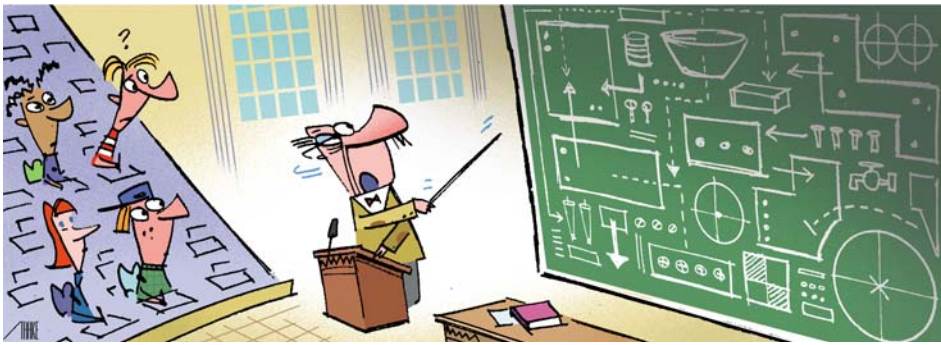


The Style Invitational

Week 626: Course Light



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Engineering 382, Setting Up Ikea Stuff: Students will learn to piece together a particle board coffee table using an Allen wrench (provided) and a diagram consisting of dotted lines and arrows but no words. Prerequisite: Lego II.

This week's contest was inspired by Don Troop of the Chronicle of Higher Education, who told the Empress of a British college that was offering a class in "assembling flatpack furniture." Your challenge: Come up with a comical college class, along with a description for the course catalogue.

Winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives a clear plastic container full of . . . well, the label on the front is all in Japanese except for "Cat." But the back label reassures us that it is "prepared dry fish bone" ("Ingredients: Fish Born, Sesame Sugar . . .) and indeed it seems to be a bunch of shiny dried little bony fish slices with sesame seeds stuck to them, and intended for human consumption.

Other runners-up win a 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, if you really have to, by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Sept. 12. Results will be published Oct. 2. Put "Week 626" 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. Entries 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. 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 Deborah Guy of Columbus, Ohio.

Report from Week 622, in which we sought additions to the U.S. Constitution that were composed of words already found in the original document and its amendments (capitalization could be changed). It seems as if half the entrants suggested "Congress shall make no law." Some enterprising Losers noted that the Constitution includes the names and states of the 39 signers (beginning with "Go Washington").

Third runner-up: No person of excessive tonnage shall remove his jersey at a public event. (Pam Sweeney, Germantown)

Second runner-up: Congress shall make no laws that direct people to work out with weights and engage in regular body training. We the People are no longer into the exercise thing. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

First runner-up, the winner of the Snake Wine containing a whole snake: No persons shall in all cases be given what they do desire but, upon trial, at times may be informed that they shall receive that for which they be needful. — *M. Jagger* (Russell Beland, Springfield)

And the winner of the Inker: Those persons resident in the District are second-class, inferior citizens. But they have the right to death, taxes and post offices. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Honorable Mentions:

Attendance at party conventions shall be for intoxicating liquors, sex, disorderly behavior and the choice of a president and vice president, in that order. (Michelle Stupak, Elliott City)

When a male and his date are to go to a party or other event, particularly one with an appointed time, if his date should redress more than three times, he is within his rights in going alone. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

No president shall be subject to impeachment for exercise of a disorderly member. — *W. J. Clinton*, New York (Fred S. Souk, Reston)

Congress shall have the power to void the laws of the state of Georgia (under the section entitled "crimes against nature") that deny the right of any citizen, and particularly a citizen by the name of Rufus Dobbs, to engage in sex with a bear, notwithstanding the fact that one such bear has granted consent, is of age, and has not been given any intoxicating liquors for at least a few days. — *R. Dobbs*, Stone Mountain, Ga. (Chris Doyle)

