

# The Style Invitational

Week 574: Boor Us Silly



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Instead of placing fake dog vomit on Grandma's shawl, use the real stuff!

**This week's contest** was suggested unwittingly by an occasional Loser who sent in this lone entry for the contest whose results appear below: "In the year two thousand four / We lost our Czar and got a whore." Intrigued by this unusual method of seeking a prize, the Em-press e-mailed the entrant and asked what might have prompted it—whether she had ever done anything to him to justify such a characterization. He wrote back: "It was just a joke. No offense intended." This week, come up with some other unwise attempts at humor—ones likely either to backfire or to create other unpleasant consequences. Here's another example: To amuse your wife, buy a pair of panties one size smaller than hers, and leave it in the laundry basket. When she tries to put them on, she'll think she's getting fatter! Of course every-thing will be fine when she realizes they aren't hers, and you'll both get a big laugh out of it!

First-prize winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational Trophy. First runner-up wins the book "Bad Hair," a collection of photos from those hilarious sample books in beauty salons, donated by Peter Owen of Arlington.

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, Sept. 13. 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 Oct. 3. 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 Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

**Report from Week 570**, in which we asked for rhyming couplets about historical events:

♦ **Fourth Runner-Up: 1776:** Though Jefferson professed all men are equal at creation, The only way he showed it was covert miscegenation. (Steve Fahey, Kensington)

♦ **Third Runner-Up: 1513:** Ponce de Leon sought the Fountain of Youth, Looked near Miami—not much of a sleuth. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

♦ **Second Runner-Up: 1981:** "I am in charge here," asserted Al Haig. (His grasp on the line of succession was vaig.) (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

♦ **First Runner-Up, the winner of the CD "Yodeling the Classics": 1905:** Freud's focus on sex left the people all stunned: It was clearly the sign of a Sig, Sig mund. (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

♦ **And the winner of the Inker: 1925:** Even though it's John T. Scopes whom they were really tryin', Darrow made a monkey out of William Jennings Bryan. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

♦ **The annals of Honorable Mentions: 2697 B.C.:** Let us recognize him to whom all Losers drink: Tien-Lcheu, the ancient inventor of ink. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

**480 B.C.:** Invading Greece, the haughty Xerxes Looked around and sneered, "What jerks these!" (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)

**399 B.C.:** Socrates lived as a shaker and mover, Ended it all with the Hemlock Maneuver. (Chris Doyle)

In **79**, Mount Vesuvius flashes, Knocks those Pompeians right on their ashes. (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

**1219-21:** The Mongol invasions left thousands to grieve. Too bad Genghis Khan didn't undera-chieve. (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)

**1300s:** The Black Death once reigned, all buboes and pus, Reducing the people disgustingly thus. (Jane Auerbach)

Chris Columbus sailed from Spain in **1492**, But it was a lousy year in Spain to be a Jew. (Marleen May, Rockville)

**1517:** On the door Herr Luther nailed his 95 Theses, Rarely has the fan been hit by so much feces. (Dave Komornik, Danville, Va.)

**1519-22:** Sailing all around the world, Magellan gained a day. It wasn't very useful, though: He died along the way. (Russell Beland)

**1607:** Smith was saved by Pocahontas Before she knew she didn't want us. (Barbara Holland, Bluemont, Va.)

**1752**, September 14, Followed the 2nd with nothing between. (Danny Bravman, St. Louis)

**1776:** When Adam Smith wrote "The Wealth of Nations," He couldn't well know about the Haitians. (Russell Beland)

**1793:** "Let them eat cake," huffed Marie Antoinette. "Merci," they replied, and then cut off her tête. (Chris Doyle)

**1793-94:** Robespierre's Reign of Terror was huge: The threat level rose from *l'orange* to *le rouge*. (Chris Doyle)

**1861:** Words were shot from North to South, but all was useless drivell. Only when the bullets flew would war be labeled "Civil." (Scott Campisi, Wake Village, Tex.)

