

# The Style Invitational

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

### Week 735: Look Back in Inker

This week marks the 200th column under the Empress's byline, or non-byline, or whatever, which gives us a reasonable excuse to give Losers another chance to enter this past year's contests all at once. (Last year we did this on our third anniversary, prompting a few people with their priorities out of whack to suggest that perhaps a week in mid-December was not the best period for immersing oneself, bathysphere-style, in the Style Invitational archives.) **This week: Enter any Style Invitational contest from Week 680 through Week 731.** Limit yourself to one entry per contest; the Empress refuses to look at 10,000 more international team names. You may refer to events that have occurred since the contest was printed (except the obituary poems; they should still be for people who died in 2006). For contests that ask you to use The Post from a certain day or week, use today's or this week's. Very long, space-consuming entries are less likely to draw ink, though we wouldn't mind running, say, one hilarious photo or astonishingly clever song parody. You can find all 52 contests (and more!) online at [www.washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational](http://www.washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational).

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a box of Hi-Ener-G Horny Goat Weed, which is labeled "Natural Aphrodisiac" but doesn't seem to include an 800 number for complaints, AND some Yang Herbal Tonic horny-goat-weed tea, both courtesy of Peter Metrinko of Chantilly in honor of his new Daughter No. 3 (she just arrived from China, we mean).

**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, Oct. 22. Put "Week 735" 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 Nov. 10. 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 was submitted by both Larry Yungk and Russell Beland. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Tom Witte.

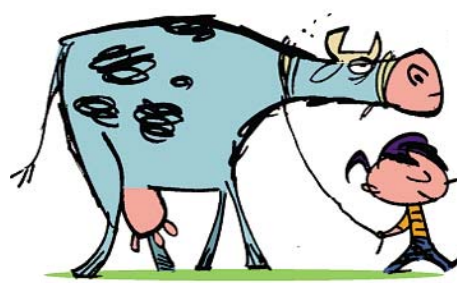
## REPORT FROM WEEK 731

in which we asked for ridiculously inefficient ways to prepare food or drink:

**4 Spinach:** Compete for tall, anorexic supermodel, but get brutishly pummeled by another suitor. When you've had all you can stand and you can't stand no more, suddenly find can of spinach, squeeze till iron-filled veggies fly directly into mouth. (Randy Lee, Burke)

**3 Buffalo wings:** First, study advanced genetics. Next, splice haploid strings of . . . (Russell Beland, Springfield)

**2 the winner of the gospel-singing lamb:** Orange juice: Become world-famous, fascinating and dangerous by writing a novel that provokes an ayatollah to proclaim a fatwa against you. Serially marry and divorce until you manage to engage the attraction and affections of a supermodel/cooking show host. Marry her. Before you divorce her, have her slice six oranges in half, squeeze out the juice and serve it to you in a chilled glass. (Sarah W. Gaymon, Gambrells)



## AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

**Boston Baked Beans:** Take one thin cow to Boston.

Trade cow for three magic beans. Throw beans out window. Next morning find enormous beanstalk; climb. At top grab goose that lays golden eggs; descend. Say, "Lay, goose, lay" to goose. Collect egg, sell to goldsmith. Use money to buy Viking six-burner range and can of B&M baked beans. Place contents of can in saucepan; heat and serve. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## GOURMAYBES

**PB&J sandwich:** Spread the floor with jelly and the ceiling with peanut butter. Stick slices of bread to the peanut butter on the ceiling, then stand back and watch patiently. Eventually the bread slices will start to fall, some straight down but others flipping over in transit. When finally two slices land peanut butter side down on the jelly-covered floor, pick 'em up, put 'em together and you have a sandwich. (Nicholas D. Rosen, Arlington)

**To steam Brussels sprouts, buy several yards of netting and coordinating ribbon at your local craft store. Create a small net for each sprout — about eight little nets per person — and hang them from the shower curtain rod while taking a shower. For enhanced flavor, use lemon-scented soap; use slightly larger nets and a longer shower for broccoli crowns.** (Elizabeth J. Molyé, Vienna)

**Chicken-fried steak:** Once you've taught your chicken to use a spatula . . . (Russell Beland)

**Pheasant under glass:** Rinse and pat dry an 8-to-10-lb. pheasant; meanwhile, heat 20 lb. sand to 2100 F . . . (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**Hot dogs:** Circumcise the hog genitalia before grinding it into filler. (Jon Milstein, Falls Church)

**Walk around town eating from an open jar of peanut butter. Arrange to bump into someone eating chocolate. Get his chocolate in your peanut butter, and get your peanut butter on his chocolate. Sample the results and nod with satisfaction. Then the two of you walk around trying to bump into someone who has orange wrappers and a national distribution network . . .** (Brendan Beary)