Between September and December, it shall be prohibited to call any holding penalties against the Washington offense, in that they just cannot control themselves. (Brendan Beary)

No person when called shall declare, "Press number one, press number two, press number eight," or act in like manner. (Marty McCullen)

Congress shall make no law abridging the right of people to have sex whenever they desire and with a hundred persons at the same time if they care to at, like, a private party or whatever. — *P. Hilton*, New York (Chris Doyle)

A person being considered for Supreme Court justice will be required to have no preference in regard to most things. In fact, each judge shall, on at least six cases, declare his sole opinion to be: "Whatever." (Brendan Beary)

After this date, no one ever engaged in the work of acting shall be president. One was sufficient. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Both houses of Congress shall open each session with the following declaration: "The Lord has delivered His blessings on the United States of America and on the Republican Party." Members who think this unreasonable are hereby directed to go have sex with themselves. — *Ann Coulter*, Washington (Chris Doyle)

When two persons (one of each sex) have had congress for the first time, the male shall be required to call by the next day, or his date is free to declare in public that the sex was inferior, and his member was smaller than most. (Brendan Beary)

Those persons who purchased a Geo should have reconsidered. (Katherine Hooper, Jacksonville)

The president may enjoy sex in the office, but if he is found out, he is out on a limb. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

The president and members of Congress shall remove their heads from their business end.

(Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)

Until such time as our party is not in power, Representative DeLay has a free pass for all crimes, misdemeanors and felonies but treason. He will also define what may or may not constitute treason. We trust him. Actually, we have no choice. (Brendan Beary)

If any person should be required to answer the call of nature without the proper papers, particularly when sitting for number two, that person shall be granted the right to subject the previous person to cruel and unusual punishment.

(Mark Hagenau, Derry, N.H.)

In order to promote a more perfect body, the President shall have power to disparage the condition of the corpus of any member of Congress.

(Deb Parrish, Fairfax Station)

The New Age Congress shall convene in a State of Tranquility and remain tender and reserved, with all members respecting each other and being on good behavior. The punishment for impairing this peace is death.

(Dave Prevar)

When engaged in sex, neither party shall raise the issue of who will pay the water bill. (Kyle Hendrickson)

Underage sex is hereby prohibited, given that we are way older now. (Russell Beland)

Any appropriation / For roads or transportation / Shall be for needful erection / And not just for election. (Peter Metrinko)

The term "more perfect" shall have unanimous acceptance whatsoever the people think. So there. (Russell Beland)

One divided by three shall equal appoint three three three three in all states of the Union except Kentucky, where it shall equal appoint three.

(Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)

Congress shall try writing a few laws that people may actually have the ability to read when they are sitting on the john, as is going on right now. (The writing, that is, not the sitting.) (Chris Doyle)

Anti-Invitational (using only words *not* found in the Constitution):

Privacy? Abortion? Church separation? Equality? Sexual orientation? Hah! Look again. — *New Supreme Court*, Washington (Russell Beland)

And Last:

In that we in Congress are concerned for the people who continue to enter this Washington Post thing just to have their name published in the papers, we hereby direct that they do themselves a favor and try to have an actual life from now on. (Chris Doyle)

And Also Last:

No title of nobility, such as King, Prince or the like, shall be granted — except by the Post on Sundays in one section. (Marty McCullen)

TODAY'S HOROSCOPE | Holiday Mathis

Aries (March 21-April 19)

If interacting with others is a basic human need, you're feeling more bear-like today. Social plans leave you feeling a touch resentful, which is a sign that you need more cave time.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your life is a three-ring circus — everyone is running around with different agendas, and YOU are the ringmaster. If you can sort through the confusion, you'll find that friends really do contribute worthwhile ideas.

