

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 758: Wrong Address

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

In this day of the three-second sound bite — not to mention seamless digital editing — any politician who makes any utterance in the vicinity of a recording device risks having his words taken wildly out of context: Parts of his comments might be deleted or even rearranged, transmogrifying sensible discourse into outrageous “quotes.”

But why should contemporary public figures suffer this fate alone? **This week: Using any of the words of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, in whatever order you like, create your own passage.** Given that there are only 140 or so unique words in this exquisitely eloquent gem of a speech — barely more than half the number in “The Cat in the Hat,” which the Losers similarly deconstructed a year ago — you may pull out a portion of a word to use as a full word, such as “cat” from “dedicated.” You may repeat a word in your passage even if it appears only once in the actual text.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the really ugly ceramic alligator-head coin bank pictured at right, a souvenir of Gainesville, Fla., home of the University of Florida Gators and not coincidentally of J. Larry Schott, the Loser who sent it to us. While of course it would look lovely on a massive rosewood desk, or perhaps on a vanity next to the crystal bottle of Jean Patou's Joy, the Empress would opt to install it, facing upward, inside a toilet bowl.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions 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, April 7. Put “Week 758” 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 April 26. 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 results is by Beverley Sharp. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Russell Beland.



BY BOB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

REPORT FROM WEEK 754

In which we supplied a list of famous personages and asked you to note “uncanny similarities” between any two:

- 4** Tiger Woods and Moses: Both have little trouble negotiating water hazards. Getting out of the sand, a different story. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills; Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)
- 3** Napoleon Bonaparte said, “Able was I ere I saw Elba.” Bill Clinton said, “Live did I ere I did evil.” (Roy Ashley, Washington)
- 2** The winner of the driver's-lap-size Beat the Beltway board game, At one point in his life, a woman sent Moses adrift in the Nile. At one point in his life, a woman sent Bill Clinton adrift in denial. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Eleanor Roosevelt lived with a president who had an affair. Bill Clinton wants to live with a president who lived with a president who had an affair. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

BEYOND COMPARE: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Morticia Addams was 223 years old and looked 26. Britney Spears is 26 years old and looks 223. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Montgomery Burns and Britney Spears are both associated with spectacular meltdowns. (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

Tiger Woods is famous for his putts. As is Bill Clinton. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis; Rick Haynes, Potomac; Ira Allen)

In 1946, Bill Clinton and Mohandas K. Gandhi were both wearing diapers. (George Smith, Frederick)

Eleanor Roosevelt and Bill Clinton were each married to someone with bad legs. (N.G. Andrews, Danville, Va.)

Smuts played a big role in Mohandas K. Gandhi's life, while smut's played a big role in Bill Clinton's life. (Chris Doyle)

Moses came down from Mount Sinai carrying stone tablets. Britney Spears was carried to Mount Sinai after getting stoned on tablets. (Larry Yungk)

Both Gandhi and Clinton subscribed to the notion that “no one is untouchable.” (Robert Elwood, Bushwood, Md.)

Moses and Britney Spears: Both cases suggest that sometimes a baby is safer floating down the river in a homemade wicker basket than staying with his mother. (Christopher Short, Greenbelt, a First Offender)

Eleanor Roosevelt and Bill Clinton: In private, Hillary Clinton still speaks to Eleanor. In public, she still speaks to Bill. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Britney Spears and Gandhi were equally good-looking when bald. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Groucho Marx said, “A woman is an occasional pleasure, but a cigar is always a smoke.” Bill Clinton just combined the two. (Randy Lee, Burke)

Both Moses and Bill Clinton will be forever associated with the phrase “go down.” (N.G. Andrews)

Moses said, “Do not commit adultery.” Clinton said, “Do not admit adultery.” (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

Eleanor Roosevelt reputedly had an affair with a woman named Lorena. Some people wish Bill Clinton had had an affair with a woman named Lorena. (Chris Doyle)

Both Gandhi and Montgomery Burns were told not to have a cow. (Russell Beland)

Groucho enjoyed a cigar in public, while Clinton enjoyed one in privates. (Dirk French, Woodbridge, who last got ink in 1998)

Morticia Addams: Appeared regularly in the New Yorker. Bill Clinton: Appears regularly with a “New Yorker.” (Jay Shuck)

Next Week: Take Another 'Whack, or The One-Hit Parade



The gator-head bank: A prize to really bowl you over.

THE WASHINGTON POST

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'Superhero Movie': Its Powers Are Weak

MOVIES, From C1

edge of such comedy has been worn till it's smooth, round and dull.

Still they persist. (And for good reason: The “Scary Movie” franchise, for example, has grossed close to a billion dollars worldwide.) “Superhero Movie,” which opened yesterday without being screened for critics (how shocking!), may not have Peter Graves, but it does have his erstwhile “Airplane!” co-star Leslie Nielsen, the sultan of spoof (notably, “Police Squad!” and the “Naked Gun” series). In “Superhero Movie,” Nielsen plays Uncle Albert (we're so sorry . . .), whose nephew, Rick Riker (Drake Bell), has been bitten by a radioactive dragonfly. Rick then becomes . . . Dragonfly, a conflicted, wall-scaling superhero who needs to learn that with great power comes great responsibility.

That it's taken so long to get a burlesqued “Spider-Man” off the ground, literally as well as figuratively, would seem to imply that a great deal of care and craft and humor had been put into it. This would be incorrect. “Superhero Movie,” like so many of its ilk, appears to have been made for about \$14.25 and — considering the relative speed with which “Meet the Spartans,” the spoof of “300,” got out and raked in the dough — to be inexplicably late to the game.

Some things, we suppose, never get old, although Nielsen, a spry 82, is no longer carrying the whole load for what turns out to be a “Spider-Man” clone accessorized with toilet jokes. Bell, whose “Drake & Josh” is one of the major pollutants on Nickelodeon — an entity that's spreading its mediocrities to other media at an alarming rate — is assigned to look dim or aghast, depending on the circumstances. Not much else in the repertoire. The more interesting casting choice is Christopher McDonald, who plays bad guy Hourglass. McDonald has spent many movies playing unlikable, arrogant, postmodernly cartoonish bad guys and stuffed shirts (1997's “Leave It to Beaver” couldn't have been what it was



Leslie Nielsen (in “The Naked Gun”) has been sucked into “Superhero.”



Julie Hagerty and Peter Graves in the sequel to “Airplane!,” the 1980 spoof with a legion of lesser imitators.

without him). But McDonald is like the entire comedy conceit of “Superhero Movie”: You know exactly what you're getting, in a format that hasn't packed a delightful surprise since, well, maybe 1980.

Craig Mazin, the director, was a producer and writer on the “Scary Movie” franchise. He also takes a writer's credit on “Superhero Movie,” although the makers of “Spider-Man” could probably take issue with that. For all intents and purposes, Mazin lifts the entire plotline of the other guys' “SM” film, larding it with such predictable and usually tasteless gags that pretending to have “written” this thing seems delusional at best.

“It's never too late,” says Rick's love interest (Sara Paxton), “to become the person you were meant to be.” But it's a bit late in the game for “Superhero Movie,” which was never going to fly, and barely crawls.

Superhero Movie (85 minutes, at area theaters) is rated PG-13 for crude and sexual content, comic violence, drug references and language.



Drake Bell as Dragonfly and Sara Paxton as his love interest in “Superhero Movie.” Any resemblance to “Spider-Man” is anything but coincidental.

BY SAM EMERSON — THE WEINSTEIN CO.