**Sweet potato pie:** Just have yo mama sit on a sack o' sweet potatoes. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

**The best waffles are made from scratch. I mean literally: Patients from the Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Center hand-carve the squares and stack them perfectly on your plate. The syrup doesn't touch your bacon, either.** (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

**Pancakes:** Obtain several tigers. Take off your clothes and give one article of clothing to each tiger. This will cause them to fight over the clothes and chase one another around a tree until they turn into butter. Apply butter to a heated frying pan . . . (Michael Fransella, Arlington)

**Pineapple upside-down cake:** For mixing the batter, we recommend hanging from your ankles from a ceiling fan, holding two spoons. Beat two minutes on medium, then three minutes on high . . . (Meghan Colosimo, Newark, Del.)

**Junior High Jello:** Obtain legs of a dead horse; reserve meaty haunches. Stew legs, removing shoes and skimming off solid matter, until fully dissolved. Add sugar and cold fruit juice to taste. Chill. Provides 450 servings, to go with the sloppy joes from the reserved meat. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

**Water:** From one Middle Eastern emirate, extract one cup of petroleum. Using an ordinary petrochemical plant, separate and re-form into polyethylene terephthalate. Blow mold into cylindrical container shape. Fill with water and seal. Next, using fibers from harvested trees, form a rectangular piece of paper approximately 8.0 by 2.5 inches. Print logo and affix to bottle. Bundle with 23 additional containers, place onto a cardboard tray and wrap with plastic. Load onto truck and transport to supermarket. Purchase, transport to residence and refrigerate. When thirsty, remove one container and unseal. Serves one. (Dan Klein, McLean)

**Get Mars Bars for dessert by going to . . . nah, that's too stupid even for this contest. Well, at least I didn't suggest Milky Ways.** (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Next Week: The Chain Gang, or The Appellation Trail

## Vicente Fox, Hawking His 'Good American Story'

FOX, From C1

barnstorming U.S. cities, chatting up Jon Stewart, Bill O'Reilly, Larry King. At the Borders on L Street NW, he signs more than a hundred books for a long line of American and Mexican fans. He has the thick, crinkled, perfectly imperfect features of an aging Gregory Peck. Those worn-saddle arroyos around the eyes and mouth are the kind Hollywood would want to apply to an old gunslinger, probably the rogue. But Hollywood would never stand for the blocky mass of a mustache.

A scrum of Mexican reporters call out in Spanish from behind a rope.

"Señor Fox, what do you say to the people who accuse you of corruption?"

"Have you already bought it?" Fox replies in Spanish, holding up a copy of the book to the reporters.

"There are better things to read!" comes a reply.

"Buy one!" urges the author, selling books as energetically as he used to hawk Coca-Cola, when he was president of its Mexican operations at age 32. He sips from a 20-ounce bottle of the non-diet stuff as he signs.

Fox, 65, has that hale, sunny, Western way of deflecting inconvenient inquiry practiced by President Reagan and the second President Bush. But that's not why he is such a recognizable character.

"Mine is a good American story," he writes at the beginning of his book. "There are love stories of hardy pioneers and defiant ranch women, rifle-toting bandits, elegant Latin beauties. . . . And like the best American stories, mine offers the hope that any farm boy can grow up to be president of a great democracy."

By the end he is quoting Alexis de Tocqueville and discussing "brand U.S.," which he defines as "the goodness of America."

He lays down chords in the key of the American Dream like a master: One grandfather, penniless, emigrated from Spain, to "make the Americas," as they used to say in Spanish. The other, Joseph Fox, rode a horse south from Cincinnati in the late 1890s till he got to the state of Guanajuato in central Mexico, found a job as a night watchman, and put together enough money to buy a 10,000-acre farm, which he worked himself, unlike aristocratic absentee landowners. Then he lost most of it to nationalization-at-gunpoint by the ruling party of Mexico's "perfect dictatorship," the party that ruled for 70 years until Vicente Fox got his revenge at the polls.

Young Vicente milked cows, went to college, signed on with archetypal American companies, first Ford, briefly, then Coke, where he rose from truck driver to president. In 2000, clad in cowboy boots, he won the presidency from the Institutional Revolutionary Party.

It reads like the perfect American politician's campaign bio-epic, which is to say it sounds almost too American to be real.



PHOTOS BY MELINA MARA — THE WASHINGTON POST

The ex-Mexican president signed copies of his memoir for a long line of book purchasers.

