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Entertainment

# Style Invitational Week 1272: The hex files — think up creative curses

Plus genuine alternative facts about the news media and publishing



A modern-day curse: "May you always get up from your computer with your headphones still attached." (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers March 22 [Email the author](#)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning fake trivia about the media)

**May you lose all your teeth except one, so you can still get a toothache.** — old Yiddish curse

**May you be a contestant on "Jeopardy!" playing against my 7-year-old son and the only categories are Power Rangers, X-Men and fart noises.** — Jean Sorensen, Style Invitational Week 75, 1994

**May you always get up from your computer with your headphones still attached.** — Thunder Dungeon

**May your cookie always be slightly too large to fit inside your glass of milk.** — Thunder Dungeon

Telling someone to "go #\$\$^& off" is so uncivilized and so unimaginative — not to mention that it's really hard to pronounce "#\$^&." So, to the rescue, we're bringing back one of our oldest contests, prompted by a recent series of [Facebook posts](#) by the Toronto comedy team Thunder Dungeon, which were brought to our attention by [Style Invitational Devotee](#) Kathy Hughes: **This week: Come up with an imaginative curse**, as in the examples above from our 1994 contest and from one of the 18 Thunder Dungeon curses.

Submit entries at the website [wano.st/enter-invite-1272](http://wano.st/enter-invite-1272) (all lowercase).

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## Most Read Entertainment

### 1 Review

The best science fiction and fantasy to read this month



### 2

First glimpse of Kennedy Center's much delayed expansion unveiled



### 3 Review

Sex, politics and art painted in broad strokes in 'Botticelli in the



Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. And to celebrate the start of baseball season, we'll give second place an **electronic chip-and-dip bowl in the shape of an outsize glove and ball**: Press a button and the top of the ball not only swings open to liberate the salsa, but also plays "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." The package guarantees it to be "great entertainment for your next party," so I'm sorry about your parties. See a video of the bowl in action at [wapo.st/singing-bowl](http://wapo.st/singing-bowl). Found by the Royal Consort in the recesses of an abandoned office.

**Other runners-up** win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "**I Got a B in Punmanship**." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "**We've Seen Better**" or "**IDiot Card**." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, April 2**; results published April 22 in print, April 19 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline for this week's results is by Kevin Dopart; Chris Doyle wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev).

**The Style Conversational** The Empress's weekly online column, published late Thursday afternoon, discusses the new contest and results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at [wapo.st/styleconv](http://wapo.st/styleconv); this week E will share the results of our two previous curse contests.

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

## HEADLYIN' NEWS: FAKE TRIVIA ABOUT THE MEDIA

In **Week 1268**, as part of The Style Invitational's relentless crusade to unenlighten our readers with bogus trivia, we asked for fictoids about the news media and the publishing industry. Despite his obvious qualifications for this contest, the president of the United States failed to enter and therefore gets no ink.

### 4th place:

**The scrolling ticker at the bottom of a newscast screen** is called a crawl because it originally required someone to wriggle across the studio dragging a hand-painted sign. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

### 3rd place:

If you don't win, it's a shame – but you might get this second prize.

**The term "yellow journalism"** derives from the 19th-century

tradition of newsboys urinating on stacks of their rivals' papers. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

### 2nd place



and the **shirt that makes you look as if your torso has been sliced away**: **Communications major Baboon Blitz** wisely opted to change his name. (Margaret L. Welsh, Oakton, Va.)

### And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

**Jeff Bezos meant to buy only a single issue** of The Washington Post, but he didn't have any small bills on him at the time. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

### Ha off the presses: Honorable mentions

Fire'

- 4 Celebrities, fashion insiders react to death of Kate Spade 
- 5 Oprah Winfrey picks prison memoir for her book club 

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**The German word** for “break wind” is *Blog*. (Duncan Stevens)

**A newspaper reporter signals that he’s working a story** by pulling his tie down to his shirt’s second button. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

**Until he was forced to pick a name** short enough for TV listings, Rupert Murdoch planned to call his U.S. cable channel Rabid Badger News. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

A reluctant Bloomsbury publishing house agreed to print the **Harry Potter books** only after J.K. Rowling’s judicious use of the Imperius Curse. (Duncan Stevens)

The real **Alfred E. Neuman** required treatment for anxiety disorder throughout his life. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

**The Honolulu Star-Advertiser** was created by the merger of the Hono Star and the Lulu Advertiser. (Randy Lee, Burke, Va.)

