

# The Style Invitational

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

### Week 687: Whatever Were They Thinking?



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This week we once again pay homage to (i.e., rip off shamelessly) the late and venerable New York Magazine Competition, which under the stewardship of Mary Ann Madden published more than 900 contests before she retired in 2000. John Schachter of Arlington recalls a frequently repeated NYMag contest from years back (one of the winning entries is in the cartoon). **This week: Tell us (A) What someone might say in some situation, and (B) what that person was actually thinking when he said A.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives, courtesy of tireless Loser Dave Prevar of Annapolis, a cute little set called Grow-a-Boyfriend and Grow-a-Girlfriend (far right). You soak the little rubbery doll in water, and in a couple of days, he or she will expand to three to four times his or her original size (um, no, it is a consistent expansion, not just certain zones). But eventually, according to the package, little Alice, let's call her, or Aloysius will return to thumb-size. The all-pink lovelies are scantily clad, but they are indeed clad.

**Other runners-up** win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called this week) get one of the all-new lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 13. Put "Week 687" 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 Dec. 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 Drew Bennett of Alexandria.

## REPORT FROM WEEK 683

In which we asked you to string together words lifted, in the order in which they appear, from any scene or two consecutive scenes in "Hamlet." Several entrants reported having read the play for the first time just for this contest. Once again, *The Style Invitational* achieves its primary goal: to improve the cultural literacy of the populace. (Note: The name of one Loser appears below with dismaying frequency. While it might be nice to have a wider variety of reading matter between the parentheses, we'd rather provide you with the cleverest, funniest stuff that goes outside those parentheses: Every week, we run the best entries we found for that contest, period — no matter whose names are on them.)

**4 Act 4, Scene 7, and Act 5, Scene 1:** "What a long speech! (Dull ass! Has this fellow no feeling?) The tongue of a politician is full of equivocation. (Every fool can tell!) How long will a man lie, ere we have his hide? (Alas, a thousand times!) (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

**3 Act 1, Scene 5:** Mark: Lend the secrets of thy young flesh! Youth: His shameful lust holds a seat! Touching my sword. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed. Ah, ha, boy! Come hither, and lay your hands on. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

**2 The winner of the Pimp My Cubicle kit: Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2:** My sweet lord. Him, my lord. My, my, my lord. A really wanton ho, you. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

## AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

**Act 2, Scenes 1 and 2:** He's addicted to tennis and it hath made him mad. His service and return, a set down, were nothing but waste, play'd like an old man on his ass. Striking too wide, he has tears in his eyes and speech like a whore a-cursing! (Dennis Lindsay, Seabrook)



## FINITE JEST: THE MINOR PLAYS

**Act 1, Scenes 1-2:** In our state, marriage of gentlemen to gentlemen might not be tenable. (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)

**Act 1, Scenes 1-2:** Get thee relief. Sit down in the privy upon the throne. That duty done, leave not the flushing before it vanish'd from our sight — or your foul deeds will rise. (Kevin Dopart)

**Act 1, Scenes 2-3:** On the scale, weighing a little more — dejected. O God! How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable are fashion, perfume and waxes! (Mary Ann Henningsen, Hayward, Calif.)

**Act 2, Scene 1:** Wanton, wild gaming! Drinking! Swearing! Scandal! Incontinency! Savageness! A party! A brothel! Hell! Horrors! Fear! Ecstasy! Love! Passion! Sorry. Denied access. (Ron Stanley, Leesburg)

**Act 2, Scenes 1 and 2:** Go a head, make my day, maggots. (Kevin Dopart)

**Act 2, Scenes 1 and 2:** He loosed out his arm, throwing strikes. Whiff, his stick did nothing. Out, out, mincing rogue, out! (Kevin Dopart)

**Act 2, Scene 2:** O dear Ophelia, I love thee — but take this "Be-No," I do beseech you! For yet is the air a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours from your wind. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**Act 2, Scene 2; Act 3, Scene 1:** Let us hear from Gore: "My damn'd defeat was made by an ass! The father, too, when he spake, it lack'd something: brains and wisdom." (Kevin Dopart)

**Act 2, Scene 2; Act 3, Scene 1:** Sith Lord, could monstrous force defeat the good force? No, and that suck'd. (Kevin Dopart) ["Sith," by the way, meant "since."]