**1864:** Ulysses S. Grant brought the Union relief (But would stink up the place as commander in chief). (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

**1865:** Abe Lincoln was shot on a fateful spring day. His wife never said what she thought of the play. (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

**1876:** Way back in the Centennial days, Samuel Tilden got Gored by Hayes. (Russell Beland)

**1884, 1892:** What most folks know of Grover is, he

reached the White House twice, Though everybody knows one trip to Cleveland should suffice. (Brendan Beary) **1903:** The Wrights first flew at Kitty Hawk. Their luggage wound up in New Yawk. (Bren-dan Beary)

**1920-33:** The 18th Amendment said, "Cut out the drinking!" The 21st said, "What the hell were we thinking?" (Brendan Beary)

**1932:** Hitler stopped the Germans feudin' By getting them to hate the Juden. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

**1934:** Dillinger's myth just grows: 'Twas not True he was hung; he just was shot. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

In **'38** Neville Chamberlain went to Munich, Had a nice chat and came home a eunuch. (Howard Walderman)

The Dinofish is coelacanth, the one they thought extinct, Till one came up in **'38**, and looked at us and blinked. (Dave Prevar)

**1943, 1969:** JFK, he sank his boat and then became a star. His little brother missed the war and only sank a car. (Russell Beland)

On Christmas Day in **'68**, John Kerry's map was out of date. (Katrina Gulliver, Sydney)

After 9 August, **'74**, We couldn't kick Nixon around anymore. (John H. Sullivan, Long Beach, Calif.)

In the White House Gerald Ford and Nelson Rockefeller landed. As prez and veep they were unique: unelected *and* left-handed. (Greg Arnold, Herndon)

**1975:** Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme tried to kill Gerald Ford, Never loaded the chamber—was as smart as a board. (Jon Reiser)

**1986:** Remember Bill Buckner? His legs were a wicket. Bostonians told him just where he could stick it. (Jon Reiser)

**1987:** Next time Tawana Brawley cries rape, Al Sharpton'll ask for the videotape. (Howard Walderman)

**1989:** Collapse of the Eastern Bloc came to the rescue Of all those Romanians under Ceaucescu. (Brendan Beary)

**1993:** Clinton, Congress push through NAFTA: "Good for jobs"? I stifle lafta. (Brendan Beary)

**1996:** Monica's dress could have been like new, But she chose to keep the presidue. (Lee McBroom, Waldorf)

When Election **2000** was finally done, Al Gore had the most votes and therefore he, oh, never mind. (Ernie Isenstadt, McLean)

Dubya barely edged out Gore; The final vote was 5 to 4. (Brendan Beary)

**2001:** In 9/11 retribution, Ashcroft killed the Constitution. (Dan Seidman, Watertown, Mass.)

**And Last:** To England from Holland came William of Orange, Who, um, er, uh . . . (Danny Bravman)

# Keeping an Eye on the Storm

LETTER, From D1

lives in Cocoa Beach, but he packed up the Nissan Sentra earlier in the week and made his way to Jackson-ville. The evacuation traffic was so heavy, Ketrom says, it took nearly seven hours to drive 160 miles. He says he's scared. "You can call me a [kitty cat]," he says. "Why take a chance?"

You read a lot about the tough old coots who stay in bars drinking rum and smoking unfiltered Camels, but on this trip you run into plenty of cowboys who are getting out of Dodge.

For one thing, Hurricane Charley blew through Florida just three weeks ago.

"We lost two stores down south," says Island Food Store clerk Jennifer Van Nover, 54. "We've got 13 stores left. Lucky 13. Everybody's taking this one real serious." She says she is closing her store early.

11 p.m.: There's no music on the radio, only weather updates. Squalls have begun hitting South Florida, you are told as you cruise south on Interstate 95. Not choosing his words very carefully, the announcer says the local FEMA office has been flooded. With calls, he adds. You are virtually alone on your side of the road. You see a few cars, a few trucks and a dead armadillo.

