

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 721: Know Your Market

We pretty much realized that The Style Invitational is a little bit different from some other newspapers' humor contests. Matt Brody of Carlisle, Pa., alerted us to the weekly photo caption contest in the Harrisburg Patriot-News, which week after week gives first prize to a submitted caption that could charitably be called wholesome and accessible. Example: Picture of two ducks. Winning caption: "You quack me up!"

Matt wondered what would happen if some Style Invitational Losers entered this contest. Would the winning humor suddenly become complex and sophisticated? So we got in touch with Losernet, the Losers' own e-mail chat group, and several Losers mailed the Patriot-News lists of entries (we suggested they not send anything off-color) for three straight weeks. Hundreds of Loser entries total. Such as, for a dog catching a Frisbee, "Karl Rover fetches a blue state for his master," by Hall of Fame Loser Jennifer Hart of Arlington.

And? The first week, one honorable mention. The second week, one more. The third week, for the Frisbee picture, several — but it was pretty clear that the Losers were beginning to write for the judge (e.g., "Man's best friend disc-overs true happiness" by Russell Beland). The grand-prize Frisbee caption? "He's a high jumpin', tail waggin', Frisbee catchin' hound. Now that's a mouthful." Not one of ours.

This week: Here are four photos. For any of them, supply two captions: one that would appeal to The Style Invitational and one that would appeal to the Patriot-News.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives a Nestle Original Yorkie candy bar, which is marketed in England as a macho candy bar, not some little girly candy bar. Sure enough, in big type on the wrapper: "IT'S NOT FOR GIRLS!" Otherwise it seems to be a plain old chocolate bar named for a foofy little dog.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called that 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, July 16. Put "Week 721" 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 Aug. 5. 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 Kevin Dopart. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by N.G. Andrews of Danville, Va. This week's prize was donated by Peter Metrinko of Chantilly.



BY MICHAEL WILLIAMSON — THE WASHINGTON POST



BY ANDREW PROPP FOR THE PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY



BY FRANCISCO BONILLA — REUTERS



BY RICKY CARIOTI — THE WASHINGTON POST

REPORT FROM WEEK 717

When we asked for Googlenopes, phrases that — until now — would yield no hits if entered within quotation marks on the Google search engine: An amazing number of entrants got their no-hitters only by misspellings: "Barbara McCulsky look-alike" may be a 'nope, but "Barbara Mikulski look-alike" is not. And we're going to print the following entries right here, just so they'll no longer be Googlenopes: "The Empress is sexy," "the Empress is thoughtful," "the Empress is hot," "the Empress is amazing," "the Empress totally rocks," "the Empress deserves a Pulitzer." All right, then. (All the entries below were verified Googlenopes at this writing. Capitalization and punctuation are not factors in Google searches.)

4 "Calvin Coolidge bobblehead" (Ann Martin, Annapolis)

3 "All the girls loved my Camry" (Tom Lundregan, Alexandria)

2 The winner of the Candy Hose Nose: "Haute cuisine sucks" (Bonnie Speary Devore, Gaithersburg)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER "That controversial 'Gilligan's Island' episode" (Malcolm Flechner, Palo Alto, Calif.)

'WORTH ONLY A MAGNET'

"Coprolite engagement rings" (Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)

"President Bush carefully considered . . ." (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.; Mark Merriman, Arlington)

"Hazy, hot, humid and happy" (Leigh Giza, Centerville)

"Museum of suburban culture" (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

"What's so cute about pandas?" (Laurel Gainor, Great Falls)

"Fox News is more accurate than" (Brian Fox, Charlottesville)

"The weapons system came in under budget" (Rick Haynes, Department of Defense, Potomac)

Neither "honest electable Republican" nor "honest electable Democrat" (Karen Byers, Alexandria)

"Cheney's crisis of conscience" (Lawrence Miller, Washington)

"Bush, placing ethics above loyalty . . ." (Anne Paris, Arlington)

"Lightly used caskets" (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)

"Hot young abstinent teens!" (Josh Tucker, Kensington)

"One sexy imam" (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

"Fun with your septic tank" (Mary Anne Nichols, Seaford, Del.)

"Je ne regrette squat" (Roy Ashley, Washington)

"Canasta groupies" (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

"Hardcore Nationals fan" (Brian Cohen, Potomac)

"Kegger tonight at Liberty U." (Anne Paris)

"DIY Extreme Uncction" (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

"Bootleg Couric colonoscopy video" (Rick Haynes)

"Three-star Scottish cuisine" (Kevin Dopart)

"Not all our facts were made up" (Paul VerNooy, Hockessin, Del.)

