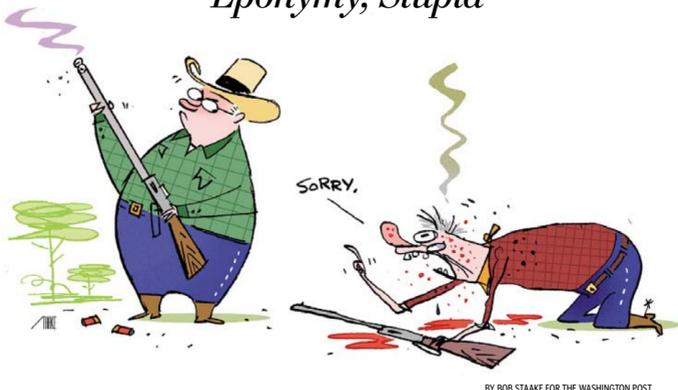


The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 653: It's the Eponymy, Stupid



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Whittingtune, n., v.: A victim's apology for being the source of distress to the victimizer. "My family and I are deeply sorry for all that Vice President Cheney and his family have had to go through this past week," he Whittingtuned upon leaving the hospital.

We're delving way, way back into the Invitational Archives to repeat — and, we hope, update — the eponym contest from Week 27: Coin a word or expression based on the name of a well-known person, define it, and perhaps use it in a sentence. Note: Receiving three blots of ink on Sept. 26, 1993, including first runner-up, was Chuck Smith of Woodbridge, who had already achieved such a degree of Invitational fame that two eponymous terms were printed about him (Chucksmit: a collector of T-shirts; Chuck: the Loser T-shirt itself: "The Chuck's in the mail"). Now that he is spattered with 712 blots, we invite him to Chuck us a few more. You, too, of course.

Winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets a Flying Spaghetti Monster car plaque, donated by Kevin Dopart of Washington, which would look very cool stuck to someone's trunk right next to a few Loser Magnets. (The plaque would, that is; not Kevin or Washington.)



BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, like the handsome example at left. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to loser@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, March 20. Include "Week 653" 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 humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published April 9. 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 649

In which we asked for lyrics set to the folk song "Shenandoah" that were actually relevant to Virginia, which recently began using it as the state song. Somehow we don't think the state legislature will start singing along with these, but we did find an out-of-state ringer: Aspiring Loser David Schildkret just happens to run the choral program at the appropriately far-from-Virginia Arizona State University, and he agreed to coerce his talented Concert Choir to sing several of this week's entries in absolute deadpan solemnity. You can hear them at www.washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. (Meanwhile, David has conveniently left the country.)

3 O Shenandoah, I found religion In the land of Pat and Jerry. No hurricanes will thunder near me. I pray. They blow away And head toward Venezuela. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

2 The winner of the squished promotional T-shirt you can write "Lose" on: Oh, Charlottesville, admit my daughter. I can't pay for Yale or Princeton. Oh, Charlottesville, please give my daughter The cachet of U-V-A: I need in-state tuition. (Barbara Sarshik, McLean)

1 AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Oh, Monticello, we long to hear you Looked away from hanky-panky Oh Monticello, what's wrong, we fear you Looked away. We've found today A source hereditary.

A white man loved a dark-skinned maiden (Look away from hanky-panky). His notions with taboo were laden. Away, he was bound to stray, When Tom espied Miss Hemings.

For seven years he courted Sally (Look away from hanky-panky). Seven more years they'd often dally, In the hay, we found, they lay, Tom and his own Miss Hemings.

Farewell to Tom, He's bound to leave us, But evidence will not deceive us: DNA was found today: To Tom is tied Miss Hemings. (Chris Doyle, Kihei, Hawaii, formerly of Fairfax County)

Next Week: King Us, or Deader Homes & Gardens

HONORABLE MENTIONS

The Virgin Queen, that's who you're named for. But now you're called the state for lovers, And birthplace of our country's father? Confused, I'm so confused! But it's okay, the fleet's in. (Judith Cottrill, New York)

Our commonwealth's most famous foodstuff, Smithfield ham, it's sent from Heaven, And we never have to share it With heathen infidels: It's just for us good Christians. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

O Shenandoah, I long to see you And drive the Skyline highway. But whatchanoah, I'm stuck in traffic. I'll wait, I'm bound to wait Behind a white Mercedes. (Steve Ettinger, Chevy Chase)

