

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 772: Make It Simple, Stupid



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Other-Coast Loser Jane Auerbach sent the Empress a copy of a letter published in the Los Angeles Times this month in which the writer, Grant Nemirow, whined about a recent profile of a movie director: "How many Los Angeles residents under 40 (a demographic newspapers must keep and expand if they are to remain in business) know the meaning of the following words in this one article: phantasmagoria, bucolic, aesthetic, soupçon, diminution, schadenfreude, contretemps and vicissitudes?" The article with those eight stumbers ran more than 1,200 words.

Maybe Grant figures that people don't start learning long words until after age 40; more likely he's arguing that long words are some archaic form of the language, unnecessary and frankly a waste of time in the T9 Texting Two Thousands. So let's help Grant here: **Translate a sentence or two of literature or other good writing so that "Los Angeles residents under 40" can appreciate it.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a genuine (if nonworking) screaming yellow Cold War era Geiger counter, of the type used to furnish fallout shelters in the 1960s. Sue Pierce of Rockville, who donated it to us, said her husband got it from a surplus catalogue after he had prostate surgery and wanted to see if he'd set it off. "Alas, no luck with that," Sue says, but happily Mr. Sue is now cancer-free.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearend-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, July 14. Put "Week 772" 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. 2. 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 was submitted by both Mae Scanlan and Brad Alexander. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Randy Lee.

REPORT FROM WEEK 768 in which we asked for fictitious movie trivia:

4 The Japanese flag shown in "Tora Tora Tora" was mistakenly flown upside down for the first half of the movie. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

3 "Schindler's List" was never actually filmed. — M. Ahmadijad, Tehran (N.G. Andrews, Portsmouth, Va.)

2 the winner of the U.S. Army promotional stress-relieving hand grenade: Even though RKO spent \$50,000 to clean up the Empire State Building afterward, the producers ultimately chose not to use the "King Kong" poo-flinging scene. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER Despite its reputation, one out of seven people who saw "Gigli" actually liked it. Her name was Susan. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

GRATEFUL JUST TO BE NOMINATED: HONORABLE MENTIONS

John Hinckley was actually more impressed with Harvey Keitel in "Taxi Driver" but didn't want anyone to think he was gay. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

The first documented product placement in film history was by the Rosebud Sled Co. (Patrick Kelly, Brampton, Ontario, a First Offender)

The flying monkeys used in "The Wizard of Oz" were sold to research laboratories after the movie was filmed. (Stephen Dudzik)

Despite their classic love story that has thrilled millions, Fay Wray and King Kong actually hated each other. (G. Smith, New York)

In an extreme example of Method acting, Jack Nicholson had an actual lobotomy for the ending of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." His doctors later reversed the operation, restoring almost all function. (Jonathan Kaye, Washington)

Samuel L. Jackson once turned down a script. (Dan Hauser, Arlington, a First Offender)

"Over the Rainbow" was nearly cut from "The Wizard of Oz," but test audiences preferred it to the proposed up-tempo number called "If Miss Gulch Takes My Dog, I'll Burn Down Her Barn." (Cy Gardner, Arlington)

While "Finding Nemo" was based on a true story, in real life they were all bacteria. (Russell Beland)

For theaters in much of the Bible Belt, the 1966 film "One Million Years B.C." was retitled "Three Thousand Years B.C." (Russell Beland)

One of the elf extras in the party scene at the end of "Shrek" killed himself during filming. You can see his feet dangling in the top right corner of the screen. (Chuck Koelbel, Houston)

Because George C. Scott's slapping of the soldier in "Patton" lacked conviction during early takes, the director brought in the renowned slapper Moe Howard to coach him. (Lee Dobbins, Arlington)

"Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" was the first general-release American movie to contain the words "@\$%&!)", "&*%#@\" and a certain form of \"\$*%\$\". (Cy Gardner)

"West Side Story" was originally envisioned as a straight play set in Renaissance Italy. (Russell Beland)

Two Cary Grant facts: He never said "Judy Judy Judy" in a film. And he never wore underwear. (Cy Gardner)

Earlier drafts of the script for "No Country for Old Men" had an ending. (Cy Gardner)

In addition to dubbing Natalie Wood's singing in "West Side Story," Marni Nixon was also the voice of Richard Beymer as Tony. (John Shea, Lansdowne, Pa.)

F. Murray Abraham has said that he drew his inspiration for his role as Salieri in "Amadeus" from his deep hatred of Mozart and his music. (Victor Lee, Leonia, N.J., a First Offender)

Linda Blair won the role of Regan in "The Exorcist" over more experienced actresses because she was the only one who could rotate her head 360 degrees and projectile-vomit at will. (Christopher Lamora, Arlington; G. Smith)

Every one of Woody Allen's leading ladies has been legally blind. (Larry Yungk)

"Apollo 13" was filmed on the same soundstage that NASA used to fake the moon landings. (Russ Taylor, Vienna; Larry Yungk)

In a scene cut from "All About Eve," Bette Davis suddenly addresses the moviegoer and spits, "Theater people really do talk this way, you know." (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

The Academy Award was nicknamed Oscar

after King Oscar I of Sweden, who was gold-plated. (Jacob Aldridge, Gaythorne, Australia)

The ugly child who played the part of E.T. performed without makeup. (Don Kirkpatrick, Waynesboro, Pa.)

