

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 674: Limerixicon 3



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**A train and a woman who's loose
Share a part that they put to good use:
As they pass you right by
You can't help but espy
Their beguilingly swaying caboose.**

It's time for our annual visit to the Omnificent English Dictionary in Limerick Form, whose founder, the heroically steadfast Chris J. Strolin, is still plugging away assiduously toward his goal of compiling one or more limericks for every word in the English language. About this time last year, we helped Chris J. beef up his stock of words beginning with *bd-* through *bl-*. Now, as his collection of five-liners has burgeoned from 17,000 last year past the 30,000 mark, he has finally made it to: the *C*'s! **This week: Supply a humorous limerick based on any word in the dictionary (except proper nouns) beginning with *ca-*.** The limerick can define the word or simply illustrate its meaning. For the Empress's guidelines on rhyme and meter, see the link at www.oedilf.com. Her standards are stricter than some people's, looser than others. Once we run the results on Sept. 3, you may submit your entries (getting ink here or not) to the Oedifiers as well.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives a night light in the shape of a forlorn-looking hula dancer in grass skirt and coconut bra, at right, picked up for us at the famously famous Ron Jon Surf Shop by Ed Gordon of Hollywood, Fla. Well, you wouldn't look so happy, either, if someone stuck YOUR butt in an electric socket.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called this week) 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. 14. Put "Week 674" 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. 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 Brendan Beary. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Kevin Dopart.

REPORT FROM WEEK 670

In which we asked you to compare or contrast two words that differ by one letter:

- 4** **Osama and Osaka:** Given five years, the CIA might find Osaka. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)
- 3** **Whores and chores:** My wife has never given me a list of whores to do on my day off. (Ned Bent, Oak Hill)
- 2** **The winner of the rubber skull with eyeballs and stuff inside:** Bra and bar: Only one of them will open to serve drinks to minors. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

NO LO(W)ER (S)INS

Ballet and bullet: Men tend to have the same general reaction when faced with either of them, but unfortunately there's no such thing as a speeding ballet. (Paul Whittemore, Spotsylvania, Va.)

The difference between global warming and global arming is W; actually, that's also what they have in common. (Dan Seidman, Watertown, Mass.)

Genial and genital: It's okay to greet your neighbors with a genial wave. (Brendan Beary)

George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush: One stopped fighting the war in Iraq; the other fights stopping the war in Iraq. (Rob Kloak, Springfield)

The capital and the Capitol: One hosts the seat of government; the other hosts the rear end of government. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Latin and Latina: I don't mind lots of homework conjugating the latter. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

There's no difference between PBS and PMS. They both put me in a state of blind, irrational fury. Then again, so does pretty much everything else. — *A. Coulter* (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

God and GÖP: It's hard to protect yourself from acts of either. (Yoyo Zhou, Cambridge, Mass.)

Bondo and Bonds: One is a synthetic body filler; the other is a body filled with synthetics. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Whiskers and whiskeys: If you have a lot of whiskers when you wake up in the morning, not a problem. (Brendan Beary)

Apple and ample: These words mean the same, as in "How 'bout them amples?" (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Bush and bust: The difference between a president and his presidency. (Marni Penning, White Plains, N.Y.)

Midol relieves an annoying, recurring headache; Idol produces one. (Ira Allen)

Bird and Byrd: One goes with white wine, the other with pork. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Bench and belch: People will sit next to you after you show them a nice long bench. (Ned Bent)

Bush and blush: One of them demonstrates self-consciousness and the capacity for embarrassment. (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

Mind and hind: One is a terrible thing to waste, and, well, so is the other. — *J. Dahmer* (Chris Doyle)

Condi and Bondi: One is diplomatic and pleasant, and the other's a beach. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

Chaney and Cheney: One is the Man With a Thousand Faces, while the other is only two-faced. (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington; Howard Walderman, Columbia)

Mission Accomplished: Failure in Iraq. Fission Accomplished: Failure in Iran. (Chris Doyle)

Vader and Nader: Darth ultimately failed to empower the Dark Side. (Dave Kelsey, Fairfax)

Fast supper and Last Supper: One involves a happy meal. (Art Grinath)

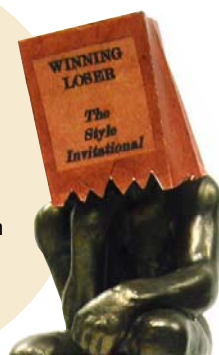
The difference between "who" and "whom" is that there are many people whom I believe misuse the latter. (Chris Doyle; Roy Ashley, Washington)

Yuri and Suri: One is known for a little cruise made by a space scientist; the other is a little Cruise made by a spacey Scientist. (Veggo Larsen, Palmetto, Fla.)

