

The Style Invitational

Week 565: Anthem Is as Anthem Does



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sometime before the sun sets today, at the parade or at the game or at the park before the fireworks, you will find yourself belting out a syntactic jumble about watching o'er ramparts, your pollen-saturated voice cracking up on "glare" like a strip of old Scotch tape. Don't let it happen again. For **this week's contest**, give us a verse for an alternative U.S. national anthem, set to any well-known tune.

First-prize winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational Trophy. First runner-up receives a vial of industrial-strength bubble gum food flavoring, plus a list of all the entries submitted by Russell Beland, Peter Metrinko and Brendan Beary for the contest below. 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, July 12. Put the week number in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks 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 Aug. 1. 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 Chris Doyle of Forsyth, Mo., and Seth Brown of North Adams, Mass. Today's contest was suggested by Russell Beland of Springfield.

Report from Week 561, in which we asked you to take a sentence from The Post or its Web site and supply a question it could answer. Once again, this challenge produced marvelous results, though relatively few people entered. Among those who did, however, was Obsessive Loser Russell Beland of Springfield, who sent in, in nine separate e-mails, 127 entries, most of them very funny. And Only Slightly Less Obsessive Losers Peter Metrinko of Plymouth, Minn., and Brendan Beary of Great Mills submitted 58 and 55 entries, respectively, most of them very funny (though a couple weren't quite printable). To those readers who gripe that they see the same names each week: You send the Empress 127 fabulous jokes and she'll write your name over and over, too.

◆ Sixth runner-up: *Then I went to Harvard, where I was a varsity athlete in basketball and crew. What happened after you finished your book tour, Jayson?* (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ Fifth runner-up: *In Virginia, Asian Americans also have been wooed by both parties. Is it true that even politicians insult people now by poking fun at their ethnic names?* (Bill Spencer, Exeter, N.H.)

◆ Fourth runner-up: *In a good way. What line never works after informing your wife that her new outfit does indeed make her look fat?* (Russell Beland, Springfield)

◆ Third runner-up: *Don't run, don't make any loud noises.*

◆ **What advice from his mother does Howard Dean regret not taking?** (Milo Sauer, Fairfax; Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)

◆ Second runner-up: *We look forward to completing the proposed merger after all conditions have been satisfied. How did Al announce his engagement to Tipper?* (Russell Beland)

◆ First runner-up, the winner of the hairy deer-leg flask: *Bill Murray, hands down. What did Jane Curtin often have to say during costume changes at "Saturday Night Live"?* (Brendan Beary)

◆ And the winner of the Inker: *I know I have to get up in the morning and put my underwear on first and my pants on next.*

◆ **After receiving some helpful advice on the subway today, how will I change my dressing regimen tomorrow?** (Marc Leibert, New York)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

It is not only the way she lived that people remember. What is the greatest understatement ever about Isadora Duncan? (Russell Beland)

All my friends from high school have children. What did your teenage daughter say just before you transferred her to the military academy? (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

One person can come along like a wave and wash it all away. What did one spider tell his friend who was building his web in a urinal? (Peter Metrinko, Plymouth, Minn.)

If it looks like it hasn't been used in 10 years, it probably hasn't. Have any tips for dating older men? (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)

Winning hearts and minds is my job, in a nutshell. How does the Planters mascot describe his role? (Russell Beland)

Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.) and Rice. What's planned for the menu next time Hannibal Lecter comes to Washington? (Brendan Beary)

Just bloody get on with it, then.

◆ **What are the traditional words of foreplay used by the British royal family?** (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)

A series of chain reactions will destroy Earth unless a time traveler successfully completes his mission. What's the lamest ploy ever used by a guy trying to get lucky? (Brendan Beary)

There was a tremendous amount of worry that the Irish and Jews were just not good enough. How did the Bullets ever end up with a name like the Wizards? (Russell Beland)

Love pleaded guilty last month to a misdemeanor drug charge and agreed to enter a drug-rehabilitation program.

◆ **Baby, baby, where did our love go?** (Peter Metrinko)

Using a lit match, carefully heat the bottom of the broken piece, then lightly push the two pieces back together.

◆ **What was the worst suggestion given to John Wayne Bobbitt?** (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

◆ **Don't leave any big lumps. What is rule No. 1 when you "interrogate" a suspect?** (Chris Doyle, Brendan Beary)

They lead to a poorly lit back room in the basement.

