

**THIS WEEK'S CONTEST**

## Week 724: Abridged Too Far

The elegantly hilarious couplet at right, about the Greek comedy in which the women of Athens stage a sex strike to make their husbands stop fighting the Peloponnesian War, was submitted by Unbelievably Witty Loser Chris Doyle as an entry for Week 720, whose results appear below. It didn't quite fit in a list of historical events, but it gave the Empress a cheap 'n' easy way to post a new contest. **This week: Sum up a book, play or movie in a humorous rhyming verse of two to four lines.** Don't include the Bible. For now.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives this stuffed George Bush doll with stuffed flames coming out from his jeans. Pants on fire, get it? Yeah, well. It's very colorful and would make a nice pillow to snuggle up with. From Inge Ashley of Washington.



In the famed Aristophanes play "Lysistrata," The women tell men, "If you war, you'll get nada."

**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](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 6. Put "Week 724" 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. 25. 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 Mark Eckenwiler.

**REPORT FROM WEEK 720**

In which we asked you to recount historic events in two-line couplets or some other short and funny way:

- 4** 1450s: Vlad the Impaler's cruel depravities Created a host of bodily cavities. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)
- 3** 1546: The Great Reformer died and the worms had a diet of Luther. (Marian Carlsson, Lexington, Va.)
- 2** The winner of the Extreme Ironing calendar: 480 BC.: If King Xerxes and friends had invaded Greece properly, That unpleasantness could have been skipped at Thermopylae. (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

**AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER**  
1888: The mind of Jack the Ripper warps: his Madness leaves a spree de corpses. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

**MORE FROM THE ANNAL COMPULSIVES**

- c. 250 B.C.:** He ran from the bathtub while shouting "Eureka!" It's how Archimedes became the first streaka. (Kevin Dopart, Washington; Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)
- 218 B.C.:** For the great commander Hannibal, sweet victory was palpable. Now all he had to do was find a species that was Alp-able. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)
- 44 B.C.:** "Beware the ides of March," 'twas warned, or so goes ancient ballad; But Caesar heard it not, and so they turned him into salad. (Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)
- At the Battle of Hastings in 1066, Harold's butt is what William the Conqueror kicks.** (Chris Doyle)
- c. 1118:** Heloise's uncle found it wasn't hard To fix the problem that was Abelard. (Kevin Dopart)
- 1415:** In Agincourt on Crispin's Day, King Henry stirred with speeches His British band of brothers, who kicked Frenchies in their breaches. (Randy Lee, Burke)
- 1431:** Rejecting a quick beheading, Joan of Arc chose a hot stake over a cold chop. (George Vary, Bethesda)
- 1502-1504:** Stylish Michelangelo carved David in the nude, While Leo's Mona Lisa watched in smiling gratitude. (Randy Lee)
- 1588:** The Spanish fleet wasn't. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)
- 1618:** No death for three Prague men was fated When dung saved those defenestrated. (Andrew Hoenig, Rockville)
- Relentless and brutal, our politics now, with the cut and the slash of the blog. Why can't we use Windows more gently, like the Defenestrators of Prague?** (Mark Eckenwiler)
- 1792:** Guillotin's chief contribution Won points on style and execution. (Jay Shuck)
- 1804:** Burr leaves Hamilton in a heap On the ground of Weehawken. He had better aim than another veep — You know 'bout whom we talkin'. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)
- 1815:** Napoleon meets his, uh, Yorktown. (Creigh Richert, Aldie)

- 1836:** Though Jim Bowie showed cojones, Santa Anna had more ponies. (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)
- 1841:** When William Henry Harrison was still the prez-to-be, He backed his public service with a one-month guarantee. (Jay Shuck)
- 1914:** His face was no match for Helen of Troy But it launched lots of ships, did Franz, poor boy. (Ian Morrissey, Frederick)
- 1937:** What killed Amelia? We can't tell. Her carry-on contained some gel? (Jay Shuck)
- 1947:** As the envy of all flymen, Yeager broke the sonic hymen. (Kevin Dopart)
- 1948:** The Trib prints famous Dewey headline (The West Coast voted after deadline.) (Andrew Hoenig)
- In late '53, Playboy first hit the stands: For 54 years now it's been in our hands.** (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)
- 1956:** John Edwards's mother paid 50 cents for his first haircut. (Roy Ashley, Washington)
- 1962:** Whether the Mafia aided in Marilyn's death we will leave to the latest disprove, But it's a scurrilous lie that her last negligee was a loaner from J. Edgar Hoover. (Elwood Fitzner)
- 1966:** The Lovin' Spoonful — 16 hits in just a year or two. Just think, it's almost what the D.C. Nationals can do. (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- 1968:** The year was truly tragic, killing King and RFK, And Vietnam horrific (what with Tet, My Lai and Hue). In springtime Prague was occupied, and Commies got their licks in, And then to cap the year off, we elected Richard Nixon. (Randy Lee)
- 1983:** Karen Carpenter once was on top of the world, But it spun ever faster and off it she hurled. (Chris Doyle)