Copulating and populating: One is when two people become one; the other is when two people become three. (Ross Elliffe, Picton, New Zealand)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER:

Patient and patent: Drug companies will wring every penny out of each one before it expires. (Ben Aronin, White Plains, N.Y.)



The difference between a stud and a spud: About 10 years of marriage. (Chris Doyle)

World Cup and World Cop: Two things the United States is really lousy at. (Kevin Dopart)

The difference between Mt. McKinley and Mr. McKinley is, oh, about 20,325 feet. Plus 6. (Chris Doyle)

Pork and park: If you don't know the difference, I'm not letting you park my car. (Mark Eckenwiler)

The difference between affect and effect is, uh, see, uh, the difference is that when you affect something, it's affected, whereas when you effect something, it's effected, see. — *G.W.B., Washington* (Charlie Wood, Falls Church)

Rome and Rove: Only one of them got sacked. (Barbara Sarshik, McLean)

Film noir is a sultry genre of movie. MILF noir is a sultry genre of mommy. (Tom Witte)

Maxima and Maxim: One has an automatic transmission, and the other is for the guy who handles a stick. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

The difference between hag and shag is the difference between oink and boink. (Tom Witte)

The similarity between yoga and Yogi is that neither one is anything like the other. (Brendan Beary)

And Last: Drive and drivel: You don't need a lot of drive to succeed in The Style Invitational. (Brendan Beary)

And Laster: The difference between mature and manure is the difference between A1 and D2. (Mark Eckenwiler; Brendan Beary)

And Even Lasterer: The difference between a laser and a Loser is that one is bright and the other is, um, unbright. (Kevin Dopart)

Next Week: Join Now! or Breaking and Entering



BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

A Speedy Win, A Swifter Fall From Grace

ESSAY, From D1

for up to four years — two years from cycling, and two years from competing in the ProTour events, cycling's major races. At that point he'd be at least 34 and nearing retirement age.

For many, the stunned reaction to Landis's crashout stems from admiration for his personal story. How do we reconcile the endearingly modest former Mennonite with the calculating rule-breaker that his urine samples suggest he could be?

"If Floyd Landis goes down, he will become the Ben Johnson of cycling," said three-time Tour winner Greg LeMond, speaking by phone earlier this week. "I hope he doesn't become that, but it is that shocking of a revelation."

Before the initial test result came out, it would have sounded crazy to suggest that Landis could be a fraud of the magnitude of the disgraced Canadian sprinter who, at the 1988 Olympics, broke the world record in the 100-meter race on steroids and was disqualified. In interviews over the course of two days in May, Landis appeared to me to be a good-natured and driven athlete who struggled with the sometimes cruel demands of the sport.

Yet given the trouble he's in now, the answers he gave then to questions about doping seem suggestively combative. In the past couple of years eight riders on Phonak, the Swiss-based team Landis led, have been implicated in doping scandals, including the American Olympic medalist Tyler Hamilton. (Landis is now the ninth.) But when asked what he thought about drug abuse in his sport, Landis complained about the frequent testing cyclists had to undergo.

"Sure, the people who are getting caught — there's a lot of them," he said. "But the ones who are getting caught are the ones who are doing it, because it's practically impossible to get away with it." The random tests cyclists undergo are "a complete intrusion of privacy," he continued. "They've been to my house four times in the last four months. If you ask me, that's excessive. It makes my daughter wonder if I'm on drugs."

"We don't have any bigger problem than any other sport does," he said. "We just make it public immediately because we're too stupid to do anything about it."

"I've been tested 18 times already this year. How many do you need?"