**Act 3, Scenes 1 and 2:** To be or not to be . . . ay-ay-ay, I forgot the rest. (Ron Stanley)

**Act 3, Scenes 2 and 3:** Julius Caesar, a mouse and a Confederate murderer come into a bar . . . (Kevin Dopart)

**Act 3, Scene 4, and Act 4, Scene 1:** "Wicked good." From New England, I will translate: " 'Tis good." (Kevin Dopart)

**Act 4, Scenes 2 and 3:** Take me like an ape, my lord. I am knavish! My body is by desperate appliance relieved, or not at all. (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)

**Act 4, Scenes 4 and 5:** I'll be straight. "Revenge of th' Sith": The plot is worth nothing. (Mary Ann Henningsen)

**Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2:** Ay, ha', 'tis, e'en, O, 'twill, i', pah, 'twere, dost — what dizzy infusion of diction, semblable of not words, but foolery. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

**Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2:** He is without arms. He has no skull, no calves, no hide, no eyelids. O well, he is not perfect. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

**Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2:** Sheet doth happen. (Kevin Dopart)

**From Act 5, Scene 2:** This election mess in the fall leaves both sides damned unsatisfied and gives this sight to the world: unnatural acts, accidental judgments, miscchance, plots and errors. (Dennis Lindsay)

**Act 5, Scene 2:** There's a divinity that shapes our ends? Nay, I'm satisfied in nature. As thou'rt a man, things come from a cell; plots and errors happen. (John O'Byrne, from vacation in Gaborone, Botswana)

**Epilogue 1: Act 4, Scenes 5 and 6:** If you desire to know the Loser, know pelican brains! They bore on Sundays. They be slow and dumb. They bore thee much. Knowest, I direct them." — *The Empress, Washington* (Kevin Dopart)

**Epilogue 2: Act 1, Scene 5; Act 2, Scene 1:** Would that I may find a life, and never lust this heartily for a shirt so piteous I do not go out o'doors in it! (Brendan Beary)

**And the Last Epilogue: Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2:** Come losing wits some nine year same, Where indiscretion serves you right; For vice, much dirt and willing shame, Only the damned do we invite. (Kevin Dopart)

**Next Week: Backtricking, or Mirror Scrimmage**



A hugely lovable girl and her pint-size lover boys.

BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

## For Bernie Sanders, Vermont Rolls Out the Red Carpet

SANDERS, From D1

tors who were pretty radical guys but never a guy who says, 'I'm a socialist,' says Eric Foner, a historian at Columbia University.

The 65-year-old known to voters simply as "Bernie" is Vermont's lone congressman, a six-term independent with a photo of Eugene Debs, the Socialist Party presidential candidate in 1912, on his congressional wall. He's perhaps the most popular pol in the state and there's nothing northern New England about him. Sanders was born in Brooklyn, raised by Jewish parents from Poland. His father's family perished in the Holocaust. He chews on each syllable in an accent as Flatbush-inflected as the day he wandered north four decades ago.

"Look," Sanders says, "you can't be afraid of the people [pronounced: pee-PULL]. A lot of progressives sit around their homes and worry about being labeled or how to talk to people. I go out, I knock on doors, and I talk about economic justice and the oligarchy and what's fair, and more people than you might guess listen to me."

"I find that absolutely encouraging." Vermont's Democrats offered Sanders a ballot slot. No way. He runs as an independent. (The Democrats didn't put up a candidate against him.) On the Republican side, his opponent is a tall, silver-haired businessman and former college basketball star named Richard Tarrant.

He's a billionaire or close to it, and he's spending \$7 million of his own money to run commercials accusing Sanders of all manner of derelictions. Tarrant gave college kids free laptops to staff his headquarters. He tools around in a \$158,000 Bentley, swapping jokes about taking out this "Red" from New York.

Tarrant might more profitably have used his cash to build bonfires along Lake Champlain this summer. Depending on the poll, he trails Sanders — who drives a beat-up old Saturn — by between 20 and 25 percentage points.

John McClaughry, a plainspoken Vermonter, is a libertarian and former Reagan administration official. He'd dearly love to see Tarrant whomp Sanders, but c'mon . . .

"Rich Tarrant is like a dream for Bernie: He's big, rich, and the personification of the running dogs of capitalist imperialism," McClaughry says. "I'll say this for Bernie, and I really detest the guy, he has a perfect feel for politics."

### People's Mayor

Bernie's curly hair used to take off in semi-random directions, a perfect accompaniment to his rhetorical flights. Now the curls scallop around the base of a balding pate. But age applies few other brakes.

Bernie clomps up to the podium at his eighth debate with Tarrant wearing an old blue blazer and corduroy pants. A sturdy

man, he opens by giving the audience a gruff nod. "I want to thank many of you for voting for me." Loud boos. Sanders shrugs and holds his hands up. "Okay, I'm not thanking all of you."

Call him a red, he calls you a red-baiter. Tell him to pipe down and he pipes up. Accuse him, as Tarrant does, of wanting to soak the rich and he'll detail how the Republicans cut taxes for the rich and multinational corporations for two decades even as median family income declined. "The major untold story of our time," he calls it.