◆ **What have I found out about my degrees in philosophy and humanistic studies?** (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

"This is not a drill, this is not a drill." What hypnosis-oriented alternative to Novocaine met with little success? (Jane Auerbach)

I went to music school for almost a year. Except for "Smoke on the Water," what's the last thing you want to hear when a guy on the bus pulls out an accordion? (Russell Beland)

Most experts expect it in 10 to 20 years. When is the next issue of Martha Stewart Living? (Milo Sauer)

Like you're wearing a chiffon party dress without a slip. What did the Valley girl say when she saw her friend wearing a chiffon party dress without a slip? (Peter Metrinko)

The average speed of 97.042 mph was the slowest in Dover history by more than 3 mph. How bad is the traffic on Delaware highways following high school graduation ceremonies? (Jon Reiser)

Shoot, I'm looking forward to it. Do you have any last words for the firing squad, wise guy? (Chris Doyle)

Adrian describes a "pinprick sensation" during the procedure. How do we know Rocky Balboa was a less than satisfactory lover? (Brendan Beary)

"I did it! I shook Kucinich's hand!" a girl squealed.

◆ **What sentence went through five Washington Post fact-checkers before it was deemed to be true?** (Milo Sauer)

I was touched by your letter to Dear Abby, and I want you to know that you can become the president of the United States because of who you are, not in spite of it.

◆ **Dear Abby: Is it true that I can't get elected because Y2K bugs will make the computers confuse my pappy and I?** (Mike Connaghan, Alexandria)

We are 25 percent female and 7 to 10 percent minority company-wide.

◆ **How has Michael Jackson been referring to his condition?** (Brendan Beary)

◆ **More of these in next week's column as space permits.**

TODAY AT THE FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

The Smithsonian Institution's 38th annual Folklife Festival concludes today on the Mall between Seventh and 14th streets NW. Admission is free. For more information, call 202-633-9884 or visit www.folklife.si.edu. All schedules subject to change.

Haiti: Haitian Kitchen
11 a.m. Griot and fried plantains
Noon. Mabi (traditional beverage)
1 p.m. Creating a Mwason altar
2 p.m. Mwason Celebrations: History of the "Mwason" and sacred song
4 p.m. Mwason Celebrations: Food and traditional music
5 p.m. Mwason Celebrations: Exchanges, testimonies and offerings

Haiti: Music
11 a.m. Rara: San Rankin
11:45 a.m. Konbit Songs: Kod-o-Bann
12:30 p.m. Old Style Konpa: Reginald Polycard
1:15 p.m. Vodou Drumming: Azor
2 p.m. Tikoka: Twoubadou
2:45 p.m. Haitian Jazz: Reginald Polycard
3:30 p.m. Ballads: Boulo Valcourt
4:15 p.m. Vodou Drumming: Azor
5 p.m. Rara Music: San Rankin

Haiti: Ounfo
Noon. Veve Workshop: Sacred Drawings for Ibo Lole
12:45 p.m. Vodou and Space: The Ounfo and Lakou
1:30 p.m. Rhythm and Ritual Dance
2:15 p.m. Making a Sacred Altar
3 p.m. Vodou, Freedom and Creativity
3:45 p.m. Color, Dress and Ritual Display
4:30 p.m. Elements of Ceremony: Honoring Bawon Samdi

Haiti: KRIK KRAK
11 a.m. Haitian Tales, Proverbs and Songs
11:45 a.m. Traditional Knowledge: Owning It, Passing It On
12:30 p.m. Kreyol Workshop
1:15 p.m. Stories of Freedom and Creativity
2 p.m. Kids and Artistic Creativity
2:45 p.m. Diaspora Voices: Haitian Identity
3:30 p.m. International Trade, Local Tradition
4:15 p.m. Tradition, Art and Freedom in Haiti

Water Ways: Bayhouse Narrative
11 a.m. Church and Community
11:45 a.m. Maritime Fourth of July Celebrations
12:30 p.m. Boat Talk
1:15 p.m. Weather and the Water
2 p.m. Maritime Communities in Transition
2:45 p.m. Blessings of the Fleet
3:30 p.m. Recreational Fishing Tips
4:15 p.m. Crossing the Water: Lightships
5 p.m. Festival Memories, Week Two

Water Ways: Kid's Coast Environmental Learning Center
11 a.m. Make Your Own Lighthouse Activity
1:30 p.m. Clearwater Sloop Educational Staff: Sing Along River Songs
Water Ways: Maritime Kitchen
11 a.m. Sunday After Church Cooking
Noon. Delaware Bay Oyster Cooking
1 p.m. Special Occasion Shrimp
2 p.m. Crisfield Celebration Cooking
3 p.m. North Carolina Cooking
4 p.m. Delaware Bay Celebration Cooking
5 p.m. Fourth of July Beverages

Water Ways: Shore Memories
11 a.m. Island Sunday Mornings
11:45 a.m. Southern Maryland Stories and Songs
12:30 p.m. Tangier Island Life
1:15 p.m. Old-Time and Bluegrass Music
2 p.m. Southern Maryland Stories and Songs
2:45 p.m. Down East North Carolina Stories and Songs
3:30 p.m. Old-Time and Bluegrass Music

