

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



Contrary to scurrilous rumor, you do NOT have to write silly, juvenile stuff to get ink in The Style Invitational. This week you can just take silly, juvenile pictures. For The Invitational's inaugural photo contest, we ask you to send in funny (but printable) images of real pieces of fruit — no risque bananas hardehardehar. You can decorate them, write on them, carve them up (even digitally). But the photos must be original, and must not have been published elsewhere. If you steal from the Web, you are going to be mercilessly hung out to dry right in this space, not to mention the corrections box, like the dustiest of old prunes. Two exceptions to normal Invitational practice: You can e-mail the photos as attachments in standard digital formats (we'll contact you if we can't open them up properly; try for jpegs no more than 1,500 pixels wide) or you may mail them to the address in the wee type below. No faxes, duh. We're not returning any photos because we need something to dress up our bulletin boards here.

The definitive Whimsical Fruit Art is the peerlessly adorable work of Saxton Freymann, of the classic "Play With Your Food" and other books. So just outdo that guy in the next eight days — it's all we ask.

The winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives a display of nine sizable samples of SynLawn artificial grass, including SynFescue (polyethylene and nylon), SynBlue (100 percent nylon) and SynTipele (0 percent bugs).

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 by mail to Style Invitational Photo Contest, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, April 17. Include "Week 657" 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 May 7. 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 John O'Byrne of Dublin. The Honorable Mentions name is by Brad Alexander of Wanneroo, Australia.

REPORT FROM WEEK 653

In which we asked you to coin and define words or phrases based on someone's name:

- 4** **Yogiberrata:** Sayings that ought to be corrected, but then they wouldn't be right. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)
- 3** **Blix-and-mortars:** Said of two types of things never found together. "Bill Frist campaigning at a Wiccan Festival would be like blix-and-mortars." (Kevin Dopart, Washington)
- 2** **The winner of the Flying Spaghetti Monster car plaque (below):**



Disputin: To invite a one-way ticket to the gulag. "Ever since the Khodorkovsky verdict, Russians have been afraid to disputin." (Steve Ettinger, Chevy Chase)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

1 **Dean:** 1. To make a complete change in occupations, such as going from singing to selling sausage; 2. To wreck a sports car; 3. To snitch on a corrupt politician; 4. To ruin one's career by resorting to weird shouting. "He used the money he made deaning to buy a Porsche that he ended up deaning right after he decided to dean out that governor who had deaned his way right out of the primaries." (Russell Beland, Springfield)

SELECTED LOWLIGHTS

Angelou: To wrap bad poetry in gravitas by employing a deep, stentorian voice: "You may angelou all you want," the teacher scolded, "but it's still just a dirty limerick." (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Dobson's Choice: The requirement that the president nominate to the Supreme Court either a reactionary arch-conservative or an evangelical arch-conservative. (Frank Mullen III, Aleo, Ill.)

Enfant terrellible: An egregiously self-centered athlete. (Tom Greening, North Bethesda)

Not to mention: T.O.: To insult coworkers, violate workplace standards and practices, and show little regard for clients. "Despite his smile and performance record, he still managed to T.O. everyone in the office." (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Vindiesel: A noxious, oily fossil fuel, or the implausible lumbering vehicles supposedly propelled by same. (Brendan Beary)

Greenspanish: Cryptic yet extremely influential language. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Cochronicle: A story told in verse. "He was on trial, for quite a while. Tried on a glove, and got no love." (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

Fiddy: Inclined to brag about sociopathic behavior: "One Dolla, who is twice as fiddy as 50 Cent, stole 42 cars, spent six years in JV and was shot eight times by police before making the logical transition to the music industry." (Jeff Brechlin)

Abramoffer: A gift that would never, ever lead any legislator to betray his conscience or his constituents and would never influence his vote in any way. Ever. (John Shea, Lansdowne, Pa.; Dot Yufer, Newton, W.Va.)

Bonds: To share drugs with your teammates. "Barry

and I did a little male bondsing before the big game." (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

Simonize: To criticize hurtfully. "To be perfectly honest, I've heard better singing from a wounded animal," the judge simonized to Singer No. 2. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis; Louis B. Raffel, Northbrook, Ill.)