Gemini (May 21-June 21)

You're depending on an authority figure in your life to get the bad guy! Is that too much to ask? Though you deserve to be protected, the only surefire way to do this is to protect yourself.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)

The excitement of attraction is in the air. This is also a fine time to renew love. So for goodness' sake, avoid all bickering! This is when you should be building emotional bridges instead.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

You think you are clearly communicating your feelings, so whose fault is it that a loved one is still so confused? Communication is a two-way

street, and it flows a lot better during non-traffic hours. Timing is key.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You get along beautifully with loved ones, especially when talking about the future. Postulate brilliance and sunshine ahead. Wish happiness for your kin, and try to put the disharmony (it's in every family) behind you.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

What you want to give might not be what others want to receive. Make adjustments. Don't be afraid to ask loved ones what they need from you. The result is a feeling of real contribution followed by bolstered self-esteem.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

Being nice is overrated. Keep everyone accountable for their actions. If you don't do it, projects dear to your heart will suffer the consequences of neglect. You want results more than you need approval.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Friends have much to share — maybe too much. Limit phone time, or it takes over the p.m. hours. The social scene is hopping tonight and more fun than you've had in ages. It's definitely worth hiring a babysitter.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

The stars indicate a shift in family dynamics. This comes in the form of an addition to the household or some information that allows you to see someone in a different light. Prepare by getting things organized.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Juggling multiple groups of friends can be difficult but necessary. To avoid conflict, some people should simply not be brought together. Fortunately, there's time for everyone with proper scheduling.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Logical decision making just doesn't appeal to you right now. Despite advice from multiple sources, you'll do your own thing, and no one can fault you for that. Leo and Aries are jealous of you!

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY SEPT. 4:

Reality accurately reflects the vision you had three years ago about where your life would be now. Knowing this, you're very careful about what you put out there. Dream bigger, have more faith in your abilities and remember the element of fun! The next 10 weeks feature love galore. Your relationships with Leo and Scorpio are enlightening.
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Napoleon's Dynamite at the Cash Register

NAPOLEON, *From D1*

From the now-ubiquitous "Vote for Pedro" T-shirts to hundreds of other new or soon-to-be-released licensed products, "Napoleon Dynamite" is suddenly an oddball leader in back-to-school sales.

Made for a reported \$400,000, the cult hit grossed about \$50 million at the box office, then added another \$104 million in DVD sales. While retail figures aren't available, Napoleon wear — the T-shirts, sweatshirts, knit tops, underwear, etc. — have become the strongest selling licensed products in the teens' and boys' mass marketplace.

And a stunning array of other licensed accessories and novelty products are available or on the way, including bed linens, backpacks, tote bags, Velcro wallets, calendars, lamps, lunch boxes, flip-flops, and playing cards.

"It is a testament to the power of fans and to hitting a nerve in pop culture," says Elie Dekel, executive vice president of licensing and merchandising at 20th Century Fox, the distributor. "This film continues to resonate and get stronger over time."

The retail onslaught began modestly last October, when the film was still catching on. One simple T-shirt design — "Vote for Pedro" — went on sale at Hot Topic, a mall-based retail chain in 50 states that specializes in apparel, accessories and music for teens. Since then a half-million Vote for Pedro T-shirts have shipped.

Now Hot Topic carries more than 150 Napoleon Dynamite products. Heck, yes, you can get a \$19 "Your Mom Goes to College" T-shirt there, or a \$2.99 "Sweet Dance Moves" notebook for school. The store's Web site sells Napoleon Dynamite fridge magnets, air fresheners, postcards, pins, trucker hats, wristbands, fleece throws, posters, bookmarks, stickers, keychains, shoe-laces, wristbands and lip gloss — all lifted from scenes or inspired by its oddly funny catchphrases that are now the daily retorts and subculture code of fans.

Just back from the MAGIC apparel show in Las Vegas this week, Dekel says the annual fashion trade show was abuzz over the phenomenon. "They are all getting reorders and the retailers are looking for more and more product," he says.