4:15 p.m. Tugboat and Piloting Stories
5 p.m. Festival Memories
Nuestra Musica: El Portal
11 a.m. Music and Family
11:50 a.m. Music and Politics
12:40 p.m. Colombian Llanero Musical Traditions
1:30 p.m. Los Primos (Trio Romantico)
2:20 p.m. Conjunto Traditions of Texas
3:10 p.m. Music and Identity: Latino Musicians in the United States
4 p.m. Perico Ripiao: Traditional Merengue of the Dominican Republic

Nuestra Musica: El Salon de Baile
11 a.m. Salsa Dance Class with DJ Bruno
11:50 a.m. Los Primos (Trio Romantico)
12:40 p.m. Salsa Dance Class with DJ Bruno
1:30 p.m. Bailemos, Let's Dance! Son Jarocho Fandangos
2:20 p.m. Afro-Cuban Dance
3:10 p.m. New Mexican Social Dance
4 p.m. Bailemos, Let's Dance! Conjunto Tejano
4:50 p.m. Salsa Dance Class with DJ Bruno

Nuestra Musica: La Fonda
11 a.m. Plena y Bomba
11:50 a.m. Guatemalan Marimba
12:40 p.m. Conjunto Tejano
1:30 p.m. Traditional Merengue
2:20 p.m. Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano
3:10 p.m. Son Jarocho
4 p.m. Los Primos (Trio Romantico)
4:50 p.m. Joropo Llanero

Nuestra Musica: La Peña
11 a.m. Viols in Latino Music
11:50 a.m. Traditional Merengue
12:40 p.m. The Son Mexicano
1:30 p.m. Musical Traditions of New Mexico
2:20 p.m. Llanero Musical Traditions of Colombia
3:10 p.m. Plena y Bomba of Puerto Rico
4 p.m. Afro-Cuban Religious Music
4:50 p.m. Marimba Traditions of Guatemala

Gelato at the National Gallery: Not Your Typical Mall Ice Cream

GELATO. From D1

close, professional consideration I give to other works of art.

Just this Thursday, I arranged a "private viewing" of the gallery's gelato holdings and invited along fellow connoisseur Eleonora Luciano, assistant curator of sculpture. Luciano was born and grew up in Italy—first in the north, then in the far south—so would be sure to balance any North American prejudices I might bring to my critique. (You can tell she's a real Italian because a passion for gelato apparently has no effect on a slim waist, and because her linen skirt and crisply tailored blazer are classically "breezesh," as they say in Italy.) The National Gallery's food "curator"—Daniel Karsevar, of Restaurant Associates, the company contracted to run the museum's restaurant operations—supplied the exhibits: a table full of cups of freshly scooped gelato. (It has been salad for dinner ever since.)

First, vanilla—the primed "canvas," as it were, behind many works of frozen art. The National Gallery's version was much softer, smoother, more voluptuous than any American ice cream could be—it had none of the hard edges of a Norman Rockwell-style scoop, or his excess of sweetness and fat.

We tried other artistic parallels. Michelangelo seemed at first a likely match, since vanilla is at gelato's heart the way the Florentine is at the root of any art that followed after him. But that wouldn't do—the gallery's vanilla was too mellow, almost too dissolute, to come from that master's firm hand. Raphael's softness came closer—but was still too classically poised for a vanilla that had an undertone of real flamboyance. Then we got it: Tiepolo. The gallery's pungent "Bourbon vanilla" (the best beans once came from the French "Bourbon" islands in the Indian Ocean) was like one of Tiepolo's ro-coco clouds: White at first glance, but with a dozen other tones lurking underneath to give it heft.

Peach gelato was much easier to match to an Old Master: Giovanni Bellini. The peach cocktail named after him made this an almost clichéd choice, of course. But we couldn't forget the peachy, golden light of his greatest pictures (that sunset in the National Gallery's great "Feast of the Gods," for instance) and the comfortable, quiet sweetness in his Renaissance madonnas, just like the flavor of the peach gelato we had at hand—not as intense as other options, but exquisitely comforting.

Luciano, the sculpture expert, made the call on the gallery's chocolate gelato: Bernini would be its patron saint. It was slightly firmer than the other gelati, richer and more baroque in flavor profile. It was also an obvious crowd-pleaser that still offered depths for further contemplation. Extravagant and carefully contrived, at once.

And then there were the flavors with a more modern aesthetic attitude: cinnamon, which seemed to have a cubist spice to it, and banana-blueberry, which had an almost pop art touch. Betty Edwards, who has long run the gelato machines at the gallery, talks of other flavors they've dreamed up that lack Italian precedents: pumpkin, served around Thanksgiving, and eggnog served for the holidays alongside her own invention, candy-cane gelato.