**Katie Couric’s colonoscopy** was faked in the same studio as the moon landing. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)

**A newspaper article’s second paragraph** is traditionally called the “nut graf,” because it’s where lunatics stop reading to start dictating angry rebuttals. (Lawrence McGuire)

After producing his historic Bible, **Gutenberg gained much more financial success** with his next publication, a set of amusing prints of cats. (Larry McClemons, Annandale, Va.)

The HVAC system at **NPR’s new headquarters** is engineered to circulate a vaporized suffusion of Valium. (Bill Spencer, Cockeysville, Md.)

Had it not been for **Chet’s last-second switch** from “rock” to “scissors,” many of us would have grown up watching the “The Brinkley-Huntley Report.” (Hildy Zampella, Alexandria, Va.)

~~Excerpted from the 1982 book, “The Miss Manners Book” by Judith Martin~~  
hostesses still had standards back then. — Judith “Miss Manners” Martin (Steve Honley, Washington)

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ADVERT:

**Donald Trump's first paying job** was as a paperboy delivering Pravda.

**Donald Trump's first paying job** was as a paperboy delivering Pravda.  
(Jeff Shirley)

**From 1973 to 1978, the Pulitzer Prizes** were made of fabric in [bright floral prints](#) . (Noah Meyerson, Washington)

Garry Cleveland Myers, the creator of “**Goofus and Gallant**” in Highlights for Children, was a family friend of both Fred Trump and Robert Mueller Sr.  
(Randy Lee)

**News scribes in ancient Mesopotamia** structured their articles in the [inverted-ziggurat format](#). (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

**Fox News runs so many ads for catheters** because, after housing and autos, urinary supplies are the third-largest segment of the U.S. economy.  
(David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

In the 18th century, “**national public town criers**” relied on contributions from their listeners and offered burlap bags as “thank-you gifts.” (Gary Crockett)

Before achieving fame as a broadcaster, a **young, studly Walter Cronkite** was known to friends as “The Most Trysted Man in America.” (Jeff Shirley)

**Ralph Nader unsuccessfully sued the producers of “60 Minutes”**  
[inverted-ziggurat format](#). (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

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**Ralph Nader unsuccessfully sued the producers of “60 Minutes”**  
under truth-in-advertising laws, demanding that the show change its name to “46 Minutes.” (Seth Tucker, Washington)



**Connie Chung turned down an offer** from NBC News when executives insisted on pronouncing her name “Chang” because it [sounded “cleaner.”](#)



(Joshua Rokach, Silver Spring, Md., a First Offender)

**The Reuters wire service** was unable to operate in Germany until 1881 because umlauts couldn't be transmitted in Morse code. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**The copyright trial** between the National Journal of Actuarial Science and the American Actuarial Society Journal had to be postponed when all 12 jurors fell asleep. (Mark Raffman)

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Despite its accuracy, **The Style Invitational's constant reportage** about my diet and sexual habits borders on cruel. — Your Mama (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

**Still running — deadline Monday, March 26: our contest for neologisms including a D, O, Y, L and E. See [wapo.st/invite1271](http://wapo.st/invite1271).**

**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 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 @patmyersTWP](#)

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The White House press secretary says Trump's personal lawyers — who do not represent her — are the ones who should answer for wrong information she delivered last summer.

1 day ago



##### Opinion

### With no Eagles around, Trump acts like a turkey

President's squabble with the Super Bowl champions turns White House event into an exercise in oddity.

15 hours ago



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### He was cleared of a rape charge. He had to show the jury his penis first