Apparently, for him, just one more. Even before the drug allegations, Landis demonstrated that he keeps secrets. He concealed a degenerative hip condition from his own team doctor. He kept it hidden from the public until the Tour was underway, when he announced it in uncharacteristically splashy style, with a press conference announcing imminent hip-replacement surgery. This co-



BY ALESSANDRO TROVATI — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Floyd Landis made an amazing comeback during Stage 17 of the Tour de France, above. A urine sample taken that day, July 20, has been tested twice, showing high levels of testosterone.

incided with a New York Times Magazine story ascribing agonizing pain and physical impairment to the otherwise normal-seeming athlete. Suddenly, it looked like Landis was trying to fashion an overcoming-adversity story to match Lance Armstrong's cancer battle.

Landis is a puzzle, clearly. He doesn't fit the stereotype of the raging, egotistical American athlete, nor, it seems, has he lived up to the image of the conscientious, rule-abiding champion that so many had wanted to see.

But if Landis's personal narrative exerted a pull on us before, it's even greater now. His fall from grace brings to mind an ancient story: the prodigal son, the biblical parable of the child who returns home to his father's embrace after squandering his wealth. The lesson is that ambition can be intoxicating and ultimately ruinous — but that after it has cost you every last shred of your dignity, your solace is to seek forgiveness.

The teenage Landis left his tiny home town in rural Pennsylvania to pursue a decidedly un-Mennonite goal: personal victory on his bike. If his ambition did get the better of him, Landis will have squandered more than just the wealth from winning the Tour. (He was promised \$2.5 million from his team,

and more would have rolled in from sponsorships, appearances and book deals.) He will also have wasted a decade and a half of lonely, grueling toil as he trained to fulfill his dream.

Since the embarrassment of the initial "A" test result, Landis has expressed something of a homeward pull, mentioning in interviews a week ago his mother's distress at the news, and a tearful phone call between them. "The sad part is he's part of a system," said LeMond, who saw fellow cyclists die from overuse of the performance-enhancing drug EPO. He faults cycling's "code of silence" for covering up the extent of drug abuse in the sport.

"I hope Floyd will have the courage to be truthful about how this came about, assuming that he's guilty," he said.

That would mean revealing his suppliers and co-conspirators and how he avoided detection if he had passed other tests while doping. Let's face it: Who believes that any of the scores of cyclists previously charged with doping — including the world's top riders thrown out on the eve of this year's Tour — stuck needles in himself while all alone in a hotel room? It's a stretch to think that dopers operate in a vacuum, without team doctors and directors being the wiser.

One who did speak out about doping —

with mixed results — is Matt DeCano, a former junior national time-trialing champion and pro racer who became an anti-doping crusader. On teams in Europe as well as here, the Virginia native said he witnessed rampant drug use and was pressured to take part. After several years of racing clean, he broke down in 2003 and began taking EPO and testosterone — a move he calls "the biggest mistake of my career."

What pushed him over the edge was being beaten by riders he suspected of using drugs. "I was like, I just can't win these races and I have the form of my life," DeCano said.

But after he started doping, DeCano says, he grew depressed — partly from disappointment with himself, partly from drug interactions, he suspects. He wrote about his drug use for a training Web site and was banned from racing for a year.

DeCano had hoped going public would lead others to do the same. "I thought I was going to spark this whole thing where all these other pros would be with me," he said. Instead, he drew hate mail and was accused of being jealous.

DeCano says cyclists should be encouraged to come forward, rather than punished for it. But complicating efforts to get others to fess up is that not all of those who turn in

drug-fueled performances see their actions as wrong.

As more and more cyclists dope and the average racing speed increases, "you either get dropped or you figure out why everyone else isn't getting dropped," said Matthew A. Masucci, assistant professor of sports studies at San Jose State University. "Then it becomes, 'Why would I knowingly give up an advantage?' It's that group mentality. 'Well, they must not think it's wrong.'"

The point is, moral choices occur in a context. Some may find it unthinkable to take illegal, even life-threatening performance-enhancing drugs — particularly after the early deaths of football's Lyle Alzado, track star Florence Griffith-Joyner and Baltimore Orioles pitcher Steve Bechler — but we don't have the prospect of millions of dollars and lasting fame dangling before our noses. We're tempted to believe that what is in an athlete's specimen cup reveals what is in his heart. If he's peeing out dope, he must be a bad guy. Yet it may only mean that he's a human being who made a bad mistake.

Now we'll see what Landis will do next. If his Tour crown rests on chemistry rather than on his own unenhanced efforts, continuing to deny the doping will ensure that the cycle of drug use won't stop here.