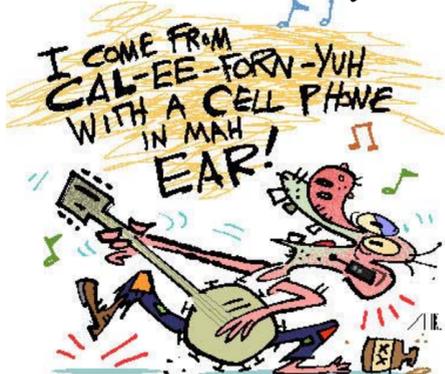


The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 765: It's Doo-Dah Day



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Some of the loveliest melodies in American music were written by Stephen Foster, the biggest-deal songwriter of the 19th century. Unfortunately, Foster's lyrics don't tend to be quite so lovely to most American ears, since many were written for pre-Civil War minstrel shows, to be sung by white men in blackface. Just as unfortunately, this hasn't stopped those same lyrics from being enshrined as the state songs of Florida ("Old Folks at Home") and Kentucky ("My Old Kentucky Home"). Okay, Kentucky changed " 'Tis summer, the darkies are gay" to " 'Tis summer, the people are gay" — but wouldn't it be better to just overhaul the lyrics entirely, while preserving the pretty tune?

That, of course, is where you come in: **This week: Write humorous lyrics commemorating any of the 50 states or the District, set to any of these Stephen Foster songs: "Old Folks at Home" (a.k.a. "Way Down Upon the Swanee River"); "My Old Kentucky Home"; "Oh! Susanna"; "Camptown Races"; or "Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair."** Those who missed out on learning these songs in school or at home can find many earnestly sung examples on YouTube.com; just search on the song titles.

The winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, just in time to be a couple of days too late for Father's Day, a necktie with pictures of various hand tools and small hardware, along with a book on "How to Tie a Tie," all part of a promotional package from the DIY Network. Perhaps there's a man out there who can perfect dovetail joints but hasn't been able to master a Windsor knot.

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 Tuesday, May 27. Put "Week 765" 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 June 14. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. This week's contest was suggested by Dave Prevar. The revised title for next week's results is by Kevin Dopot. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Beverley Sharp.

REPORT FROM WEEK 761

in which we asked you to supply dialogue for any of three wordless Bob Staake comic strips:

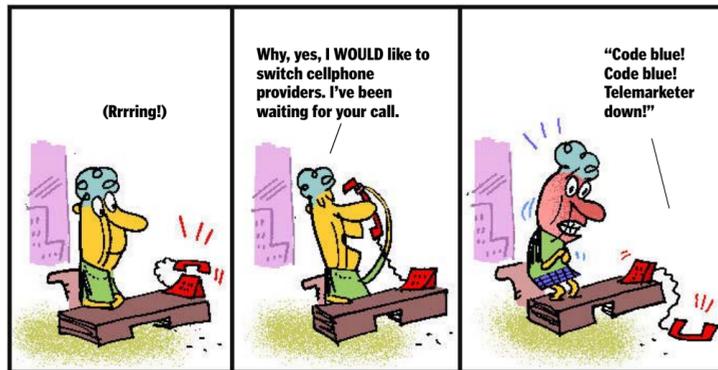
CARTOON A

4 (Russell Beland, Springfield)



CARTOON B

2 the winner of the slightly bent It's Happy Bunny sign with the legend "No sucky losers allowed" (Roy Ashley, Washington)



CARTOON C

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

(Randy Lee, Burke)



3 CARTOON C:

1. Left man: Where do we serve the subpoena?
2. Left: The charges are horrible — dozens of little girls forced to dress and pose provocatively! Mirrors! Poles! Left man: The scam!
3. Left man: Uh, this is a ballet school. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

STRIPPED DOWN EVEN MORE: HONORABLE MENTIONS

CARTOON B:

"Good morning, McCain headquarters." [Phone on floor] "That's right, this is Reverend Wright and I want to endorse the senator." (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

"Barely Legal Hotline — ooh, hello there, you sexy thing!" "Grandma???" (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

CARTOON C:

"Are you ready for this?" "As ready as I'll ever be." "Okay, let's find out what happens when two lawyers walk into a bar." (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

1. Guy on left: "How did the board meeting go?"
2. Guy on right: "Rough. I had to bare my fangs a bit."
3. Guy on right: "I think I have some shareholder stuck in my teeth." (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

1. Man: We almost have enough votes to pass the Moral Rectitude Act of 2008.

2. Same man: That is, we will in a moment.

3. Senator Craig? Senator Vitter? Could we borrow you for a few minutes? (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

1. Man 1: For once, the meeting ended early — where to?
2. Man 2: Let's go look at something we don't get to see at home.
2. Man 1: We've gotta be careful — if the wives find out, we're dead.
3. Man 2: Wow, check out those cupcakes!
- Man 1: Yeah, I'll be glad when our wives are off this Atkins kick. (Jim Ward, Manassas)

Next Week: Look It Up in Your Funk & Wagnalls, or Lexicon Artists

In the Same Boat, Along the Riviera

CANNES, From C1

ia the last time), which would make the babies . . . sorta French. (The couple are currently bunking at zillionaire Microsoft founder Paul Allen's Villa Maryland at near-by Cap Ferrat).