"Let's live in Cleveland!" (Steve Offutt, Arlington)

"Once again, my husband was right and I was wrong" (Scott Susser, Hillside, N.J.)

"Darfur condo rentals" (Stephen Dudzik, Olney; Howard Walderman, Columbia)

"Wine and Spam tasting" (Anne Paris)

"I wish Paris Hilton was my mom" (Jonathan Gettleman, Ashburn)

"How do I install a virus on my computer?" (Hugh Pullen, Vienna)

"The 'Sopranos' finale was terrific" (Steve Buttry, Reston; John Kupiec, Fairfax; Paul Wright, Charlottesville)

"Ann Coulter conceded graciously" (Miles D. Moore, Alexandria)

"Utah's biggest party school" (David Kleinbard)

"Who's Who in York Springs" (Arthur Litoff, York Springs, Pa.)

"Angela Merkel porn" (Jon Grantham, University Park)

"The sexiest '60 Minutes' anchor" (Brian Fox)

"Funny Googlenopes" (Russell Beland, Springfield)

"First-time entries never get ink" (Pete Marshman, Edgewater — and yes, of course)

"The Empress's real name is . . ." (Randy Lee, Burke)

And Last: "Poems about hirudiniasis" (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

Next Week: Put Our Heads Together, or Go Ahead, Make My Daily

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH (D)			
♠	K J 10 6		
♥	Q 10 5		
♦	A 10 9		
♣	7 6 3		
	♣ None		
EAST			
♠	Q 5 3		
♥	J 8 7 2		
♦	K 5 2		
♣	J 6 2		
SOUTH			
♠	A 7		
♥	A K 9 6 4		
♦	J 8		
♣	A K 7 5		

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	5 NT	Pass
6 ♥	All Pass		

Opening lead: ♣ 10

Professionalism, boosted by an influx of pros from overseas, is profoundly affecting major U.S. events, and the foreign players are dominating.

In this year's Vanderbilt Teams, most of the top seeds consisted of a sponsor plus pros. Of the 19 non-sponsor players in the semifinals, 17 were of foreign extraction. One semifinalist team had two members of the reigning world champions from Italy; their opponents fielded the other four! Thus, the ACBL didn't have to watch the final of its prestigious "national" championship contested among six Italians and various other foreigners.

All this is a symptom of a U.S. class structure that has become increasingly polarized. More people are rich and spend their money retaining bridge pros for hefty sums.

In the quarterfinals, a team led by Poland's Piotr Tuszynski ousted Nick Nickell's powerful squad. In today's deal, North-South made six diamonds at one table. At the other, Jeff Meckstroth-Eric Rodwell, Nickell's North-South, reached six hearts, and West led a club.

Rodwell, a top-notch declarer, won with his ace and took the Q-A of trumps: A 3-2 break would have made 12 tricks easy. When West discarded, declarer could have succeeded — for example, by attacking the diamonds. Instead he tried the ace of spades and a spade to the jack. When East won, South had to fail, and Tuszynski gained 16 crucial IMPs.

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Fifth Sense: Venezuelans Show Their Independent Streak

HOLIDAY, From D1

with parties extending into the wee hours of July 7. July was a good month to throw off colonial masters. (Also see: Argentina, Colombia and Peru).

The U.S. and Venezuela even share a revolutionary hero or two.

But the Venezuelans don't do fireworks. By midnight Friday, Alvarez would be crooning folk ballads under a tent in the ambassadorial garden on Massachusetts Avenue NW, backed by a band of traditional cuatro players, before a crowd of Chavista true believers and international allies, who were dancing and throwing red roses.

By the time he starts singing, he will know if anyone from the Bush administration showed up to help celebrate.

"We hope they come," the ambassador says with a smile.



The morning of July 5, the statue of a sword-wielding Simón Bolívar mounted on a steed towers over a small group of diplomats and military officers on a plaza near the White House. The dignitaries represent Venezuela and other Latin American countries. Bolívar led Venezuela to independence from Spain on July 5, 1811. Born in Caracas, the dashing commander also helped free Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Panama.

An embassy official gives a ceremonial reading of the Venezuelan Declaration of Independence. Alvarez declares, "Now, more than ever, Venezuela is struggling to assume a full independence" — referring to the freedom to carry out the Chávez program without meddling by the United States, which now plays the part of Spain in the national drama.

