



Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1325: Stand up and jeer — jokes for the WHCA dinner

Plus this week's winners: creative reviews for boring household products



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

March 28

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the creative reviews for everyday products)

New contest for Week 1325:

Stand up and jeer

“Of course, Trump isn’t here. . . . I would drag him here myself, but it turns out the president of the United States is the one p---- you’re not allowed to grab.” — comic Michelle Wolf, at the 2018 White House Correspondents’ Association dinner

“Yo, Barry, you did it, my n---a.” — comic Larry Wilmore to President Obama at the 2016 dinner

Welp, there’s not going to be a comic performing at *this* year’s WHCA dinner. After a three-decade tradition of hiring a comedian to tease the gussied-up media types as well as the celebs and politicians — usually

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including the president, who then takes his own turn at the mic with a gentle standup routine — [the embarrassed press association announced](#) that this year's speaker, on April 27, would instead be historian Ron Chernow, who'll "make the case for the First Amendment." President Trump, who refused to attend the past two dinners, has not yet said whether he'll be showing up at the Washington Hilton to mix with the Enemy of the People and listen to Chernow, author of the Alexander Hamilton biography that inspired Lin-Manuel Miranda to write the musical about the Founding Father.

But *we're* here. **This week: Give us some original standup jokes that would have been good at this year's White House Correspondents' Dinner;** they can assume that the president (or someone else) is in the room, or not. You can even suggest some material for Chernow, who insists that "while I have never been mistaken for a stand-up comedian, I promise that my history lesson won't be dry." The contest results publish online two days before the event, so he could revise his bit. And we're **extending the entry deadline to April 15** so that your jokes can be a week fresher. This contest was suggested by Obsessive Loser Jeff Contompasis.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1325 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the [Lose Cannon](#), our Style Invitational trophy.






Second prize, apropos of this contest, receives a genuine first- (only-?) edition of "**Collected Speeches of Spiro Agnew**," comprising the crooked pol's public proclamations during the first two years of his veepship — a couple of years before he resigned after pleading nolo contendere over those pesky kickbacks. Dedicated by its original owner, who inscribed the title page "Elden Carnahan, Boston, 1971." The 48-year-old mass-market paperback is, fittingly, rather sullied, with a slightly off odor.

Other runners-up win our "[You Gotta Play to Lose](#)" Loser Mug or our "[Whole Fools](#)" Grocery Bag. 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 15** (what, you have something else due that day?), results published in print April 28 (online April 25). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; Bill Dorner wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" 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 discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

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

MERCH MADNESS: THE PRODUCT REVIEWS OF WEEK 1321

- 1** **SNL** takes on the Mueller report with more of the same, including Robert DeNiro, Alec Baldwin and Kate McKinnon's Rudy Giuliani 
- 2** **Review** How will 'Veep's' Selina Meyer be remembered in the end? As a woman who hated other women. 
- 3** **Perspective** What exactly is bel canto? It's a way of singing and, for some, an addiction. 
- 4** **Analysis** The original 'Dumbo' was decried as racist. Here's how Tim Burton's version addresses that. 
- 5** George Clooney calls for boycott of Brunei-owned luxury hotels in protest of anti-gay death penalty 

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in [Week 1321](#), we once again asked for humorous reviews for various boring products listed on Amazon.com. Many Losers noted that the “blemish remover” included on the vegetable peeler did not improve their complexions.

4th place:

[12-pack of men's white cotton handkerchiefs:](#)

Who would have guessed that carrying my mucus in my pocket all day could be so stylish? (David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.)

3rd place:

[Flat shoelaces, 5/16-inch wide:](#)

Three stars — not as good as spaghetti, but better than zoodles. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

2nd place

and the pods of [David Fahrenthold's own Trump Select coffee](#):

[Velveeta Original Pasteurized Recipe Cheese Product, 64 oz.:](#)

Cheese slices are so last week — this time I tossed the whole 64 oz on [my baby's face](#) at once! Soooo many page views! Next time I'll take it out of the box first. Like and Subscribe! (Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

[60 binder clips, assorted sizes:](#)

Binder clips. Yawn . . . until I saw the French on them: “*pinces relieuses variées*,” and suddenly I wasn't in my cubicle ordering office supplies. I was waltzing to accordion music down the Champs-Élysées, drinking Bor-deaux, and helping mustachioed, beret-wearing mimes binder-clip elegant French documents as the sun set over the Arc de Triomphe. “Take me away!” I cried as I clicked “Buy Now.” Anyway, they're binder clips. (David Hammond, Vienna, Va., a First Offender)

Yucky stars: Honorable mentions

[12-pack of men's white cotton handkerchiefs:](#)

Now I have one for every month of the year! Livin' the good life! (Deb Stewart, Damascus, Md.)

I got these reusable handkerchiefs to impress my zero-waste, natural-living girlfriend, but it turned into a heated “conversation” about the cotton industry's ties to slavery. She was too snotty for me anyway. (Maddy Vieth, Washington, a First Offender)

Great “filler” to add extra lift to your cleavage. Smooth contours with none of those lumps you get with sweat socks. (Robyn Carlson, Keyser, W.Va.)

I can't understand why items like this are still sold. Don't they realize that handling cotton is an anxiety trigger for those coping with America's abhorrent history? — Virginia first lady [Pam Northam](#) (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

These are handkerchiefs made for a MAN. None of your girly, lacy

folderols that won't stand up to dribbling tobacco juice or coughed-up sputum. Plain white cotton was good enough for the men who plowed the plains and laid the rails. Such handkerchiefs would have wiped the sweat from the tanned, weatherworn forehead of a Texas ranger chasing down a gang of cattle rustlers. Buy 'em. (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

Flat shoelaces, 5/16-inch wide:

My doctor told me to get a neti pot, but these were way cheaper! The plastic bits on the end hurt, though, so only 4 stars. (Todd DeLap)

I just stuffed these flat laces with dryer lint, and now they look just as good as the round laces at half the price! (Deb Stewart)

The description says these are "great for all types of shoe." Well, they fell right off my horse's hoofs. And let's not even discuss brake shoes. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel, Md.)

