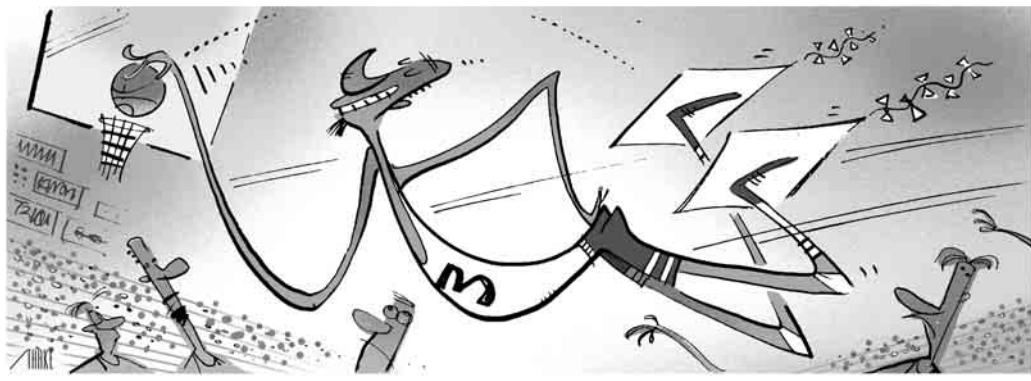


The Style Invitational

Week 571: A Tour de Fours



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

TESH: kiteshoe: The sneaker that puts Air Jordans to shame.

STHE: malisthenics: Ten more push-ups, just for spite.

HETS: apathets: "whatever," "so," etc.

In his first Style Invitational contest suggestion ever, Obsessive Invitationist Chris Doyle of Forsyth, Mo., proposes a twist on a contest that ran occasionally in the erstwhile New York Magazine Competition, of which this column is a direct rip-off. Editor Mary Ann Madden offered up a game called Superghost, in which a "root" of four letters was supplied, and contestants had to create and define a word that included it. Chris suggests that we invite more variety by letting you arrange the four letters—we'll be using T, H, E and S—in any order before you make up the neologism (the letters must appear consecutively, however).

First-prize winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational Trophy. First runner-up wins a Defense Intelligence Agency coffee mug plus a bandanna with a picture of a stealth bomber on it. Drinking from the mug or wearing the bandanna makes you invisible. 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 by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 23. 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 Sept. 12. 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 Brendan Beary of Great Mills.

Report from Week 567, when we asked you to tell what these cartoons had to do with the presidential campaign: Many people described Cartoon C as a diagram of the spider holes hiding WMDs and/or Osama bin Laden under the Crawford ranch.



◆ **Fourth runner-up: Cartoon A:** Kerry will claim that the grass clippings spraying onto his legs merit another Purple Heart. (Jerry Pannullo, Kensington)

◆ **Third runner-up: Cartoon D:** In a bold attempt to steal the thunder from Barack Obama's convention speech, Jack Ryan makes off with the party mascot. (Janice Eisen, Brookfield, Wis.)

◆ **Second runner-up: Cartoon B:** Despite his being shot, drugged, given electric shocks, and left in the bathtub for dead, the Republicans can't stop Vice President Rasputin from hitting the campaign trail. (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

◆ **First runner-up, the winner of the "Impala Skin Bushpen": Cartoon A:** Vying for the suburban vote, Bush and Kerry hold a "mow-off." After the initial photo op, however, Kerry's manservant Jacques is easily defeated by Bush's head gardener, Vicente. (Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

◆ **And the winner of the Inker: Cartoon D:** As the entire GOP convention floor went silent, Karl Rove began to regret hiring MTV to produce the "Let's Whip the Dems" video. (Josh Tucker, Kensington)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

Cartoon A: Bush goes right, Kerry goes left, they both make a lot of noise, and neither one scratches the surface. (Ned Bent, Oak Hill)

The candidates diverge at the grass routes level. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Surprise winner Nader took the high road and found positions for both Kerry and Bush on the White House staff. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

Each man tries to prove that he's the "lawn order" candidate. (Joseph Romm, Washington)

Both candidates were poorly advised for their campaign stop in Motown. (Rick Powell, Springfield)

Cartoon B: After a long day on the trail, Karl Rove unwinds in a soothing bath of hydrochloric acid. (Roger and Pam Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Okay, who let the president play with the rubber pretzel bath toy? (John Ost, Alexandria)

Cheney swims a dozen laps to prove to the press corps that he is fit to serve another term. (Jeff Brechlin)

Cartoon C: Hoping to appeal to rural voters, Bush boasted of the time he spent on the farm as a kid. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

Just because Bush didn't go to Vietnam doesn't mean he didn't have to battle the Viet Cong. Here, from the family archives, is a cross-section of ranch in Crawford circa 1969. (Carl Gerber, Annandale)

This is clearly a hoax. The intent may be to let us know where the veep's "undisclosed location" really is, but this can't be the United States because everyone knows there

are no more family farms in the United States. (Bill Spencer, Exeter, N.H.)