Chávez takes Bolívar as his revolutionary role model. At Chávez's urging, Venezuelans voted to rename the country the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Elected president in 1998, Chávez has wrought large changes, with popular support, extending access to health care, education and a political voice to the poor. But he has also taken greater control of the oil industry, obtained legislative permission to rule by decree and closed a television station. Critics in Washington say he's leading the country away from democracy.

Alvarez bats away such cavils. Why, he asks, is Venezuela held to one standard of democracy when there is nationalized oil in Mexico and television stations are closed in other nations? "Do you think it is a democratic practice that if you want to be elected sen-



BY ANDREA BRUCE — THE WASHINGTON POST

Venezuela's patriotic celebrations here began on July 5 and included a performance of "Venezuela Viva" at the Organization of American States.

ator in this country, you need at least \$20 million?" But there's still the famous Chávez mouth, unavoidable even when the man himself is on another continent. A table near the statue holds copies of Chávez speeches. One of them from January devotes a page-and-a-half to excoriating José Miguel Insulza, the secretary general of the Organization of American States: "He's a true idiot, from the 'i' to the 't,'" Chávez said.

But hey — isn't that Insulza himself, here now, joining Alvarez in laying wreaths to Bolívar?

"I am not the first one or the last one to be treated that way by President Chávez," Insulza says later.

That night Insulza is in the front row for a spectacular performance in the organization's downtown headquarters. It is the creation story of Venezuela, told in dance and music. Every country has a triumphal narrative it likes to tell itself on Independence Day, and in the Venezuelan version, three races — white, Indian and black — unite, after some initial bloodshed, throw off colonial bonds and build a vibrant modern nation.

There is no Chávez in this vast, mythic rendering of Venezuelan history, as there might not be a

President Bush in a July 4 recounting of the Story of America.



Friday night, the Venezuelans aren't done yet.

Alvarez, now in a dark suit and peach-colored tie, greets hundreds of guests streaming into the residence. The crowd is thick with ambassadors from Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. Here comes Gustavo Guzman of Bolivia, representing Chávez's ideological soul mate, Evo Morales, looking bohemian in hippie hair, black suit, no tie, black-framed glasses and a boyish smile. He's the maverick. The rest of the men bow to the Washington consensus of dreary, tightly-knotted and buttoned-down embassy dress, while the women are permitted to strut on the highest of heels in the sleekest of silk.

A towering gringo in a blue suit appears in the mansion's doorway and powers inside with a hearty greeting to all. It is Thomas Shannon, assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, the State Department's point man on Venezuela.

Shannon says he has come out of "respect for the people of Venezuela, and a recognition that while in democracies govern-

ments may come and go, the ties and friendships between people will remain."

How diplomatic. But on second thought, that's the theme of the evening, of the entire two-plus days of Venezuelan independence in the belly of the beast that can be Washington.

Presidents come, presidents go. History is long.

"Bush is a man, Chávez is a man," says Dilenia Lopez, rolling her eyes as if to say, *You know how men are*. "The problem between Bush and Chávez has nothing to do with the people."

The Afro-Venezuelan group Eleggua strikes up percussive dance music. But the night is still young, and the crowd remains on best Embassy Row behavior, so there are few dancers. One of them is Maia Rodriguez, 19. "If we were back home, it would be crazy!" she says. Born in Bolivia to an American mother and raised in Venezuela, she has triple-citizenship.

"I like my president," she says, waxing idealistic about Chávez, as do so many young supporters. It sounds as if they are talking about Bobby Kennedy. "There is so much hope."

Susana Mota brought her American fiancé to the party to

show him there is more to Venezuela, and Venezuelans, than what sometimes appears in the media. "This is a good representation of my country: beautiful women, nice people, good food," she says.

And she passes on a secret — don't tell Chávez: "We like Americans. We love to copy you guys. The music. The styles. Venezuelans, just to be sophisticated, we talk English sometimes."

It's getting late, most of the non-Venezuelans have left, and now the dance floor is filled. The women's high heels are getting caught in the rubber mat spread on the lawn, temporarily trapping them like exotic birds.

The cuatro band takes the stage — with traditional guitar-like instruments and a flute — and the old songs come out. The folk tunes, the love ballads, the salsas and boleros, songs everybody knows, older than any regime, songs that have seen presidents come and go.

It's like karaoke with a live band. A Venezuelan army sergeant in uniform sings, then the press attache and then the ambassador himself: glass in hand, un-happily happy, singing sad songs about love of the land, about love itself and not about politics.