Albert Lukas, executive chef at the gallery, says he even tried to take the art form to the radical fringe. Black truffle gelato, however, wasn't as good as he had hoped.

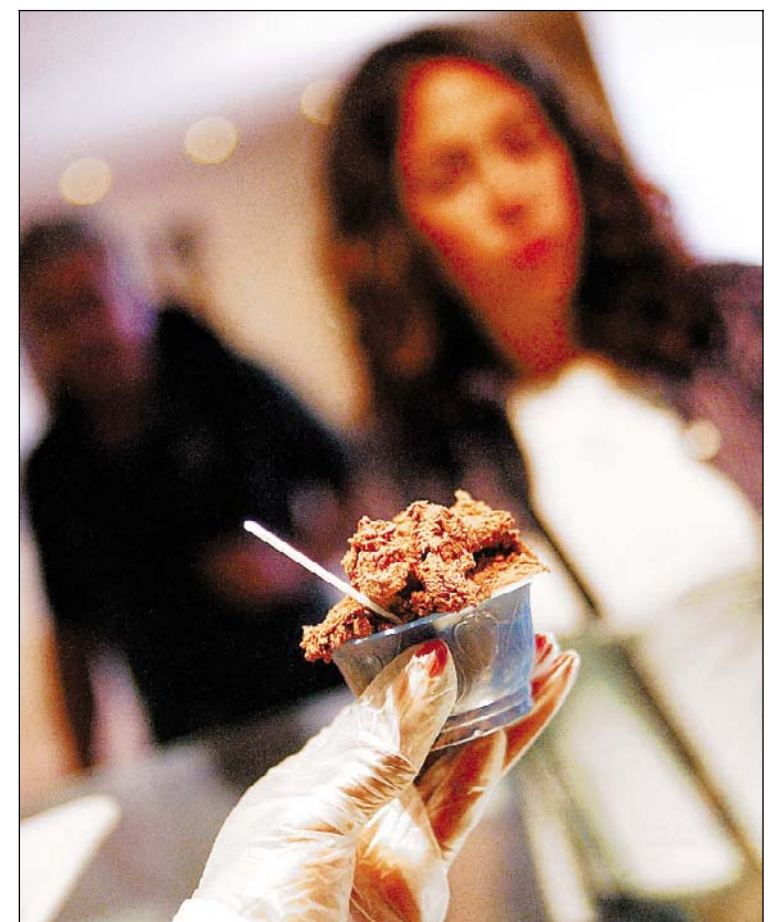
After our aesthetic marathon, Luciano and I agreed that the assembled tastes and textures brought back crisp memories of Italy. (We both missed the much smaller servings available there, however. They allow patrons to take tiny gelato hits, and then repeat them with other flavors, instead of consuming a super-size single taste. Karsevar heard our complaint: He says that from now on, the staff won't balk if you ask for extra flavors in the \$2.75 "single-flavor" cup.)

But, for all the pleasure that our tasting brought, we hadn't quite encountered any great masterpieces of the gelataio's art. The National Gallery's gelato is made fresh daily with whole milk and a dollop of cream, as it should be. (Gelato hovers at 6 percent butterfat, compared with 20 percent or more for American ice cream. The fruit flavors, properly known as "sorbetti," have al-



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN ERNST FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Italian-style gelati of many flavors, some classic, some not, sit ready to be savored at the National Gallery of Art.



◆ **A freshly scooped serving of gelato makes its way to a customer at the National Gallery. In Italy the servings are smaller than those in America.**

most no fat at all.) But, like all but a tiny handful of gelati, even in Italy, the flavoring components come from prepackaged "compounds," imported in this case from a firm in Turin. Edwards can't build a new taste from the bottom up; she can only blend or tweak what comes from Italy by adding extra fruit or a new ingredient or two. And the texture, again as often in Italy, depends on mixing in a mysterious powder that can't have been around in gelato's early days. (At rival gelateria Gelatisimo, some blocks west of the gallery in the food court of the Ronald Reagan Building, owner Stelvio Pacchini says that he adds similar imported flavors to a base he makes from scratch. But for all the wonderfully authentic look and feel of his establishment—his display cases were shipped direct from Italy four years ago; he moved from Florence only six years before that, when he was 61—his gelato doesn't quite measure up to what the gallery can offer.)

Maybe, coming fresh to a foreign tradition, Lukas and Edwards shouldn't be expected to live up to grand models like Tiepolo, Bellini and Bernini. They're at a happy second level, filled by great unknowns like Bacchiacca, Beccafumi and Schiavone.

They're undervalued makers riffing on the greatest masters' innovations, providing heaps of pleasure as they go.

Next Week: **The LMNs of Style or RDRR**