The Anagrammarians Party buys ads to point out that "ant farm" = "Mr. NAFTA," but fail to explain how that's in any way relevant. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

While they can find nothing on Kerry himself, or even his immediate family, Republicans discover there is dirt dug up on his ant. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

In an ant farm, the ants work very hard and remain in the dark. This is a good metaphor for the current administration, except for the "work very hard." (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

Cartoon D: Wesley Clark could never understand why his training as a cavalry officer got people so upset. (Elden Carnahan)

If Cheney withdraws, many Republicans think former House whip Tom Delay would make an ideal dark-horse candidate, assuming there's nothing embarrassing in his closet. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Cartoon E: This is your brain listening to campaign ads. Any questions? What? Um, well, those are your Achilles tendons listening to campaign ads. Any questions? (Ned Bent)

Kerry, out to show he's not a snooty elitist, goes to breakfast at Denny's, where he promptly orders *un oeuf avec deux tranches fines des lardons fumés*. (Chris Doyle)

The legend under this campaign button reads: "He lied. People fried." (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

Where's the beef? (Hamdi Akar, Broad Run)

The fundraising breakfast for the American Jewish Committee went terribly wrong. (Thad Humphries, Warrenton)

As we learned from 2000, it's not ovum till it's ovum. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)



BY MARVIN JOSEPH—THE WASHINGTON POST

CapitalWeather.com bloggers, from left, Jamie Jones, Josh Larson, Andrew Freedman and Jason Samenow. The public's growing obsession with weather has spawned an Internet industry built around peering at charts, dials and skies.

Doing Something About The Weather: Blogging It

WEATHER, From D1

menow's blog, www.CapitalWeather.com, and the others provide up-to-the-minute forecasts for a new set of the weather-obsessed, part of a generation that increasingly looks to the Internet as its primary source of news and that wants personality with its predictions. Informed, entertaining, for sure, but the Weather Channel this ain't.

Anticipating a "quadruple whammy" this weekend, Samenow blogs in the wee hours that strong storms will "pop" over the area, with a fizzle from Tropical Storm Bonnie and a solid "punch" from her successor, Charley. Posted alongside the storm analysis is a magnified photo of a 1.5-inch chunk of ice placed next to a ruler, like a piece of Diamonique jewelry displayed on QVC.

While an earlier generation of "weather weenies" will be stuck in front of the TV, Samenow will not be idle. No, a storm hits and he drives toward it, from his apartment in Van Ness to the maelstrom in Virginia, to collect evidence for his weather blog. He checks out Doppler radar, dew points, jet stream winds, satellite images, vorticity maps and convective parameters, and creates his own forecast, which he details under such subject headings as "Amazing Alex" or "Flood Redux" or "Thunder in the blogosphere." Come the apocalypse, you begin to think, he would probably be outside with a thermometer and a tape measure preparing an entry: "End of the World???"

Perhaps, Samenow says, there are those who cannot fathom the appeal of blogging the weather. Weather is the topic of idle conversation, not heated debate, incompatible with intrigue, what you discuss at the water cooler when there's absolutely nothing else to say—right? Not exactly, the blogger says. The weather constantly changes and we constantly change with it. Nothing is more elemental.

Its ubiquity is part of what makes it perfect blog fodder, says Leslie Campisi, 26, a blogger on the weather portion of Gothamist, a popular New York-based blog. The site, www.gothamist.com/weather, which launched this March, receives 5,000 to 10,000 hits a day, Campisi says, far more than any other specialized section, including those on sports, food and advice.

"The thing I love about weather," she says, is that it's "something we're all sort of in together."

When she was little, Campisi would sit with her grandfather in

Louisiana and track the paths of hurricanes. Around that time was born a fantasy in which Campisi is standing in the middle of a torrential downpour in a yellow rain slicker, with a microphone, talking about how hard the rain is coming down.

"Weather freaks," is how Andrew Freedman, an improv comic and another CapitalWeather blogger, sees this new generation. He delivered his first presentation on cloud formations in the second grade. Samenow's interest began with the snowstorms of 1987 and was cemented at age 13 when he won first place in an oratorical contest with a speech on his ambition to be a weatherman. For fellow CapitalWeather blogger Josh Larson, from Chevy Chase, it was the Blizzard of '93. He drank four glasses of water before going to bed each night, so he was sure to wake up when the snowstorms were starting.

In the last six months, weather aficionados in New York, California, Pennsylvania and throughout the Midwest have set up blogs, covering local or global weather fronts with attitude and energy. The current collection of bloggers shows various levels of professionalism and degrees of technical proficiency. Kathryn Sausy, a 33-year-old senior meteorology major at San Francisco State University, runs a blog called "Wind," which focuses exclusively on atmospheric dynamics and lately has contemplated a "lovely image of Typhoon Mindulle." And Bill Young, 31, maintains "what I like to think of as the Drudge Report for weather," which right now serves as a weblink clearinghouse about Charley, from his home in northern Texas. The CapitalWeather crew is relatively conventional. They revere local celebrity weatherman Bob Ryan but aspire to more eccentricity. "When the weather gets a little bit dull," Samenow says, "we try to liven it up."