Kaineing: A severe legislative defeat. "The governor got a brutal kaineing from the Republicans on his slow-sprawl bill." (Daniel Hupfer, Springfield)

Lola: To encounter a mixed-up, muddled-up, shook-up world. "We have to find a pickup bar with better lighting — it's just too easy to lola here." (Russell Beland)

DeLaissez-faire: The practice of looking the other way regarding questionable campaign contribution schemes. (Julie Klavens, Baltimore)

Sharonstone: To show more skin than justified at one's age. "Ewwwww, Sally's mom sharonstoned us at the pool party." (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Manilobotomy: A procedure to remove that godawful nagging tune out of your head. (Brendan O'Byrne, Regina, Saskatchewan)

Paristocracy: The class of people born to the lifestyle of the rich and clueless. (Deborah Guy, Columbus, Ohio)

Vannalism: A form of graffiti that is displayed only a letter at a time. (Brendan Beary)

Kobe: To buy off a spouse after an adulterous affair is discovered: "He had to kobe up a \$4 million diamond to pay for that one-night stand." (Ken Rosenau, Washington)

Sanctum Santorum: The holiest of holier-than-thou political philosophies. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Chert: To fail to pay attention, with dangerous consequences. "I wouldn't chert off those flood

warnings if I were you." (Dan Seidman, Watertown, Mass.)

Ojaywalking: Making the rounds on a golf course in search of your wife's killer. (Jon Reiser)

Billdo: A cigar. (Nick Curtis, Gaithersburg)

Frist: To make a quick judgment on insufficient evidence. "The specialist fristed whiplash after examining the scrape on the patient's bumper." (Elden Camahan, Laurel; Elizabeth Stamper, Watertown, N.Y.)

Nader: To sabotage or undermine. The beauty contestant nadered her roommate's chances by pouring Nair into her shampoo. (Gordon Labow, Glenelg)

Larryking: A slow-pitch softball that doesn't even reach the plate. (Marc Naimark, Paris)

Halliburton: The process of destroying something and then hiring oneself to rebuild it. (Brendan O'Byrne)

Bidentime: Shooting the breeze instead of asking a nominee questions. "After the senator from Delaware had rambled on for his entire questioning period, the Republicans on the Judiciary Committee put in some bidentime as well." (Steve Ettinger)

Partonage: One's bust size. (Tom Witte)

Timmeadows: the pasture to which most "Saturday Night Live" cast members disappear. (Brendan Beary)

Alitosis: A fear that opening one's mouth might offend somebody. (Dave Kelsey, Fairfax)

Next Week: It Plays to Recycle, or How the Waste Was Won



Putting the Mojo On the Motorcycle

MOTORCYCLE, From D1

Inside the mess is Rafaele Proctor, owner and proprietor of the garage, which goes by the name of Artistic Creations. Short, curly hair and an ever-smiling face. He's wearing a blue garage uniform, his name stitched on the breast. He's sketching on an artist's pad.

Daryl Bailey watches. "Just gimme, gimme —" He's a delivery driver for the money and a biker for the love and truth of it. Lives in Lanham. He's making up his mind about colors, wants something new for the summer.

He bounces up and down on his toes, jiggling the brain for inspiration, peering at Ray's sketch. "Hot pink?" Rafaele smiles. "You laugh," Bailey says. "Like a line of pink, a pearl white, a TSI blue — you know? That's hot. That's hot now."

He's thinking out loud. Then he gets it, gets how the bike will become the apotheosis of Daryl Bailey himself. "Orange is me. That's sorta mine." He settles on an image of the Grim Reaper, too.

Rafaele sketches, turns to pull out another marker, comes back to the pad. Desk is so crowded he has to balance the pad on top of the Rolodex. Then he spins the page around. He hasn't bothered drawing the entire motorcycle, only the skins of the bike — the plastic shells that form its shape. It's in tangerine orange, a pearl white, outlined in blue.

Bailey smiles. "Do it. Do it. How much?"

"One grand. That's for you. Anybody asks, it was \$1,800."

Bailey deals out a credit card. Complains a little bit.

"I was trying to get to you last Friday, man."

"Shoot. Friday, I had 60 phone calls. 'S why I can't get nothing done."

"Don't answer the phone. Get you a secretary."

"She'd have to be big and ugly."

Bailey laughs: "What, your wife?"

Ray: "Nah, man. Guys would never leave."

That is likely true, as guys tend to hang out even when there are no women present at all, save for the pictures of the nearly nude models on the walls. A cycle garage is something like what barbershops used to be: Some guys working, some guys jawing, some just sort of there.

Rafaele has what so many of them want from life.