"Yes, I am part of this," Fox is saying now. "My grandfather . . . brought all the values of the Founding Fathers with him down to Mexico. That's what I was nourished and educated in." He thinks of his house at Rancho San Cristóbal, the old family farm, as his "Tara." Among the photos on a wall there is a shot of one of his heroes, John Wayne.

He has folded his 6-foot-5-inch frame into a chair on the 11th floor of Bloomberg's Washington bureau. He looks as though he could use a tequila. He's hoarse after a long day of yakking and flacking.

Where are the boots for which he became famous? Today he's done up like a CEO in black dress shoes and red power tie.

"I'm selling books," he says.

Then he says, "I don't have the boots because of doctors' recommendation. They told me high heels won't help back surgery I



had four years ago." The surgery didn't stop him from entering a bullring with a red cape where he was injured by a 200-pounder and confined to sitting in a chair long enough to write his book. "Really, it was too small a bull for a grown man even to mention, more of a child's pet, very embarrassing to a va-

quero," he writes.

Standing nearby checking cellphone messages is Marta Sahagún de Fox, his stylish former press secretary and now his second wife, and Rob Allyn, the Dallas-based political consultant who worked on his presidential campaign and co-wrote the book.

"He's the storyteller and I write it down," Allyn says. It took three months. The curious result is a Mexican president's memoir written and published first in English. The Spanish translation isn't due until next month.

For the English version, Allyn and Fox wrestled with how to render some idioms. He calls Bush a "windshield cowboy," the kind who rides a pickup, not a horse. Fox knew the score immediately when he offered Bush a chance on his best horse. He saw the American president "backing away from the big palomino."

Another story, from the wild frontier of the cola wars: "You drank tequila with the Pepsi drivers in the rough trucker bars until dawn," he writes. "Often you drank a Coca-Cola and a raw egg for breakfast, or perhaps just a quick beer if you were hung over. Then you reached into the front seat to grab an ice pick and spiked the tires of the Pepsi truck beside you."

Racing across deserts, jungles and mountains to beat the Pepsi guys was how Fox got to know the people, and his country.

He was elected on hopes of true democratic reform too high to be achieved by any mortal. But it was a start, and for that the expatriates lining up in Borders thank him. Mexican presidents are limited to one six-year term. The new president, Felipe Calderón, is trying to continue the process of reform.

"Former chief executives of Mexico," Fox writes, "generally caught the first plane to Europe, turning over power to a designated successor by pointing the dedazo, the 'finger.'"

It's a point of pride with Fox to say he is breaking that pattern. He will retire to his Tara, where he is building a presidential library and think tank. But his critics say he may not be different. Questions have been raised about the funding and ownership of the family ranch. Fox posts his personal financial information on the Internet and says he has nothing to hide.

The whiff of alleged scandal is the finishing touch on a good American story. Fox is using his book tour to remind this country of what it means to so many, and to advocate for immigrants with stories not unlike his. In the realm of dreams, he says, Americans have more in common with Mexicans than they realize.

Now he's on the sidewalk of New York Avenue NW, about to ride off into the sunset over Virginia, not on a horse, but in a light blue sedan, with his entourage of two, to catch another plane to another book signing.

## Music

### Licaret Should Have Stuck With Enescu

What's it take to get a little George Enescu around here? The Romanian composer wrote some of the most lyrical, richly evocative music of the early 20th century, but is woefully little heard here these days. So you'd think that a recital by one of Romania's most promising young musicians, given at the residence of the Romanian ambassador, would be a chance to flood your ears with this rare and wonderful stuff.

Sadly, you'd only be partly right. Pianist Andrei Licaret did play a bit of Enescu on Wednesday night: just two movements from the Piano Suite, Op. 10. And they were, as you'd expect, rhapsodic essays of the most elegant kind, full of translucent harmonies and imaginative writing. Licaret played them naturally, poetically and with extraordinary attention to detail — a tantalizing glimpse that left you wanting more.

At 25, Licaret is still so baby-faced that he set off waves of maternal cooing when he sat down at the piano. But he displayed a powerful technique in the rest of the program, which included Schumann's "Kreisleriana," Op. 16, Beethoven's Sonata No. 30, Op. 109, and three devilish little sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti. They're all challenging works, and the Beethoven is one of those daunting, late-period enigmas that few pianists can really make work. Licaret played them all with ample technique and often a strong lyric sense, especially in the radiant second movement of the Schumann. But as often as not he seemed impatient — dispatching the pieces rather than sinking deeply into them — and didn't always show a distinctive, developed personality behind the virtuosic finger work.

— Stephen Brookes



Romanian pianist Andrei Licaret.