He has never run a negative TV commercial. But verbal fisticuffs? *That's* democracy. "If I kick you in the [crotch] and you push me back, a reporter would write, 'Gee, there's tension in the room and both sides are pushing,'" he explains. "The Republicans lie a lot and the corporate media is very weak and completely biased and has a hard time calling someone a liar."

Sanders first ran for Senate in 1972. He was the candidate of the socialist Liberty Union Party and got just 2.2 percent of the vote. Did he think he'd one day be measuring drapes for a Senate office?

The laugh comes from deep inside his chest. "There are *very few* members of the Senate who can say that they once got 2 percent," he says with mock solemnity.

Sanders came out of the University of Chicago, an itinerant carpenter and inveterate reader of history books. He accumulated the collected works of Freud. But he didn't have a "proper" political career until a conversation in 1980 with a friend, University of Vermont theologian Richard Sugarman. "One day I suggested to Bernie that instead of running for these offices, governor, senator, why don't we look for something you could actually win?" Sugarman recalls.

They settled on mayor of Burlington. Sanders took on a five-term old pol, worked 15-hour days, drew huge margins in working-class precincts and damned if he didn't win by 10 votes. It looked like a fluke until Sanders won three more terms. Critics called it the People's Republic of Burlington; his followers dubbed themselves Sanderistas.

### No Fancy Folks

Bernie Sanders ran a tight ship. He balanced budgets, picked top-drawer appointees and showed up at 2 a.m. to ride fire engines and snowplows until services improved. He had a listed phone number and answered it. He denounced the deprivations of capitalism until a cable company agreed to wire the city — and to repair sliced-up streets on its own dime. He kept his campaign promise and obtained a minor league baseball team.

They named it the Vermont Reds. Moody's Investor Service gave him a thumbs-up. Sanders, who is married and has four grown children, road-tested his show in



Rep. Sanders with supporters. The Democrats offered their place on the ballot to the self-described democratic socialist, but he declined.



Sanders's Republican opponent, Richard Tarrant, right, listens to a Vermonter during a campaign event in January.

a 1986 run for governor. He got just 14 percent of the vote, but he carried the French Catholic farm belt. The farmers didn't agree with or understand him. But they liked his manner, which was as plain as theirs.

In 1990 he won in a landslide against an incumbent Republican congressman, carrying Burlington but also Hardwick, a hard-tack bit of outback Vermont. The state's median income is the second lowest in New England, and poverty is rising. "There are no fancy folks there — it's the no-gun-control and snowmobile crowd," said McClaughry, who ran for the state Senate that year. "Bernie and I were the leading vote-getters in Hardwick. It really annoyed me."

Bernie favors abortion rights and civil unions for gays, but economic justice is what drives him. In his view, workers are invariably right; he boasts a 100 percent AFL-CIO rating. Business leaders complain that when it's a labor dispute, he doesn't really listen.

After a rough patch in the early 1990s, when his scorn of Democrats got on the liberal nerves in Washington, the congressman calmed down. He befriended Sen. Patrick Leahy, the state's senior Democrat, formed a progressive caucus and even corralled Western representatives from the "black helicopter" faction of the GOP and deleted a section in the Patriot Act that would have required librarians to report which books patrons checked out.

Sanders annoys some to his left (admittedly a rather small neighborhood). Peter Diamondstone — who founded the Liberty Union and is running for the Senate this year — has had more doctrinal splits with Bernie

than they have fingers. Now 72, he recalls spending the night at Sanders's Burlington apartment in 1981. They argued over dinner, they argued over dessert, they argued deep into the night. After turning in, Diamondstone says, "there was a few minutes of silence and we began yelling at each other up and down the stairs."

Still, if you're a beat-up war veteran or an old mill hand looking for food stamps, you want to wash up at Sanders's constituent offices. He brings home millions of dollars for veterans and the usual fat subsidies to quaint Vermont dairy farmers. It pays off for him every Election Day.

You nose up the rutted dirt roads north of Lyndonville and brake by a log cabin with three cords of fresh-split wood under the porch. Two political signs are in the grass — for Jim Douglas, the Republican governor, and for "Bernie," the socialist.

Frankie Paquette, 63, asks you to sit in his kitchen while his wife, Millie, knits. He's a wiry millworker whose mill moved south of the border three years ago. He subsists on odd jobs and no health insurance, hoping to limp to 65 and Medicare. He's talked with Sanders twice and the congressman's office helped him obtain college loans for his sons.

"Bernie's got really crazy ideas," Paquette says. "But he's for the little guy who ain't got three dollars for gasoline in February. That's me and I'm for him."