During the balmy days of the Democratic National Convention, Samenow's blog picked up a Kerry/Edwards campaign trope:

If you're seeking warm, humid days with highs near 90... hope is on the way.

If the risk of an afternoon or evening thunderstorm excites you, especially on Sunday... hope is on the way.

If you've been long awaiting the formation of this season's first Atlantic tropical storm... hope is on the way.

But when hurricanes come, all levity vanishes. This is the true calling of the amateur weatherman. There are untold thousands out there in cy-

berspace counting on updates. Out come the charts, the statistics, the initial analyses.

After a breathless rundown of Charley's progress through Cuba, Ed Oswald, 25, a television production assistant who runs a weather blog in Philadelphia, writes at 7:06 a.m. Friday, "He still looks real nice on satellite and appears from hurricane hunter data to be strengthening again, with pressure starting to fall rapidly again."

For days, Gothamist's Joe Schumacher has followed the progression of storms, every time predicting rain: "We'll try not to sound like a broken record, but as long as the front hangs out in our 'hood, and as long as tropical moisture streams our way, we don't have much choice in the matter."

Schumacher, 43, has a degree in meteorology from the same school as Al Roker. Another blogger at Gothamist, Kevin Porterfield, 32, studied music technology in college. His big weather blogging feat: He interviewed the man in charge of picking out elevator-type music for the Weather Channel. Asked to match a soundtrack to this weekend, Porterfield suggests the rock band White Stripes because it's "raw, unpredictable, in your face."

Recently, four CapitalWeather bloggers crowded around a computer contemplating just that—exactly what conditions the brewing hurricanes will bring. The bloggers occasionally refer to a quote popular in the weather community, attributed to Benjamin Franklin: "Some are weatherwise; most are otherwise." In service of the latter they are particularly cautious about predicting storms. But in the midst of this restraint, Larson whispers the two words that, in the wake of Bonnie and Charley, could send weather bloggers into a frenzy this fall: El Niño.

Samenow hushed him before anyone gets too excited. Larson emphasizes it is far too early to be sure of anything, but the result could be—and they qualify this with a thousand caveats—a mild winter in Washington. In the meantime, the bloggers hope to avoid the one question they seem to hear more than any other.

"I'm sick of getting, 'Can you change the forecast?'" Larson says. "Yeah," Samenow says. "People always ask me to serve up a nice, sunny, 75-degree day for tomorrow."

So, out of curiosity, any chance of that happening?

"No," he says, happily, looking forward to a storm.

TODAY'S HOROSCOPE | Jeraldine Saunders

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)
Adopt a fresh attitude and quit clinging to the past. Be grateful for the support of family and co-workers. Take time to plan this month's budget carefully, and set aside a little mad money.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Others may be under the weather, but your good judgment and inspiring words can chase away the clouds. Don't let minor frustrations spoil your day. Give your creative genius free rein.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
The new moon puts emphasis on your friendships and objectives. You may be walking a balance beam where your reputation is concerned. Public mistakes can be corrected in private.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Like a racehorse at the starting gate, you could be anxious to spring forward this week. You have the magic touch where money is concerned, but must remain discreet with others.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Your ability to charm your way into someone else's good graces is limited by a hesitation derived from

past experience. You have enormous vision and scope; be straightforward to be successful.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Remember the story of the little girl who, "when she was good she was very, very good, but when she was bad she was horrid"? Aim for the future and deal with existing matters with grace.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
The new moon shifts focus to relationships and interactions with others for several weeks. Adhering to a rigid schedule may cause hesitation in matters of the heart. Share feelings as they pop up.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)
Security is within your grasp, but it may require sacrifices. Abandon people and goals that weigh you down, and shift attention to that special someone who brings a smile to your face.

Aries (March 21-April 19)
Shifting conditions on the home or career front may cause agitation, but when the air clears you will see a definite improvement. Your ability to work as part of a cooperative whole is your biggest asset.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
It could be tempting to tell a white lie, but the truth will win friends and influence people who can aid your future. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, including yourself.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)
You have the ability to explain your ideas in an agreeable manner. Although one moneymaking scheme must be discarded, you have discovered alternative routes and can gain support from others.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)
As a new lunar cycle begins, you have the chance for a fresh start where money is concerned. Set sensible financial goals for the upcoming month. Pacing the facts about a relationship stalemate will free you.

IF AUG. 15 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: You get a gift of a new moon for your birthday, so you might feel that the world revolves around your wishes and commands. You may be more aware of your appearance these next several weeks. As the star of your own production, be appreciative of the material fortune that is yours. As one door closes, another one will open for you.

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Next Week: **Tome Deftness, or Barnes Ignoble**