- 1983:** What was the threat that Reagan saw in minuscule Grenada? His numbers since he left Beirut were what he was afraid. (Jay Shuck)
- 1997:** Woody Allen made flicks, played a mean clarinet. Then he married his daughter. (How Soon-Yi forget.) (Chris Doyle)
- 2000:** At the stroke of midnight, on the dot, The world's computers all crashed — not. (Andy Bassett)
- 2001:** Wikipedia went online. (How else could I write all these entries of mine?) (Russell Beland)
- 2004:** Secret detentions, wiretaps aplenty: Orwell was off by only twenty. (Joe Neff, Warrington, Pa.)
- 2006:** Rummy told he must resign. Soldiers told they must re-sign. (Steve Ettinger, Chevy Chase)
- 1896, 1954:** Plessy versus Ferguson said "separate but equal." With Brown Against the Board, for once they made a better sequel. (Randy Lee)
- 2007:** Segregated schools, an issue so messy Again we're back to Ferguson and Plessy. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)
- 52 B.C., 1337, 1415, 1760, 1814, 1871, 1940, 1954:** Les Français se rendent. (Kevin Dopart)
- And Last: 2004:** Three years ago this contest appeared here for the first time, But back then all the entries were required to be in rhyme format. (Russell Beland, winner that time around)
- Next Week: Know Your Market, or Spitting Images**
- Burn me once, shame on you; burn me twice . . . uh, can't get burned again.**



BY MARTHA WRIGHT—THE WASHINGTON POST

**BRIDGE** | Frank Stewart

North dealer  
N-S vulnerable

**NORTH**  
♠ Q 9 5  
♥ 9 4  
♦ A K J 10 3  
♣ Q 10 6

**WEST**  
♠ 8 7  
♥ J 7 5 3 2  
♦ 5 2  
♣ A J 8 4

**EAST**  
♠ 6 3 2  
♥ 10 8  
♦ Q 8 4  
♣ K 7 5 3 2

**SOUTH**  
♠ A K J 10 4  
♥ A K Q 6  
♦ 9 7 6  
♣ 9

The bidding:  
**North East South West**  
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass  
2 ♠ Pass 6 ♠ All Pass

Opening lead: Choose it

It would be nice if we made our mistakes only when nobody was looking.

In a team match both North-Souths got to six spades. At the first table West led a trump, and South won and craftily tried an immediate diamond finesse. Sure enough, when East took the queen he led a heart, not a club from his king. It was a mistake, and everybody noticed: South claimed 12 tricks!

In the replay, West led the ace of clubs and shifted to a trump. South seemed to have a diamond loser, but he judged that if West held the ace of hearts and could pitch all his hearts on the diamonds, West would have seven hearts and might have led the ace or might have bid.

At the second table West erred but was lucky, in a way, since few players would have noticed. If West leads a diamond at the second trick, he beats the slam.

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## 'Straight Talk Express' Aims to Get Back on Track

MCCAIN, From D1

Bush in the New Hampshire primary seven years ago. It was here where Mr. Straight Talk Express shook hands with everyone and won over the press. It was here where he was happy.

New Hampshire is where the Arizona senator ran well alone. Since then, he has wrapped himself up with Bush, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the president on his unpopular Iraq war, hiring his former campaign pooh-bahs. The public hates the war, and most of the pooh-bahs have quit. Now he's alone again, without a big entourage or media scrum, and he likes it.

You can see his relief from the moment he steps before the crowd. Greeted with great applause in the building's central atrium, the 70-year-old McCain looks over those assembled. There are no folded arms, no disgusted looks. Made up of a combination of the firm's employees and members of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, this is a group willing to listen and embrace the man they found attractive in 2000.

"I slept like a baby," he says of the time after his crushing loss in the 2000 South Carolina primary. "Sleep two hours, get up and cry. Sleep two hours, get up and cry." Laughter.

"You know the difference between a lawyer and a catfish?" McCain says. "One is a scum-sucking bottom-dweller and the other's a fish." More laughter.

If you can listen to a terrible lawyer joke, well, you're willing to hear the man out on the hard stuff: the threat of radical Islamic extremists. Climate change. Al-Qaeda's advances in cyberspace. His own "cowardice" for not taking a stand on the flag flying above the South Carolina Capitol in his 2000 campaign. Defense of the Iraq surge.

McCain, who keeps his own remarks brief, respects the impromptu nature of the town hall format. He engages in a lengthy discussion with a doctor about the state of medical care and the stresses of medical school graduates entering the profession. A young girl asks him about Iran. Speaking into a microphone, 28-year-old Kate Benway tells the story of her brother Mark — a 25-year-old soldier on his second tour in Iraq who'd come home from his first tour physically fine but psychologically shaken. McCain uses her question to speak about the terrible fighting conditions in Iraq and the mind-killing reality of post-traumatic stress disorder.



In Nashua, N.H., Sen. McCain autographs Dot Nice's shirt. She believes the candidate "is being true to himself."

Later, he tells her, "You tell that Mark I'm proud of him."

