

The Style Invitational

Week LXXXVII: Ha Anxiety

This Week's Contest: Make us laugh. First-prize winner gets a delicate bell emblazoned with the logo of the Prince George's County Police Department. We have no idea to what use this bell is intended to be put, except to note that it is made of glass, and, struck smartly on a desktop, would probably shatter into utilitarian fingernail-size interrogational slivers, if you get our drift.

First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, by e-mail to losers@washpost.com, or by U.S. mail to The Style Invitational, Week LXXXVII, c/o The

Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 1. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and telephone number. E-mail entries must include the week number in the subject field. Contests will be judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post.

Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published in four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Brian Foster of Fairfax.

REPORT FROM WEEK LXXXIII

in which we asked you to explain how things would have been different if a historical figure of your choosing had been of the opposite gender, or a different nationality, or really, really stupid, or a dog, living in a world of dogs.

◆ **Fifth Runner-Up: If Beatrix Potter had been a man, her book would've started: "Once upon a time there were four little rabbits and their names were Flopsy, Fatso, Fartsy and Zit Boy."** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

◆ **Fourth Runner-Up: If Lorena Bobbitt had been a dog, she wouldn't have needed a knife. However, she also would have been "put to sleep."** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

◆ **Third Runner-Up: If Al Gore had been a dog, he would have promised to bury Social Security safely in the back yard.** (Ray Aragon and Cindy Coe, Bethesda)

◆ **Second Runner-Up: If Alan Webb were a Kenyan, he would finally make the varsity this year.** (Daniel J. Mauer, Silver Spring)

◆ **First Runner-Up: If Tajikistan's Prime Minister Yakhyo Azimov were Kazakhstani, who would give a crap?** (Chris Doyle, Burke)

◆ **And the winner of the coasters, drinking glass and necktie: If sculptor Gutzon Borglum had been a dog, living in a world of dogs...**



(Drew Knoblauch, Falls Church)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

If they were women:

Sigmund Freud would have declared that men look enviously at life savers, pencil sharpeners, holes in doughnuts, etc. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

J. Edgar Hoover could have saved a lot of money on clothes. (Grant Beale, Arlington)

Douglas MacArthur would have said, "I'll be back in a jiff." (David McAuley, McLean)

Muhammad Ali would float like a butterfly and sting like an astrigent. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Instead of making an arrest of Pee-wee Herman, police would have made a video. (Drew Knoblauch, Falls Church)

Yasser Arafat? It would have meant one more blind date for me that somebody would swear "Can't miss." (Michael Scott, Arlington)

Moe Howard would have disciplined her brother Curly and compatriot Larry Fine with scathing, pithy sarcasm and icy glares of disapproval followed by sensible advice and empathetic encouragement to learn from their mistakes. Mercifully, this did not happen. (William Jacobs, Olney)

Jesus would have made sure beforehand that there were enough fishes and loaves to feed all those people, not to mention tartar sauce, brownies, potato salad, green bean casserole, iced tea, cinnamon buns... (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

Abner Doubleday would have required you to touch a lot more bases before you score. (Roger Hall, Harrisonburg)

If they were men:

Florence Nightingale's bedside manner would have consisted of: "Wounded? Nah. Walk it off, wuss." (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

If they were dogs, in a world of dogs...

Frank Sinatra would have been known as "Old Blue." (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

Lennon-McCartney would have written "When I'm 9." (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Lauren Bacall would have said to Bogart, "You know how to whistle, don't you? Oh, wait, neither do I." (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Bonnie and Clyde would have been famous for knocking over a whole string of garbage cans. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

Ponce de Leon would have yearned to drink from the Toilet of Puppyhood. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

Judge Roy Bean would have been known as The Fixing Judge. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Louis Pasteur would be famous for inventing the "eating grass" cure. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Ty Cobb would be known as the dirty athlete who slid into second base with one leg up. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Abbie Hoffman would have written "Chew This Book." (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Strom Thurmond would be approaching 693 years old. (Mel Loftus, Holmen, Wisc.; Mike Genz, La Plata)