So this is the Cannes International Film Festival: an elegant pregnant lady in low-cut evening gown strolling through a Riviera Coney Island as French hicks gnaw on their baguettes, begging for freebie tickets for the latest in Hungarian cinema. The high-low thing? Somehow it just works. The genius is that the most blatantly commercial blockbusters, such as "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," which premieres here Sunday, can coexist with a film such as "Leonera" from Argentine director Pablo Trapero, which screened Thursday. It is about female felons in prison (with their toddlers behind bars). It is not a comedy.

The jury that will select the winner of the Palme d'Or prize from all this is led by Sean Penn, who was praised by the festival's Artistic Director Thierry Fremaux as a representative of "a different voice from an America that has been in the headlines for the last 10 years," meaning, basically, that he isn't George W. Bush, whose approval ratings here hover in the low single digits.

At his press conference, the middle-age rebel Penn complained, naturally, about Bush and then went off on France's new smoking ban — and then fired one up — and said he thought it would be difficult for Barack Obama to live up to expectations. "I hope that he will understand, if he is the nominee, the degree of disillusionment that will happen if he doesn't become a greater man than he will ever be," said Penn in a cloud of smoke.

Oh, but what about cinema? you ask. The film "Blindness" opened the festival, from the Brazilian director Fernando Meirelles, based on the novel of the same name from the Portuguese Nobel Prize winner José Saramago, starring Julianne Moore, Gael García Bernal, Danny Glover and Mark Ruffalo. The film depicts a world in which people suddenly go blind with "the white sickness," and humanity quickly reverts to extreme barbarism. The helpless blind are rounded up and forced to live in abandoned sanitariums, where they stumble around half-naked, starving, filthy, the weak preyed upon (and gang raped) by sightless thugs. "I don't think the film is very different from what would happen" if such a disease were real, Meirelles says.

It is a very grim fairy tale. Apparently, though, not as grim as it could have been. Meirelles said he showed an earlier "very hard" version of "Blindness" to focus groups, and 45 out of 500 people walked out. "It was almost unbearable," said Meirelles,



BY JEAN-PAUL PELLISSIER — REUTERS

Brazilian director Fernando Meirelles arriving for the official screening of his apocalyptic bummer "Blindness."



REUTERS

Shades of meaning: "Blindness" star Julianne Moore's paparazzi-reflecting specs.

whose film contains the message: We have eyes, but do we see? "It is a fable," Moore explains at the press luncheon. "It poses the 'what if' question for everyone." Bernal said they rehearsed by wearing blindfolds. Glover asked for some fresh-squeezed orange juice, not the kind made from concentrate. "The difference is night and day," he said.

After the premiere of "Blindness," guests strolled from the Palais (a.k.a. convention center) down the Croisette (a.k.a. street) to a party on the Carlton Hotel's pier. They entered the tent through a glowing white tunnel, filled with dense milky fog, creating the illusion of temporary blindness, before emerging to tables laden with salmon mousse and flutes of champagne. It was only awkward if you thought about it. The patrons nibbled canapes and discussed the blind rape scene.

The buzz for the coming week? Very fluid. Many of the American films are being fin-



BY ERIC GAILLARD — REUTERS

The jury, led by Sean Penn, poses on Thursday for the opening night. Penn was praised for being "a different voice" from America.



BY FRANCIS MORI — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Penn with Bono. The cig-wielding Penn gave a thumbs-down to the new French smoking ban.

ished as this is typed. Woody Allen is back at Cannes with "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," starring Javier Bardem and Scarlett Johansson, who decided (last minute) not to come to Cannes. This is a pity. Cannes is made for an actress of Johansson's talents. Clint Eastwood is bringing "Changeling," with Angelina Jolie and John Malkovich, set in 1928 Los Angeles, about a disappeared kid. There's that little Indiana Jones thing. Posters of a sadly ageless Harrison Ford hang from every wall. Madonna is on her way here, to promote her Malawi AIDS documentary. Good for ole Madge. Sporting legends Diego Ma-

radona and Mike Tyson are expected to show to support documentaries about their sporting legends.

The selectively reclusive screenwriter Charlie Kaufman is coming with his directorial debut called "Synecdoche, New York," starring Philip Seymour Hoffman in the role of a small theater director with, according to film notes, "a mysterious condition systematically shutting down each of his body's autonomic functions." Debate has mostly centered on what are autonomic functions and how to pronounce the title (think "Schenech-tady") and how weird the Kaufman project



And more tattoos! Mike Tyson arrives at the premiere of, what else? "Tyson."

might possibly be — word is: weirder than his "Being John Malkovich," which could be great. Unless not. Seasoned Cannes say the film, which has not yet sold to a U.S. distributor, is screening at the very end of the festival, which is never a good sign.

Speaking of mysteries, Steven Soderbergh arrives here in a rush with his opus "Che," starring Benicio Del Toro as the iconic leader of the Cuban revolution. The film is being shown as two separate movies — at a total of 4 hours 28 minutes. Did we mention it is in Spanish?

At the "Kung Fu Panda" press conference yesterday, Dustin Hoffman was asked, wasn't there, umm, a big leap in his career, from the early heights of "The Graduate" to his playing Master Shifu, the cartoon character?

Hoffman deadpanned, "It's a decline in culture." The international entertainment press corps laughed. Then Hoffman stuck in the knife: "But it's also reached your profession. We're all here, in the same bag together."

ON WASHINGTONPOST.COM See photos from Cannes and discuss the festival with Post reporter William Booth on Monday at noon at www.washingtonpost.com/style.