A few minutes later, McCain sits in an empty office, stretching, asking where he's headed next. Nashua, he's told, less than a half-hour away.

"We need to stop at a Starbucks on the way there," he says. "I need my shot of caffeine."

He talks about the differences between now and 2000.

"I think the aspect of the presidential campaign that's changed fundamentally is 9/11," he says. "I do believe the struggle against radical Islamic extremism does overlay the whole campaign. You notice I try and avoid the 'War on Terror' phrase. I just don't like that phrase. I think the dimensions are too complex. I think it's best described as radical Islamic extremism and I think that overlay has fundamentally changed the dynamics of the campaign."

After doing the usual candidate-speak about the importance of the New Hampshire primary, he brightens at the thought of the "Straight Talk Express," the bus he used to help win the state. It was a means of transportation, yes, but also the physical embodiment of a brighter, more optimistic time.

"We're gonna get the bus out sooner rather than later," he pledges. "And I promise you'll be invited on board and we'll have some fun."

"One of the things we haven't done well is we've been bouncing in and out of places," he says. "Like a day, day-and-a-half here. What we're going to do is spend three, four days here. Then three, four days in South Carolina or Iowa. We've got to have more consistency. We've got to spend more time in each state."

It sounds like 2000 all over again, McCain running from behind, rolling down the highway on the STE, with the boys on the bus. Which is cheaper than a plane.

When told there will be no request from this reporter to rehash the campaign woes referred to as "the process" by the remaining McCain staffers, the candidate says, "Thank you. God bless you, boy."

Later, McCain walks into Martha's Exchange, a brewpub off Main Street in Nashua, where he sees Griffin Dalianis, the co-chairman of his state Veterans Advisory Committee. When Dalianis stands up, McCain hugs him tightly.

"He's back to being the old McCain," says Judith MacDonald after watching McCain holding court in the back corner of the brewpub. "People to people, person to person. He's back among us."

"He certainly does well in the town hall setting," says McCain supporter and Nashua Mayor Bernie Streeter. "He gets down to the level of the people. He pokes fun at himself. He's not ramrod straight. Some candidates come without a hair out of place, but he knows New Hampshire."

Afterward, McCain begins the short walk to the city hall, flanked by Dalianis and Streeter. Watching McCain now with his sunglasses on, stopping to shake hands with people on the brick sidewalk, he seems very much like the candidate from seven years ago: radiant and suffused with the belief that he can become president.

The last time Dalianis had seen the candidate, he seemed exhausted from cross-country travel. Now, Dalianis says, "You look bright-eyed and bushy-tailed."

"Thanks," McCain replies. "I feel good. I feel somewhat refreshed."

At City Hall, he goes from office to office in a whirlwind, stopping in to shake hands with any city employee he can find. Upon learning that Mo Qamarudeen, the city's financial services coordinator, is originally from Sri Lanka, McCain addresses that country's civil war.

"It's terrible what's going on there," McCain says, "and nobody knows about it."

Walking into the city clerk's office, where they issue birth certificates, dog and marriage licenses and handle voter registrations, Mc-

Cain tells the staff: "I came to register as a vegetarian."

In the mayor's office, he's introduced to the mayor's daughter Stephanie, and her 5-year-old son T.J., sporting a Paul Pierce Celtics jersey. McCain examines the young man and asks his mother, "Any more?"

"We have to find a husband first," she replies.

"What he's doing is being true to himself," says 84-year-old Dot Nice. "He started like this and I'm glad he's going to end it like this. He's his own man."

Next stop, the ballroom in the Keene Country Club, more than an hour from Manchester. For over an hour McCain paces the stage set between the chandeliers, speaking to this well-heeled dinner crowd with the same zeal he had during the morning in Manchester. As with all stops, he thanks veterans for their service. But what he cannot expect is Rebecca Dowd, whose husband, John Tuthill, served with McCain on the USS Forrestal — site of a series of explosions in 1967 that could have killed both men. Although Tuthill had not come, citing his aversion to crowds, Dowd has brought a book commemorating the ship for McCain to sign. McCain looks through the book before signing it, trying to comfort the suddenly overwhelmed Dowd.

Unable to control her tears, Dowd begins to weep as McCain scribbles a note of gratitude for her husband. It's here where one is struck by both how much of the past McCain carries with him and how that ability reaches those in the present. These personal interactions with the former prisoner-of-war still move people, but McCain must reach to his own happier times — to the 2000 campaign — to harness the energy and nerve of the "Straight Talk Express" should he have any chance in New Hampshire and beyond.

On the long road to the White House, there will be more tough days like the next one, in Derry. Speaking to the Rotary Club of Derry, McCain is met with a sweltering room and angry questions about the Mexican border.

He doesn't sweat.

"After I lost in South Carolina, I spent three of the most wonderful days of my life feeling sorry for myself," he tells the Rotary Club. "It's really wonderful feeling sorry for yourself. I figured out in the middle of the night after about three days that it was pointless . . . You've got to move forward in life and in the world."