Midnight: At the sold-out Renaissance Hotel in St. Augustine, next to the World Golf Hall of Fame, Mike Mitchell, 39, and his girlfriend, Erin Myers, 27, come through the back door with their mutt on a leash. The dog's name is Bogart, Mitchell explains, as in "Don't bogart that joint." The couple has evacuated from Vila-no Beach, where Mitchell is a seaside artist. "My art supply store is the ocean," says the long-haired, bearded painter who incorporates flotsam and jetsam in his oeuvre. "I've had too many people tell me to get the hell off the water." He adds, "There's one behind it, too," referring to Tropical Storm Ivan.

He and Myers decided life is too precious to be swept away by Frances, so they loaded their Dodge Dakota with the dog, some paintings and Gracie the cat. "And beer!" Mitchell says happily.

1:30 a.m.: At the Comfort Inn in Elkton, there are just a couple of rooms left. The front desk clerk says she has many customers who are fleeing Frances—some from as far away as West Palm Beach, 250 miles south. A typewritten note on the pillow from the motel staff says: "The electricity may go out, the hot water may not work, the telephone lines might go down, all events that we have no control over. We must weather this storm as a team. . . ." From the balcony, the wind is soft, the moon is shining and stars sparkle overhead.

Saturday, 5:30 a.m.: You wake to the local and national weather ma-vens—who are pretty windy them-selves—saying Frances is about 125 miles east of West Palm Beach. Her winds are clocking in at 105 mph. Hurricane warnings stretch south along Florida's east coast from Flag-ler Beach to Florida City. The hurri-cane's eyewall is expected to cut across Florida somewhere near Mel-bourne. The eyewall is the area sur-rounding the eye; it's where surface winds are strongest and thunder-storms most dramatic.

Outside, the wind has stiffened. It buffets your Chevrolet Classic rental car now and then.

7 a.m.: Flagler Beach is ghostly empty. A pair of Eyewitness 3 News team trucks are parked near the shore. The waves spank the sand.

John Reid, 65, from nearby Palm Coast, has driven over to see the an-gry sea for himself. He moved here three years ago from Upstate New York, where he worked for a cheese company. "I'm a little nervous," he says.

It's eerie how everything is board-ed shut. Mother's Beachside Liquor in Flagler Beach. Lazy Rayz Beach Emporium in Ormond Beach. Hotels and 7-Elevens and diners and condo-minium complexes are bandaged with plywood. You are stopped at one point by a cop who asks to see your ID. The buildings are boarded up as protection against looters as well as Frances.

At the Grandview Condo in Day-tona Beach Shores, three grizzled men—two hold drinks, another smokes a cigar—do a little early morning jawing in the parking lot. The windows of their building are plywooded over, but they are staying the course. Steve Gawroriski, 67, Ed Gill, 48, and Joe Chapman, 57, say they aren't scared of a trifling breeze. "Want a beer?" Gawroriski asks. There is talk of the eyewall on the ra-dio. And of a dry-air trough and wind shears that have weakened Frances. But as the weatherpeople talk, the wind increases and the waves crash against the beaches.

8:45: Sandbags rest against the doors of Ron Jon's legendary surf shop in Cocoa Beach. Dan Rather comes on the radio and suggests that Cocoa Beach may be hit the hardest. Rather has awesome street cred, be-cause as he is speaking, a squall de-scends on the beach and the rain comes down so hard you can't see to drive. When the storm lets up a little, you high-tail it to Melbourne. This is supposed to be where the eyewall will come through in the next 24



BY CHARLES W. LUZIER—REUTERS

A news team reports from Cocoa Beach Pier as Hurricane Frances closes in.

hours or so. They say.

9:45 a.m.: Kurt Gurley, 34, is look-ing for some hurricanic action also. He is an associate professor of civil and coastal engineering at the Uni-versity of Florida. And he has brought a 20-member team into the thick of things to test the wind's ef-fects on structures. The crew has three trucks and a trailer carrying the parts of a 40-foot orange tower. They are going to set it up near the beach. "I'm happy it's been down-graded," Gurley says of Frances. Any hurricane that lives up to Frances's initial hype, he says, is just too much of a horror show to even imagine.

