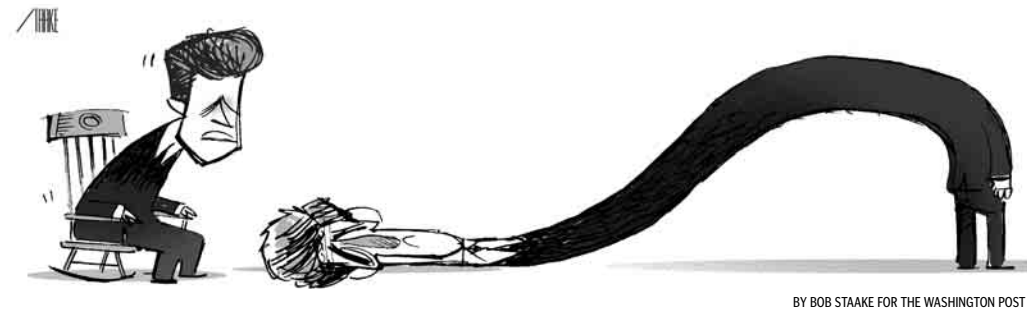


The Style Invitational

Week 558: Set Us Right



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

What is the difference between JFK (1960) and JFK (2004)?

John F. Kennedy had no problem with charisma, and a bad spine. John F. Kerry has a bad problem with charisma, and no spine.

Over the years, The Invitational has been accused of awarding prizes (such as they are) to political humor that tends to veer maybe a wee bit to the left. So, to compensate for any perceived liberal bias, The Empress decided this week to print only right-leaning anagrams in the results below. Nah, not really; that would have been wrong. In fact, it would have been impossible—because there weren't any right-leaning ones to choose from: The spectrum of the political anagrams submitted ranged from Gentle Tweaking of the Administration to Raving Leftist Screed.

This week's contest, suggested by Mark Cackler of Falls Church: See if you can give us some Fair and Balance—send us conservative-leaning humor in any of the following genres: (1) Knock-knock jokes; (2) limericks; (3) "how can you tell" riddles; (4) "what's the difference" riddles; (5) four-line rhyming poems. Jokes about Bill Clinton's sex life do not qualify; they transcend ideological barriers. And needless to say, joke plagiarists will be abused and humiliated.

First-prize winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational Trophy. First runner-up wins an autographed copy of "The Hype About Hydrogen" by Joseph Romm, a longtime Loser who donated his new book as a prize in a desperate attempt to see it mentioned in The Washington Post. (Joe is perhaps more famous for having also donated as a prize, in 1995, his underpants.)

Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week.

Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312 or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. Deadline is Monday, May 24. Put the week number in the subject line of your e-mail, or you risk being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are 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 June 13. 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 Scott Campisi of Wake Village, Tex.

Report from Week 554, in which we asked you to create an anagram for any text about a person or event recently in the news. Many (but not all) of the winning entrants used the suggested Anagram Artist software—as did many of the losing entrants. As we found out right away, that program will count letters for you, and even suggest words, but it's still really hard to write a good anagram on it.

Once again, the people at www.anagrammy.com invite you to enter your Invitational entry—winning or not (and other anagrams)—in their monthly contest. And you even get to vote for the winners.

◆ **Third runner-up:** From: *Ads for men are trying to sell Viagra, Levitra, Cialis.* Anagrammed to: **I find vitals are larger, also staying more vertical.** (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)

◆ **Second runner-up:** *Paris Hilton*
= **Hi! (Loins part.)** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

◆ **First runner-up, the winner of John O'Byrne's book "In Other Words: A Book of Irish and American Anagrams":** *Bob Dylan, age sixty-two, appears in a Victoria's Secret commercial, singing while Adriana Lima slinks around in her undies.*
= **Ridiculous ad attacks women, i.e., insists sex appeal is a rich, incoherent old man and a servile bra-baring girl. Oy, I'm yawning.** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ **And the winner of the Inker:**
I, George Walker Bush, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.
= **We, Karl Rove and G.W. Bush, do solemnly swear that we'll faithfully disinfect this here tainted office of President and, to the best of our ability, update the effete Constitution to help us to get elected next time. Yes, sir.** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

◆ **Honorable Mentions:**
Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz
= **Oddly, they puff weed. More puffs.**
= **"So, let's nail Switzerland and Ecuador!"** (Chris Doyle)

Soon-to-be-former president George Walker Bush
= **Master of errors & pure gobbledegook in the news** (Richard Grantham, North Melbourne, Australia)

The United States Department of Homeland Security
= **Taut, tense men fondled my chest at the airport. I sued.** (Chris Doyle)

The Donald's hair
= **He's hid an old rat.** (Chris Doyle)

Should the Iraq war be continued?
= **Hear a blended chorus: "Quit it now!"** (Larry Brash, The Junction, Australia)

The singer Clay Aiken of "American Idol"
= **"Fact: I like girls. I do!! Can anyone hear me?"** (Meyran Kraus, Rehovot, Israel)

Islamic extremist Moussaoui learns to fly.
= **CIA to Rummy: "Listen, relax! Most U.S. oil is safe."** (Chris Doyle)

The American Association of Retired Persons
= **Fact: I am seniors, diapers, coronaries, no teeth.** (Chris Doyle)

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton's . . .
= **. . . another actor for oil energy interests.** (Toby Gottfried, Santa Ana, Calif.)