"It will have a nice little run and, in all likelihood, will have a short life and until the next slightly off-kilter thing comes around," says Martin Brochstein, editorial director of the Licensing Letter, a executive newsletter covering the consumer licensing business. But why the groundswell? How does a decidedly unhip flick make uncool so cool and drive retail sales to take a sweet jump like Pedro's Sledgehammer bike?

"People enjoy celebrating an awkward outsider such as Napoleon" is the simplified explanation Jared Hess, the film's writer and director, e-mails from Mexico, where he's working on a new film.

Others say "Napoleon Dynamite's" cultural momentum runs deeper — and richer. Neil Feineman, Los Angeles-based author of "Geek Chic: The Ultimate Guide to Geek Culture," calls the film "a cultural touchstone" for the younger generation. "Napoleon became the everyman for a huge subculture of kids, in particular, who saw themselves in that movie and who love this guy," he says. "They



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The manufacturer of the Napoleon Dynamite Official Talking Pen was turned on to the character's merchandising possibilities by his daughters.

deeply got the joke. Somebody got it right."

And, adds Feineman, "that's gotta be a gold mine."

It is for Jay Kamhi, whose daughters dragged him to see "Napoleon Dynamite" last fall, then begged him to make a talking Napoleon doll. "I loved the movie," says Kamhi, "but I told them I didn't know how many other people are going to buy a Napoleon Dynamite talking doll."

Kamhi has been in the novelty manufacturing business nearly 30 years. His latest big seller is his talking SpiceMice, more than a million sold. Last week, his company, Kamhi World in Clearwater, Fla., began shipping the 7 3/4-inch, \$14.95, Napoleon Dynamite talking doll. Press its button and hear 18 Napoleon sound clips from the movie. Same for the Napoleon Dynamite Talking Pen that spouts off seven lines — like "Freakin' idiot!" "Tina, you fat lard, come get some dinner!" and "Sweet!"

"We're getting bombarded with orders," says Kamhi, estimating he has 100,000 orders from his funtalking.com Web site and stores such as Urban Outfitters and Spencer Gifts. "It's like the fans have their own little rapport with this character."

But not all do. Representatives of the Arc of the United States, a leading advocacy group for people with intellectual disabilities, recently asked 20th Century Fox to stop production and retool existing stock of the talking Napoleon dolls and pens. The group took offense to the phrase "You guys are retarded," a line Napoleon utters at his oddball Uncle Rico and brother.

"Arc made us aware that this was alarming to them," says De-

kel, explaining that 20th Century Fox responded by ceasing manufacturing of the items to change the sound clips. "We feel it was the right thing to do." (On eBay last Wednesday, one buyer spent \$73.25 on one of the talking dolls, offending quote intact.)

Another collectible, of sorts, is Napoleon's "Jet Ranger 206" T-shirt with the image of a helicopter and mountain. Randall Sowa, a helicopter mechanic, and his graphic designer partner Phil Goettl, designed that shirt in 1983 to sell to hardscrabble helicopter crews exploring for oil in Rockies. Every year, they'd make another design to supplement their income. All told, they sold a couple of hundred.

Co-director Jerusha Hess, Jared's wife, found one of those shirts, size XL, good condition, at a Salt Lake City thrift shop and used it in the film. "I came away stunned that our shirt was pulled out of someone's ragbag and paraded front and center in an odd film," says Sowa, of Grapevine, Tex. "... I realized the shirt would become a cult icon."

Since then, Sowa has revived his original design and sold 23,000 of the \$15.95 shirts from his Norider.com Web site. "It really hasn't let up," he says, attributing the fervor to people identifying with Napoleon. "All of us are that character at one point in our lives."

But the bizarre irony, he says, is that "a shirt originally sold to a dynamite-toting, hard-living, helicopter-riding, migrant, seismic junkie would end up infinitely unforgettable on the back of a geek of geeks."

"You can't plan for that kind of stuff to happen."

Next Week: Try to Remember, or Mnemonic Possession