I cannot find a Jewish deli. Oy vey! I need pastrami. And Dr. Brown's to fill my belly. Oy vey! Oy vey iss mir! I'm just a good ol' boychik. (Barbara Sarshik and Andy Pike, McLean)

Eight presidents came from Virginia! Sure, we rub it in a little, Since Maryland has not had any. Although we're sure you're proud Of Mister Spiro Agnew. (Brendan Beary)

I'm stuck out here, out in Manassas. Traffic's thick as day-old phlegm. We're moving just like cold molasses. Oh gee, how can this be When it's 3 a.m.? (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Please don't confuse us fine Virginians With our less enlightened neighbors Like hillbillies in West Virginia, Or worse — oh yes, much worse — Those liberals in Maryland. (Steve Ettinger)

Oh protozoa, you're so much smarter Than Virginia's politicians. But they're peerless at dividing. Divisiveness: It's one of our Dear commonwealth's traditions. (Peter Metrinko)

Potomac, you're our muddy river Full of carp and yuppie kayaks, Old tires and cans, and scraps of liver, And hey, I hate to say, That stuff's our drinking water. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn., formerly of Loudoun County)

Oh Shenandoah, you're filled with feces. But oh, boy, we like our chicken. Your fish are all endangered species. Oh why not buy our eggs From someplace like Missouri? (Michael Fransella, Arlington)

After Jackson Beat It, Santa Maria's Back to Normal. Sigh.

JACKSON, From D1

here, closed for failure to pay his employees' salary and workers' comp insurance.) Jackson's trial was repeatedly described on the news as having a "circus atmosphere," but, really, it wasn't. It was orderly. It was Mayberry — if it weren't for the subject matter.

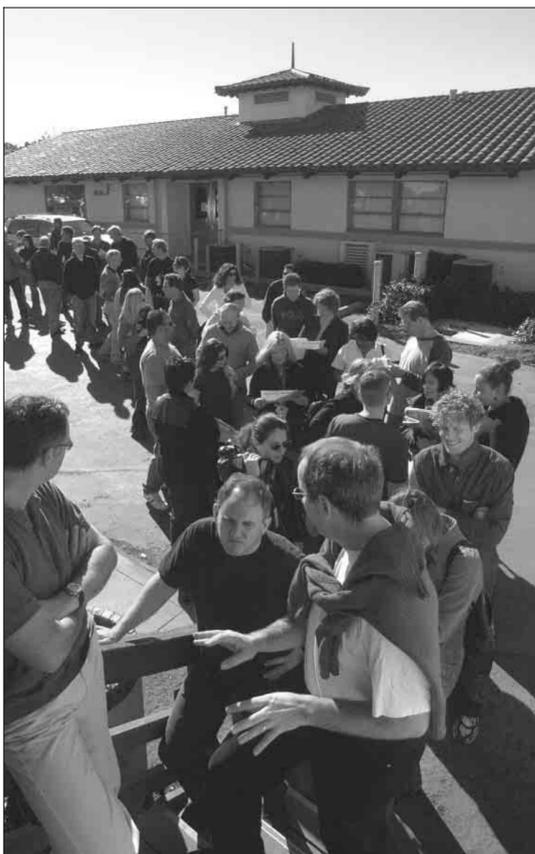
When it was over, on a June afternoon, one of the more vivid memories the people who work at Superior Court have is how fast the media packed up and abandoned them — leaving all that trash and wires and dead shrubs.

"The media were very effective at moving on; that's what they do. So it was over, like that. The shrubs have bloomed again, the grass has come back," says Darrel E. Parker, assistant trial courts executive officer, who ran the day-to-day logistics of *California v. Michael Jackson*. "I have to say — and there were of people who told me this, and I felt it, too — about a month or so after it was over, there was this weird ... malaise, like 'Wow, I can't shake this.' It was a funk; that's the only word I can think of."

Even though the courthouse is right next to Santa Maria's lone shopping mall, many people in this town of 83,000, three hours north of Los Angeles, were able to ignore the fuss completely — if they wanted to. ("Welcome Canadian Golfers," read a big sign in the Holiday Inn lobby this time last year. "Welcome Canadian Golfers," it says again now.)

But many of the courthouse regulars liked it. It started every day at 8 a.m. and ended at 2:30 p.m. Some days it felt as if the court was running a summer camp for tabloid reporters, who would file their stories manically, breathlessly; then, at night, the Fleet Street freelancers and maybe the Japanese film crew, along with their new stateside colleagues, would all go to a bar down the street, Maverick's, which has a mechanical bull, and they would goad one another into riding it. It was Jacko porn by day and "Urban Cowboy" by night — how American and frivolous it all seemed.