I ordered these shoelaces from Amazon, but all I found in the padded envelope with the abstract jet leaving behind a satisfied smile of a contrail was disappointment. These laces measured a full three microns thick, according to my micrometer. As I have done with my other 37 purchases from Amazon in the last 37 days, I shall return these laces for a speedy refund. Now that will put a satisfied smile on MY face. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

Velveeta Original Pasteurized Recipe Cheese Product, 64 oz.:

I'm sick of all the snotty snark about this product. Velveeta is quick, easy and affordable, and it works better than many of the much more expensive spackles. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

I take the Velveeta out of the box, put in my bottle of wine and put it back in the fridge. No one has ever found my stash! Five stars! (Robyn Carlson)

I think they changed the recipe — doesn't taste anything like the real thing. I finally finished the 32-ounce block I purchased in 1953 at the A&P, and it was sooooo much better than this crap. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

Back me up here: Cheese comes from a cow. Leather comes from a cow. The third anniversary is the "leather" anniversary . . . (Todd DeLap)

This is an excellent product: Melts quickly with no lumps, then I just mix it with a little base- coat makeup and voila!, the perfect shade for my Trump costume. (Robyn Carlson)

People!! Pasteurization is just a scheme to increase costs and make money for Big Cheese — who DON'T tell you that pasteurization can ALSO cause your children to be infertile until they reach PUBERTY! If you love your kids, only feed them natural, homemade, unpasteurized velveeta! (Frank Osen)

The aroma of this cheese has a fair intensity but low duration. The flavor is heavy on the sweet and salty side, with very few bitter notes. Elastic and sticky in the mouth, it quickly melts with a buttery texture. While lacking total satisfaction, I ate the entire package in one sitting.

Pairs well with a six-pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

It mixes well in casseroles; it melts into a dip.

It boosts a salad's flavor; it's versatile and hip.

No matter how you slice or dice or chop or shred or nuke it, Velveeta's smooth when going down, and later when you puke it. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

5-pound dumbbell:

This item is aptly named! I hit it 20 times with a hammer and the only sound I got was a miserable clank! (George Smith, Frederick, Md.)

If you want biceps like Barney Fife and are willing to do the work, here is all the gym equipment you'll ever need. (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

I lifted this thing like 10 times and I still don't look like the guy in the picture. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.)

5 stars! Superior in every way to the 239-pound one! (Tom Gleason, Lawrence, Kan.)

I read in the reviews here that this was great for curls, but it is extremely uncomfortable. I woke up with a really stiff neck, and when I sat up, it ripped my hair out. (Frank Osen)

Very accurate item description — I pounded this on my alarm clock exactly five times, and that was the perfect number to completely mute the stupid &\$^# ringer. Five stars! (Danielle Nowlin)

Your website says this product is available in sizes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 15 lb. So I guess those of us who prefer to work out with dumbbells weighing 11, 13 or 14 pounds are just out of luck, huh? (Steve Honley, Washington)

Swivel vegetable peeler:

I've been a KitchenAid man for years, but I like to stay abreast of the latest developments in peeler tech. This premium swivel model from Zulay has good balance and okay shear tolerance, but it seems to come at the expense of adequate torque and tensile strength. The handle is reasonably grippy, but still gets slick in intense peeling situations. Overall rating: 3.275. (David Hammond)

Your health plan doesn't cover impetigo? This peeler quickly and painlessly removes scabs. Just remember to rinse it off in warm water before returning to meal preparation. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Works okay but jiggles when you shake it. Maybe mine had a manufacturer's defect? (Frank Mann, Washington)

60 binder clips, assorted sizes:

(Can't say how these work in the long term, but the right wing of our boss's executive jet is still there. (Frank Mann)

These are perfect for executing just about any intricate updo. And when strategically placed, they can also pinch a tiny bit of scalp — presto, instant facelift. Way cheaper than Botox. (John McCooey, Rehoboth

Beach, Del.)

Don't you hate it when you only need 59 binder clips but are forced to buy that one extra? Thank goodness for Craigslist! (Deb Stewart)

[Bought them years ago](#) in anticipation of promotion that never came through. Never buy in bulk unless you really, really need that many. @MittRomney (Dinah Rokach, Silver Spring, Md.)

Good, but nearly impossible to open once the handles fold forward. Then you need a screwdriver to pry it open — terribly inconvenient. (Martin Bancroft, Bellevue, Wash.)

60 binder clips, assorted sizes: Five stars! Binder clip squeezes are an essential part of my fingerbuilding regimen. My pinkies are RIPPED!! (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

[Amazon Basics standard toilet paper holder:](#)

I'm so glad to have one of these at last! My older brother has been making me stand in the bathroom and hold the toilet paper for years. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

This product is thoroughly unsatisfactory! My husband insists the paper should hang over the roll, while I rightly hang it under, and your product DOES NOT PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS!!! (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

Just once, I wish they would design one of these things that could be refilled by spouses and children. (Robyn Carlson)

This is described as a "modern" toilet paper holder. Does that mean that there's one of those cameras in it? (Warren Tanabe)

Extremely misleading because the toilet paper is NOT INCLUDED! I was really depending on the next-day shipping, so you can imagine my distress when the product arrived holding nothing! (Drew Bennett)

Still running — deadline Monday night, April 1: Our contest to sum up a Bible story or folk tale as someone else would write it. See [wapo.st/invite1324](#).

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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](#)

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