11 a.m.: The rain has returned. You stand at Indialantic beach and watch the ocean roil and churn and the sand swirl onto the lonely streets. The horizontal rain pelts your face. There is an excited charge in the air. A dozen or so stalwarts have come just to gaze out into the storm.

Lobsterman and veteran surfer Scotty Mays, 39, grew up here. He hasn't seen waves like these in years. He estimates the wind is blowing at 30 knots and the waves are 15 to 18 feet high. The storm scares him. "I worry about it destroying my boat," he says.

The rain revs up. The winds wail. The skies darken. In the streets near-

by, a traffic light falls and shatters. On the bridge to the mainland, two tall silver light poles snap and col-lapse, crashing on the road. Palm branches fly through the air like witchless broomsticks.

On the radio, emergency officials tell everyone to get off the roads, to go inside, to hunker down for the long haul. Some counties have noon curfews. Others, 2 p.m.

There is a long line at the check-out counter of Joy America Foods in Melbourne. This is the only store open within miles. The shelves are becoming bare. People load up on whatever—sleeves of salted peanuts, beef jerky, Mountain Dew, 30 racks of Budweiser.

There is talk that the storm is headed straight for here. The man behind the counter says he is only staying open another 45 minutes.

The lights flicker and the electric-ity goes off. Then comes back on.

A man with gray stubble laughs. "That's not a good sign."

Customers go home. Travelers re-turn to their lodgings. The wind whips the palm trees; the rain is strong and steady. Most folks take the advice of the authorities and hun-ker down. Waiting for the long night and wondering what Frances will do next.

## BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

|                |  |  |  |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| N-S vulnerable |  |  |  |
| NORTH          |  |  |  |
| ♠ 10 9 7 6     |  |  |  |
| ♥ A 6          |  |  |  |
| ♦ J 9 7 6 5    |  |  |  |
| ♣ 9            |  |  |  |
| WEST           |  |  |  |
| ♠ A 5 2        |  |  |  |
| ♥ J 9 3        |  |  |  |
| ♦ A K 8 4 3 2  |  |  |  |
| ♣ 6            |  |  |  |
| EAST           |  |  |  |
| ♠ K J 8 4 3    |  |  |  |
| ♥ 10 2         |  |  |  |
| ♦ 10           |  |  |  |
| ♣ 10 8 7 4 3   |  |  |  |
| SOUTH (D)      |  |  |  |
| ♠ Q            |  |  |  |
| ♥ K Q 8 7 5 4  |  |  |  |
| ♦ Q            |  |  |  |
| ♣ A K J 5 2    |  |  |  |

The bidding:

| South   | West     | North   | East |
|---------|----------|---------|------|
| 1 ♥     | 2 ♦      | Pass    | Pass |
| 3 ♣     | Pass     | 3 ♥ (I) | Pass |
| 4 ♥ (I) | All Pass |         |      |

Opening lead: ♦ K

I walked into the club lounge and found my friend the Eng-lish professor grading papers while waiting for the afternoon du-licate to start.

"Look at this," he groaned, shoving a freshman's essay under my nose, "and tell me the coun-try's not in an intellectual funk."

"The greatest writer of the Ren-aissance," I read, "was William Shakespeare, who was born in

1564, supposedly on his birthday. Shakespeare never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He wrote comedies, tragedies and historectomies, all in Islamic pentameter."

In today's deal, which I watched an hour later, the bidding was a comedy and the play was a "trade-gy." North, with two key honors in South's suits, should have bid more than three hearts. South roared on to game even though North's hand might have been much less suitable.

At the second trick, the prof, sit-ting West, cashed his ace of spades. When South's queen fell, the prof led a low diamond next. East obliged by uppercutting with his 10 of trumps, and South over-ruffed with the queen. South then took the A-K of trumps, but the prof's jack was high. When the clubs broke 5-1, the contract was history: South also lost a club and went down one.

"The man plays the dummy as well as my students write," the prof muttered to me.

Instead of overruffing East's 10 of trumps, South should pitch a club, a loser on a loser. He pre-serves his high trumps and is sure of six trump tricks and four clubs.

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