Even months later, Parker says, he went across the street to Coffee Diem, where owner Carmen Jenkins served lunch and coffee to hordes of media and stary-eyed fans or curious passersby. "Carmen was in the right place at the right time, that's for sure," he says. "And she says to me, 'You know, I'm only just now getting



BY ED SOUZA — ASSOCIATED PRESS

over all of it."

"Oh, we miss them so much. It hasn't been the same at all," says Jenkins, who at the moment has two customers. She is perhaps the only person you'll ever meet who loved having a media scrum camped on her street. "And it's not the money, not the business that I'm talking about. It was the total ambiance — the people I met, the activity," she says. "And you know, people ask me, 'How's that new Beemer' that I bought with all the new business — which I didn't."

Some events put a town on the map in a way it might not like to be remembered — Waco, Tex., and its Branch Davidians, or Oklahoma City and the federal building bombing. The datelines pile up, but the place is never to be revisited again by all the networks. Santa Maria will for many people

remain the place Michael Jackson walked free.

"Something like that won't happen here again," Parker says. "It's like the hundred-year flood. Something will happen somewhere — every 10 years. Just not to us. It's California. There are lots of celebrities. It's bound to happen."

On this particular morning, Parker says, he was walking into his office when a man asked him two questions: "He said, 'Is this where I pay my traffic ticket?' and I said yes, and then he said, 'Is this the place Michael Jackson was?' and I said yes, and he said, 'So I'm going to get in trouble for doing nothing, and he got off,' and I said yes."

So, then, a kind of normalcy. ("This place was never normal," says a woman working behind the bulletproof window where the adjudicated masses pay an assortment of court-ordered fines.) The



BY MICHAEL A. MARIANT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



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Reporters, far left, await credentials in January 2005 to cover the trial; left, Darrel Parker, who ran the trial's logistics, remembers there was "this weird ... malaise" after it was over; above, a woman exits the court Friday.

ing through a laundry list of arraignments with an assistant DA and a public defender. Many cases deal with methamphetamine, shoplifting, drunk driving. There's a domestic violence charge. Upstairs, a woman from New York pleads out a forgery charge. She gets her probation paperwork and comes down to the entryway and calls her boyfriend, telling him in another language to come pick her up. She paces back and forth across the very spot where Jackson and his entourage arrived each day last spring.

Back inside, a peroxide blond transgendered woman in floral capri pants and a sleeveless hoodie is facing meth-possession charges. She fidgets and sighs and switches seats every five minutes. Her court-appointed attorney at last advises her to plead no contest; she wants a trial. Bring on the drama. The whole thing is pushed back a few days and she leaves in a swirl and gets on her bike, repeating, "Oh, my gosh" over and over, and begins pedaling away to some other sort of Neverland.

In his office, the day's proceedings winding down, Parker shows off some of his Jackson mementos: a framed printer's plate of the front page of the Santa Maria Times from the acquittal verdict. TV reporter Diane Dimond's book, "Be Careful Who You Love," about all the dirt — "signed," he says. A rubber ducky on the wall that refers to an inside joke among the staff.

In the weeks after the trial, to cheer them up, Parker threw an appreciative barbecue for the staff. One hundred sheriff's deputies and other key players were given framed, pastel courtroom sketches from the proceedings, donated by the artists who drew them.

Rodney S. Melville, the judge in the Jackson case who is well regarded for keeping the trial sane and orderly, has gone back to his usual diet of family court matters in a smaller courtroom. (On this day, he is in San Francisco representing the county court at a budget committee hearing.) Tom Sneddon, the district attorney who lost the case, is going to retire after a new DA is elected this fall. Thomas Mesereau Jr., Jackson's defense attorney, and his colleague Susan Yu abruptly dropped their client three weeks ago, without comment.

And Jackson has been living in Bahrain all this time, according to the Associated Press. Tabloid rumors have him doing push-ups every day, considering a macho makeover to reignite his career. The state has given him until Tuesday to make financial amends with his staff, which hasn't been paid for months. Local animal welfare agencies have taken many of Neverland's animals away.

Parker shrugs. "People ask me about Michael Jackson, or if I've seen him since, as if I have any connection at all to him," he says. "I ask them, 'Have you seen Elvis?'"