The Cherry Blossom Festival and Parade
= **Do a frosty schlep amid vernal trees? Bah!** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)

Richard Clarke: "The CIA, FBI, NSA, DoD, and I failed you."
= **Dick Cheney: "Torrid liar! A fib! CANADA failed us. D'oh!"** (Chris Doyle)

Earth Day: April twenty-second.
= **Hardy planet? We CAN destroy it!** (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

Wardrobe malfunction
= **Alarm crowd, but no fine.** (Alison Kamat, Reston)

One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

= **Or one Bible nation, riddled with injustice for all uninvited gays?** (Chris Doyle)

Louvre: Famed Mona Lisa painting is deteriorating.

= **Item: Sad evaporating smile infuriating Leonardo.** (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

In Baltimore, the Orioles team kicked off their new season; their Opening Day pitcher was Sidney Ponson.

= **With beefy ace pitcher, inane errors and weak hitting, I see no trips to Disneyland soon, folks. Oh me, I mope.** (Brendan Beary)

Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ"
= **See the mobs, lashings! (I notch profits.)** (Chris Doyle)

Mrs. Maria Teresa Thierstein Simoes-Ferreira Heinz Kerry
= **Zany heiress misfit marries me, Senator. Take her! I err! I err!** (Chris Doyle)

Michael "Mikey" Jackson shouldn't dangle babies out of any windows.

= **"I did unduly fling own babe." Loathsomeness, thy name is Wacko Jacko.** (Scott Slaughter, Mount Airy)

Jaetagus leindagut, D. Bravman, Potomac, Scribbles a lyric With lexical styles.
= **Double-dactylical Anagrammatical Poetry's vexing With just Scrabble tiles.** (Danny Bravman, Potomac)

See lots of CD reviews in Sunday Source, the New Section M of The Washington Post, featuring Carolyn Hax's advice column.
= **O, what aura of conceit, of smugness! Target conflicted sex-starved ninnies who unconsciously move lips when they read.** (Brendan Beary)

Style Invitational Loser:
= **I soil vilely 'n' eat rat snot.** (Mark Hagenau, Derry, N.H.)

Peddling Posters of Off-Kilter Kitsch

POSTERS, From D1

she's holding an opium pipe. And she's standing on a human skull. And the beams of light emanating from her head read "Filth" and "Immorality" and "Ruin to White Labor." It's an anti-immigration cartoon from an 1881 issue of the Wasp, the San Francisco literary magazine edited by Ambrose Bierce.

"I love these old immigration images," says Moursund, 59, "because they show that people used to say the same things about the *old* immigrant groups that they're saying now about the *new* immigrant groups."

The phone rings and Moursund answers it: "Georgetown Book Shop." He listens for a minute, then takes out a pen and writes something on the back of his left hand, which serves as his notebook and is already covered with phone numbers and messages. This is not unusual. His wife, Fallon, swears that the only time she's seen his left hand devoid of notes was their wedding day in 1990.

Moursund hangs up the phone and continues pulling his favorite posters out of the bins in the front of his store.

"Welcome to Greenville, Texas," says one. It's a blowup of a 1940s postcard that shows the main drag of scenic Greenville, where roadsters with running boards are parked under a welcome sign proclaiming the city's proud motto: The Blackest Land . . . The Whitest People.

"I BREAK STRIKES!" screams another poster. It's the cover of a 1935 book subtitled "The Techniques of Pearl L. Bergoff." Apparently, those techniques were pretty straightforward: A photo on the cover shows a goon whacking a striker with a baseball bat.

"HITLER IS RIGHT!" This poster is a blowup of the cover of a 1940 book that is, Moursund says, a 452-page rant against Jewish bankers, black rapists and the Treaty of Versailles.

"I Googled the author," Moursund says, smiling mischievously. "He published one other book, a picture book of Germany. It was published in 1949—in Buenos Aires." He bursts out laughing.

Moursund has an odd sense of humor—"it's kind of a black humor," says his wife—and it's reflected in his choice of images for the posters. They're all a tad off-kilter. This is kitsch with a twist. One poster is an ad for a 1934 Fourth of July picnic—but it's a picnic sponsored by the Communist Party. Another poster is an ad for a 1939 "Pro-American Rally" in Madison Square Garden—but it's sponsored by American Nazis. "Onward Christian Soldiers," says one poster—but the name of that beloved old hymn is written atop a photo of a 1925 Ku Klux Klan march in Washington.

Moursund finds this weird stuff when he is out scouting for old books. Sometimes an image just cries out to become a poster.

