

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1224: We beg you to differ — our compare/contrast contest

Plus winningly pedantic observations from Week 1220



The difference between the White House visitor logs and a kale-and-blueberry smoothie ... (Bob Staake/for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers 

April 20

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning pedantry from Week 1220)

The difference between **the White House visitor logs** and a **kale-and-blueberry smoothie**: Both are likely to produce some unsavory stuff, but we'd still like to see what's going down inside the White House.

The White House visitor logs are like a **left sock with a hole in it**: You can cover them up, but eventually a rotten smell is going to make itself known.



It's adult-size, of course. Brag about your achievements in this week's second prize. (Pat Myers/The Washington Post)

- April the giraffe
- A flight on United Express
- A golf cart ride at Mar-a-Lago
- Lunch with Mike Pence
- Beyoncé's vocal cords
- MOAB
- A pink knit hat
- A response by Sean Spicer
- A self-driving car
- A left sock with a hole in it
- A ham and cheese sandwich
- World War III
- The past five Style Invitational contests
- An intentional walk
- Easter Bunny ears
- A vacation in space
- The 50-yard line at FedEx Field
- The White House visitor logs
- A kale-and-blueberry smoothie

It's been more than a year since our last installment of our hardy perennial (or sometimes more-often-than-ennial) compare-and-contrast contest. **This week: Explain how any two (or more) items on a list are the same or different, or otherwise connected**, as in the examples above. The Empress is keeping her fingers crossed that four weeks from now, we'll still be able to joke in the abstract about World War III.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1224 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the lovely and exuberant fuchsia ["I Pooped Today!" T-shirt](#) pictured here — in an adult size, of course. Donated by 138-time Loser Barbara Turner, who did not provide any information about her

daily successes.

Other runners-up win our new “[You Gotta Play to Lose](#)” Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, “[I Got a B in Punmanship.](#)” Honorable mentions get one of our new lusted-after Loser magnets, “[No Childishness Left Behind](#)” or “[Magnum Dopus.](#)” First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). Deadline is Monday night, May 1; results published May 21 (online May 18). See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](#). The headline “Quibbles ’n’ Wits” for this week’s results was submitted by both Tom Witte and Jesse Frankovich; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Chris Doyle. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](#). “Like” Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](#).

● **The Style Conversational** The Empress’s weekly online column, published late Thursday afternoon, discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at [wapo.st/styleconv](#).



Speaking of pedantry: The Empress bet Bob Staake she’d get complaints that in Week 1221, he drew Richard Nixon as a lefty. The E was shocked to lose. (Bob Staake/for The Washington Post)

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

QUIBBLES ’N’ WITS: PEDANTIC ANTICS FROM WEEK 1220

In [Week 1220](#), we asked you to be comically pedantic in correcting or clarifying some statement or voicing some peeve. Yes, dozens of people, we also noted that despite its name, The Style Invitational is open to any old loser, and that it is notably lacking in you-know-what.

4th place:

Since **toilet paper** is rarely used to wipe a toilet (alas!), I always refer to it as toilet-user paper. (Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park, Md.)

3rd place:

I’ve always found that famous scene from “**Last Tango in Paris**” highly troubling: Parisians in the 1970s bought their butter in blocks, not sticks. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

2nd place

and the [UFO mug](#) labeled “[Get In Loser](#)”:

I am amazed at how many otherwise intelligent people will say, “**It goes without saying** that” When I

need to convey that concept, I express it in mime so I don't look like an idiot. (Seth Tucker, Washington)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Diamonds turn into graphite in considerably less time than forever — in fact, at 4,000 degrees Celsius and 1 atmosphere pressure, almost immediately! That's why, on our next big anniversary, I plan to give my wife a No. 2 pencil. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

More's the petty: honorable mentions

Each time my pregnant wife complains that she is **nauseous**, she is correct in a different way from what she intended. "Nauseous" refers to something that *causes* nausea, and as you can imagine, her repeated misuse of that term always makes me a little sick to my stomach, i.e., nauseated. But most mornings I sensitively refrain from correcting her. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

I firmly refuse to **RSVP** to any invitation: It's *Répondez s'il VOUS plait* — "if it pleases YOU." I will, however, send a JRPMP: *Je réponds parce-qu'il ME plait* — "because it pleases *me*." Actually, I've done that once, some years ago, but I am waiting for a second opportunity. (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

A steak that is "**well done**" is quite the opposite! It is dry and flavorless, rather than juicy, dark pink and 135 degrees Fahrenheit. In place of the traditional five levels of steak doneness, diners should specify "under well done," "well done," "past well done," "overdone" or "ruined." (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

It is absolutely possible to "**have your cake and eat it too.**" In the context of foodstuffs, "have" is a synonym for "eat," as in "let's have pizza for dinner" — and at any rate, one inevitably "has" anything one consumes, even if only briefly. The sensible way to say it is "Once you eat your cake, you no longer have it available." (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

I have found two separate articles in The Washington Post in the past three months that say Trump's proposed policies would make "**foreign imports**" more expensive. Unless one of those policies is to change the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution, there will continue to be only one kind of imports here. And you wonder why people have lost respect for the media. (Kevin Dopart)

Earth is only sometimes the "**3rd Rock From the Sun.**" As the moon orbits Earth, it is closer to the sun about half the time, thereby making Earth the *fourth* rock from the sun. Come to think of it, there are also thousands of asteroids that are closer to the sun, so really that show was pretty dumb. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

No, I'm sorry, I don't have a **Kleenex**. I do have some facial tissues manufactured by another corporation. But since you seem hellbent on using one particular brand name, it appears you're out of luck. Gesundheit. (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

How on earth is "**Mary, Mary**" acting "quite contrary" in the nursery rhyme? If she really were, she'd answer "How does your garden grow? with "None of your business — and get off my lawn." (Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.)

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Why would anyone say "**heat up**"? Can you heat in any other direction? I used to say "heat sideways" for melting ice or boiling water, but that was just a phase I was going through. (Kevin Dopart)

“Pardon me, Mr. Tech Support Genius, but **when I put my mouse on the X** in the upper right corner of the screen and left-clicked, it didn’t close the window. However, when I used my mouse to move the mouse pointer to . . .” (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

When someone boasts of making a “**quantum leap**” in a project, I always say, “Well, keep trying.” Because a quantum of something is the smallest possible amount. (Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.)

Do you have any idea how far ahead you need to schedule someone to come out to **clean your pool**? I’m supposed to believe some guy just shows up at a woman’s door to do the job? Jeez, who comes up with the plots for these pornos? (Hildy Zampella)

Still running — deadline Monday night, April 24: our contest to write lurid headlines for mundane news. See bit.ly/invite1223.

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