week 1173, food puns:

Steamed dumpings: Taking the farm-to-table movement way too far. (William Kennard, Arlington, Va.)

Naught again! Honorable mentions

Week 1150, change someone's name by one letter:

John Madams: The original Vice president. (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Week 1155, replace vowels in a movie title with other vowels:

"Behind Locked Doors" -> "**Behind Licked; Odors**": New title for "My Life as a Dog" (William Kennard)

"Moby Dick" -> MBYDCK -> "**Maybe Duck**": A discouraged Ahab ponders easier quarry. (Colin Schatz, Oakland, Calif., a First Offender)

"**Fantastic Boasts and Where to Find Them**": @RealDonaldTrump: The Movie. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

"Gideon's Trumpet" -> "**God, No — Is Trump It?**": Horror strikes at midnight on Nov. 8. (William Kennard)

Week 1160, redefine a word:

Umami: A Japanese insult: "Everyone's had a taste of umami." (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Undeterred, n: Result of potty training mishap. (Mark Raffman)

Seesaw: The view from the window of a bullet train. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Week 1162: Onion-style headlines:

Trump to Keep State of the Union Speech Brief: “Veni, Vidi, Vici” (Jeff Contompasis)

Young Man Who Said ‘Yes We Can’ to Malia Obama Still Missing (William Kennard)

Week 1163, spell words backward:

GNILF: A good neighbor you’d like to get to know better. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Anozira: A medical condition in which brain cells are destroyed by continuous dry heat. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

Week 1165, add or substitute the letter B in a word:

Bratuity: An additional \$10 tip as penance for not controlling your kids. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Boff-season: Spring break in Fort Lauderdale. (Howard Walderman, Columbia, Md.)

BSer-friendly (adj.): Describing gullible voters. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

Week 1168, Asterisky Business – jokes that require specialized knowledge to understand:

There was an analytical lab supervisor who didn’t believe in praising his workers too much. **He only gave out attoboys.***

*The prefix atto- means one-quintillionth. (Jeff Contompasis)

Week 1170, “breed” two racehorse names and name the foal:

Stradivari x Can’t Remember = FiddlerOnTheRoofie (Chris Doyle)

Week 1170 combined with Week 1168:

Gettysburg x Twenty Four Seven = Plank’s Constant*

*“Gettysburg Eddie” Plank was a Hall of Fame baseball player from Gettysburg, Pa. Planck’s constant (6 x10 to the minus-34th) represents the ratio of the energy of a photon to its frequency. (William Collinge, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Week 1171, pair a line of a song with your own rhyming line:

Then nearly 14 billion years ago expansion started. Wait . . . (“Big Bang Theory” theme)

The school board says I now must state: This theory’s open to debate. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

I fell into a burning ring of fire (Ray Price)

Or so it seems in this damn underwire (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Week 1174, “grandfoals” from breeding Week 1170 foal names:

Señor Moment x Someone Else’s Kid = Nacho Daddy (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

Auld Lang Zion x Glock Watcher = Bibi Gun (Nan Reiner)

Auld Lang Zion x Desitin = Rash Hashanah (John Hutchins)

Week 1175, neologisms whose letters add to 13 Scrabble points:

Platinum: The metal used to make anvils and steamrollers. (Jeff Contompasis)

Chauv: To push aside someone of a different gender or group. “Donald sure knows how to chauv people around.” (Jesse Frankovich)

Week 1176, funny obits for the living:

In memory of Metro chief Paul Wiedefeld, all trains will stop running for one minute at noon tomorrow instead of the customary 17. (Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.)

Week 1177, song parodies about the election:

To “Gooch’s Song” from “Mame”; [click here](#) to see Nan Reiner sing it herself:

We winked at his “movement”; it might shake the pols up.

We wanted improvement, and how.

But no one expected that he’d be elected.

Oh, what do we do now?

We thought he was batty, we dished up the drama,

We roared at each catty meow.

Who dreamt that the Twitler could turn into Hitler?

Oh, what do we do now?

With ballots, propriety’s yoke we shucked,

Not thinking that it could be us we’d ...plucked.

This miscreant gall-pot will soon seize the White House

And govern like Pol Pot or Mao.

No one contemplated that our ship of state’d

Become a garbage scow.

Perhaps in four years’ time we can right this wrong...

If the world could just survive that long.

Oh, what do we do now? (Nan Reiner)

To “Refugee” by Tom Petty:

[Click here](#) to see Jon Gearhart singing it:

Somebody somewhere must have kicked me around some.

I don’t have any class and it’s time that I found some

It don’t really matter to me

That we’re supposed to be the land of the free:

Since yo-ou ca-ame out in support of me

You won’t have to live next to refugees.

I wo-on’t let in all the refugees.

I won’t let in all the refugees, baby ... (Jon Gearhart)

Week 1178, *collective nouns*:

A GRAB BAG of harassment accusations (Jesse Frankovich)

A COVY of Quayles (Chris Doyle)

Week 1180, *a question that a line in a comic strip from that week could answer*:

A. The slime they produce is very valuable. (From “Sherman’s Lagoon”)

Q. Mr. Trump, why do you favor Breitbart News? (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Week 1187, *drop the last letter from a name*:

Forrest Gum: “Life is like a box of Chiclets.” (Chris Doyle)

Peter Rabbi: A mohel. (Tom Witte)

Lady Gag: John C. Holmes’s on-set nickname. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

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Week 1190, *name chains*:

Dan Snyder, [Potomac View](#) Elementary, Watson, Alexander Graham Bell, Tinker Bell, Wendy, Chuck E. Cheese, Chuck

Berry, “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee,” [RGIII](#), Dan Snyder (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Week 1195, change a movie title without changing any letters:

“Trans Formers”: Documentary on Caitlyn Jenner’s team of surgeons (Rachel Bernhardt, Silver Spring)

“What Ever Happened to Baby, Jane?”: Tarzan and his wife wonder if a dingo ate Korak. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Week 1201, neologisms including the letter block NOVE:

Novembereavement: The state of intense grief felt after the loss of a close election. (Jesse Frankovich)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 9: Our contest for poems about people who died in 2016.
See bit.ly/invite1208.

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