If they had been of different nationalities:

If Wayne Newton had been German, he would have had a hit song called, "Thank You." (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

If Bill Clinton had been French, Monica would simply have been called The First Mistress, and no one would have given two patooties. (Kelli Midgley-Biggs, Columbia; Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

If Kevin Costner were Japanese, after the failure of "Waterworld" he would have disemboweled himself. Darn! (Mark Young, Washington)

If Van Gogh had been Sicilian, the ear in the mail might actually have worked. (Dan Dunn, Bethel, Conn.)

If Clarence Thomas were not African American, there'd be absolutely no difference. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

If they'd been really stupid:

Hirohito: There would have been a sneak attack on Bar Harbor. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

George Washington: We'd be entering the Cornwallis Post Style Invitational. (Chris Doyle, Burke)

Next Week: Acronymious



LIFE IS SHORT

LIFE IS SHORT, From F1



When I woke up on Sept. 11, I opened presents and birthday cards from my family before heading for work. "Fifty is nifty," I thought with a laugh. Less than two hours later, after the World Trade Center and Pentagon were attacked, any feelings of self-pity disappeared. "Fifty is beautiful," I thought. "Fifty is a gift. Fifty is being alive."

Carol Ann Riordan
Reston



My fiancé looks Arabic. I'm worried. I want him to stay home and lie low until the cry for revenge dies down. I want him to make sure people hear his Jersey accent. I want him to shave his five o'clock shadow every day. But he just volunteered to drive a truck to deliver supplies for the Salvation Army to and from the site of the Pentagon crash. I tell him to be careful. "I'm not going to do anything differently," he tells me. But everything is different now—except for his character.

Sushella Varky
Washington



My oldest son, Matthew, called from Seattle to say that he would not be joining us for a long-anticipated vacation in late September. Now he is afraid to fly. I was not able to persuade him otherwise, even though his younger brother is flying in. He encouraged me not to be disappointed in him. "It's okay to be afraid, Dad, and to let the people who love you know," he said. "It eliminates distance." I wish I had learned that lesson at age 25.

David R. Porter
Vienna

Find a way to give insight into your life in under 100 words. Authors of selected entries will be notified and paid \$100. Send text (accompanied by daytime phone number) via e-mail (lifeishort@washpost.com), fax (202-334-5587) or surface mail (Style, Life Is Short, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071).



PHOTOS BY REBECCA D'ANGELO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

We came to the beach for a late summer vacation. Five days, no work, no commute through the Pentagon Metro station, no worries. Then came the attack. Glued to the tube for hours, I cannot bear to hear "unbelievable" uttered one more time. I walk to the beach and find another vacationer contemplating the American flag waving furiously in the wind. He lowers the flag to half staff. My heart sinks as deep as the ocean. I shiver and wonder, will I ever feel carefree again?

Carol Ann Linder
Arlington



I live in the house my grandfather built in Arlington in 1940. He was a Lithuanian Jew who fled the pogroms in 1906 and came to the United States to be safe. Inside, his memory lingers, like sunlit notes in the quiet air. Outside, his ashes long ago leached into the roots of azaleas and dogwoods and oaks that he planted 60 years ago. In the winter, long shadows of trees reach through the windows into the house like ghosts. Now, only the dead are safe.

Edwin Fountain
Arlington



Before school this morning, my 8-year-old daughter, Sophie, sat down and drew a horse-shoe-shaped rainbow over a field (her favorite subject). She announced that "this is my last rainbow; from now on I am going to draw dead people." I was shocked and asked her how she would draw them. She said it would be a "curved stone over the grass." About a half-hour ago, the rain stopped and the sun came out. I pray that she sees a rainbow.

Dan Craun-Selka
Washington