He used to step out of his little ranch-style house off Alex Ferry Road in Clinton 15 years ago — a house his father had built with *his* father — and think about a shop like this. His view from the front door, morning, noon and night, was the ugly end of industrial Americana: an air-conditioning warehouse. A waste management company. Traffic. Then Rafaele would go off to work, wearing the FedEx uniform, hauling packages. He wanted more.



PHOTOS BY JAMES A. PARCELL — THE WASHINGTON POST

Rafaele Proctor opened a shop on nights and weekends in 1999, and made decorating motorcycles a full-time job two years later. At left, one of his creations.

There is a long history of men in this country who did not have complicated dreams or go to fancy schools but who worked through the brute force of American industry to realize things that they had only seen in their mind's eye. Creativity is not easily seen in oil pans and exhaust pipes and camshafts. But it is there, nonetheless.

One day, Rafaele had his pick-up painted and lettered. The guy showed him how to do it.

He learned. He read magazines about airbrushing. He practiced. His early stuff was awful. And then he got good. He turned himself into an artist, sketching out images freehand on transfer paper taped to the bike, then airbrushing it in. He started up a shop in 1999, did it on the side, nights and weekends. Opened this place in 2001, thought about quitting his day job.

"My father asked me, 'Would you do it for free?' And I said yes. That's when I knew I was going to quit FedEx. I love racing, love bikes, love speed. I don't have to do anything I don't want to all day long. I just wake up and do stuff I love."

The artist's portfolio: helmets painted to look like full-faced Spider-Man, complete with the visor

that flips down and completes the face. Monsters, gargoyles, things with teeth. Nude women. Lots of skulls. Twenty Bird. Bikes with a leering Freddy Krueger; a Triumph emblazoned with a Union Jack. Flames — flames are big.

An off-duty cop, standing in the office, flipping through Ray's work, looking for inspiration for his bike: "Tired of looking like everybody else, man, I tell you that."

Jerome Enoch is in here to get some motor work done, performance tires put on his Suzuki GSX-R 750. This is a high-performance Japanese sport bike, something like the Suzuki 'Busa, a top end in the neighborhood of 200 mph. You don't accelerate on these things, you *detonate*.

Enoch also has two helmets he wants Ray to airbrush: one to be painted as the Reaper. The other as Darth Mal, from "Star Wars." The man goes for evil.

Most guys who come out here do. Maybe they'll do the bike candy-colored green, but there'll be a skull ghosted on the gas tank. Bike art is of the Frank Frazetta school, goth/fantasy/prehistoric women with heaving breasts and loincloths. The kind of thing you used to see on the side of vans if you're old enough to remember

that kind of thing.

Another fine day for Rafaele. Why not?

Man is 33 years old, his own boss. Shop has grown to employ two people full time and two part time. Two partners do the motor and chrome work. Entrepreneurial spirit. Family enterprise. His wife, Rochelle, works as an administrator at Washington Hospital Center. They've got a baby boy, Malakai. Ray is such a damn red-blooded American it makes you want to grab a flag and hit somebody.

Donny Harley, 41, is sanding down the bright blue skins of another Suzuki, peeling off the paint with a sander. The conversation around the shop turns to speed, and Harley tells the story about being a passenger in a car about 2 a.m. on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. They were doing about 60 mph, he figures, when two bikes flew by, doing, what, 170 or better.

"ZZZnniiiiiooooooww! They were by us before you even saw them. So loud, it scared the guy driving so bad he goes, 'Hay-yal! Lets go of the steering wheel, throws his hands up in front of his face.'"

Guffaws. The afternoon spins out; it's April, warming up, bikes

back on the street at last. LaRay Proctor comes by, Rafaele's brother. So does Daryl Rice, a man who has put more than \$18,000 into a Kawasaki ZX-12. His day job is at Metro, a bus mechanic. He bought the bike used, had Rafaele trick it out, and now he can't take it out on the street without guys asking him where he got it done.

It's that sort of word of mouth that's making this business work. "We reference a couple hundred people per year over to Rafaele," says Bill Gash, general manager of Clinton Cycles, a shop a mile or two away. "They're looking for stock stuff to be painted, or their helmets, or a complete custom job. He always does a great job. People know his work."

Rafaele perches on a stool at the front of the shop. The spring sunlight falls across one shoulder, leaving him half in dark, half in light. He's airbrushing a skull with a rose clenched between its teeth on the gas tank of a Honda Shadow. The tank will be candy brandywine, which is, it turns out, the hot color this season.

This is what real-life dreams look like on a Thursday afternoon, and the view from here is pretty damn good.