"I just look at them and there's the Wow! factor," he says, smiling. "The real kick I get is to see people flip through these and say, '*What the hell?*' That's the reaction I'm going for."

These posters aren't for everybody: You have to share Moursund's sense of humor to appreciate them. But between the bookstore and its Web site—georgetownbookshop.com—Moursund has sold nearly 5,000 posters, at \$25 unframed or \$40 framed.

Which raises the question: Who buys this stuff?

Teachers buy many of them for use their classrooms, which pleases Moursund. The rest go to folks who just take a fancy to an image.

"The first person who bought this," Moursund says, holding the Klan's "Christian Soldiers" poster, "was a black man who is the former



BY KEVIN CLARK—THE WASHINGTON POST

Andy Moursund finds his images as he searches for books to sell in his used-book store. "I just look at them and there's the Wow! factor," he says.

president of Fisk University."

That's Walter Leonard, 74, retired after a distinguished career at Harvard and Fisk, and now living in Chevy Chase.

"Why did I buy it?" Leonard says. He laughs, then gets serious. "I have been a collector of art and historical memorabilia, particularly sides of American life—its promise and its reality. Often the promise and the reality get confused. We have to see to it that the reality is placed before America like a mirror."

Is the poster hanging in his house?

"Not yet," he says. But he plans to hang it in his library or maybe his sitting room, someplace where his wife won't encounter it too often. "In the interests of domestic tranquility," he explains, "I try to keep these things out of my wife's way."

Back in the bookstore, Moursund pulls out another poster. It's a photo of a rundown storefront in a nondescript brick building. The sign above the door reads: "Helen's Place New & Used Clothing for Men, Women, Children and Transvestite."

"I took that picture in Knoxville," he says. "It was the spring of 1975."

That was particularly odd period in Moursund's odd life. In those days, he and a girlfriend earned their living traveling to campuses across America, showing campy old TV programs, complete with the original advertisements, to inebriated college kids at midnight screenings. The show ended with the Mickey Mouse Club singing, "Now it's time to say goodbye," then a quick cut to Richard Nixon saying, "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore." In the Watergate era, that clever juxtaposition frequently inspired patrons to throw beer bottles at the screen.

"At midnight shows in the '70s, you just assumed that everybody was drunk or stoned or both," he says. "We sometimes spent hours cleaning up the beer bottles."

The son of a Norwegian immigrant, Moursund grew up in Washington and graduated from Wilson High School in 1962. He

studied at Duke University but dropped out for a year to work as a SNCC volunteer in the civil rights movement. On July 12, 1963, Moursund's picture appeared on the front page of the New York Times—he was shown lying on a sidewalk in Cambridge, Md., after being beaten by white bigots for trying to desegregate a restaurant called the Dizzyland.

"They kicked the hell out of us and dumped us on the sidewalk," he recalls.

After he finally graduated in 1967, Moursund drove a cab in Washington, then worked as an assistant to maverick journalist I.F. Stone, all the while spending his nights pursuing his life's great passion—pool hustling.

In 1979 he began working as a used-book buyer for a local store. In 1984, he founded his own bookshop, first in Georgetown, then in Bethesda. Two years ago he started making and selling his posters.

Smiling, Moursund pulls out the first poster he ever made. It's the cover of a communist children's book, "Teachings of Marx for Girls and Boys," with photos of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. It was published in the '30s, he says, by an Episcopal bishop from Kansas who became a communist nicknamed the Red Bishop.

Moursund finds the cover hilarious. "There's something so *sublime* about that," he says, laughing.

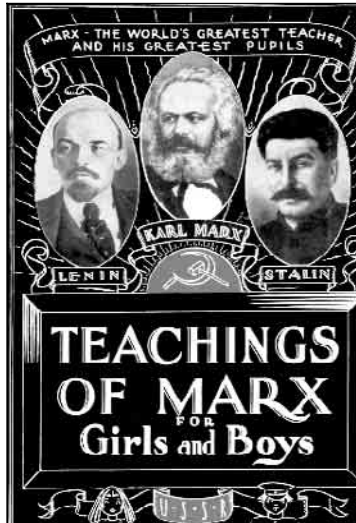
The message of his posters, he says, is that American history is far more varied than most people realize. "The more you see, the more you realize how complex America is," he says. Then he smiles. "Of course, sometimes the complexity is just the average of the nuts on both sides."

He pulls out another poster. It's the cover of a magazine called Japan Times Weekly with a photo of Japanese fighter planes zooming through the clouds. The date is Dec. 18, 1941.

"That's about a week after Pearl Harbor," Moursund says. "And I love the understated headline."

The headline, printed in small, subdued type, is this: "Weak Links in American Navy."

"It's *great!*" Moursund says, then he bursts out laughing.



Some of the posters for sale in Moursund's bookstore in downtown Bethesda. Many of the illustrations started out as political advertisements.

See BEYOND INSERT CARDS

The Magazine Reader. Tuesday. Style.

If it's important to you, it's important to us.

The Washington Post

NF202