Robert De Niro prepared for his role in "Taxi Driver" by driving a taxi in New York for six weeks. Then he killed several pimps. (Marc Leibert, Jersey City)

Howard Hughes designed Errol Flynn's cantilevered codpiece for "The Adventures of Robin Hood." (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

In "Being John Malkovich," Johnny Depp was originally cast to play Malkovich, but he had to pull out due to illness. (Kevin Dopart)

Unsure how the war in Europe would go, "Casablanca" director Michael Curtiz considered an alternative script in which Rick, Ilsa and Victor fly to Germany, fleeing French Resistance terrorists. (M.C. Dornan, Scottsdale, Ariz., a First Offender)

In the fourth "Die Hard" movie, Bruce Willis did his own smirking. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

If you listen carefully during the climactic scene of "The Natural," you can hear the ping of an aluminum bat. (Bob Dalton, Arlington)

In his first movie, "Animal House," Kevin Bacon had nothing in common with anyone else in the cast. (Rob Wolf, Gaithersburg)

Early digital editing techniques were used on "Return of the Dragon" to make it appear as if Bruce Lee beat up Chuck Norris, since no one can actually beat up Chuck Norris. (Keith Waites, Frederick)

Next Week: Splice Work if You Can Get It, or Joined at the Quip



BY SUE PIERCE

You can't really count geigers with this prize, but it's real.

hear the ping of an aluminum bat.

'As We Forgive,' Heartbreak Writ Large and Small

HINSON, From C1

stooped gangly man who killed her father. He can't face her; her eyes are embers. "Remember all your old neighbors," she says. Yet the next day, Chantale begins working to build a house for another ex-con who confessed his crimes.

For Hinson, it was proof that the "transcendent filters through every aspect of life" and also that the world is really messed up.

"Reconciliation," she adds, her wide green eyes peering across the hall as she curls a finger into her drooping gold flip-flop, picking at the hard skin of her heel. "I think it's one of the most challenging subjects anyone can face. You choose to give up your right to hold that against him."

His? You wonder to whom it refers. But then it reminds you: She might not have tackled reconciliation without the rings. She might not have made the film without the breakup.

In 2001, she graduated from Furman University, where she double-majored in political science and communications. She then moved to Winston-Salem, N.C., for her boyfriend, a psychological counselor at the time. She took a lousy marketing job for a hospital corporation. He gave her the ring. Then he dumped her.

Hinson was devastated and embarrassed. She had to reimburse her bridesmaids and sell her gown on eBay. She lost a ton of money and gave the ring back. And then she decided to follow the "creative impulse running through my veins" and come to Washington for film school, in 2003.

She's at Silverdocs, talking to PBS execs, trying to get her film seen. It wasn't screened at the festival, but she's attending the conferences, with 650 other aspirants in the documentary biz. The rings glint. She bounces in her seat like the glowing child of serendipity, all tanned and blondified in a white, military-style linen tunic and black shorts. Her hair is short, her sleeves are rolled. Her lips pink, her earrings purplish.

She still seems like a little girl eager to sit at the adult table.

"She wanted to do things we thought she wasn't old enough for," her mom, Nina Waters, recalls by phone from Destin, Fla. "She was interested in everything." Growing up in the Panhandle, Hinson pranced around filming tableaux with her friend Ashley. They had one campy horror scene featuring a body falling from a window and a shot of the lifeless corpse on the ground.

Hinson also had the director's impulse for choreographing others. She collected costumes from thrift shops and played little old men herself; one Halloween she dressed football players in gowns. She hosted dinner parties, requesting that invitees don formalwear.

"We were the cooks," her mother re-



Laura Waters Hinson captured the first meeting between John and Chantale in the 14 years since John murdered Chantale's father.



Above, Hinson interviews Rwandan President Paul Kagame for "As We Forgive"; and, second from right, with fellow winners of the 35th annual Student Academy Awards.

calls. "We'd wait on them — they'd be smoking their fake cigarettes." Hinson was elected president of Fort Walton Beach High School for three years.

She's religious now but wasn't always. Raised Episcopalian, Hinson says she didn't get "serious" about it until after Furman, when she joined the Anglican Mission in the Americas. That group broke away from the Episcopal Church — rejecting its liberal reforms, including the acceptance of gay clergy — under the auspices of Rwanda's church.

The link led her local congregation to plan a trip to Rwanda in 2005. She didn't

sign up to go. She was frenzied, searching for a suitable thesis topic. But one congregant dropped out and a pastor urged Hinson to take the spot. When she got there, she knew she had found her film. She came back and started researching, planning to shoot in the summer of 2006.

She was so interested in the topic that she hosted a dinner at Armand's Pizza on Capitol Hill for a Rwandan bishop who was working to facilitate reconciliation. There she met a fellow American University student who was also planning on filming in Rwanda in June. He and his friend agreed to shoot her movie, if she'd

provide room and board.

They also brought a Canon camera to add to the Panasonic MiniDV the university had lent her. She found the translator, Emmanuel Kwizera, through the Internet mailing list of a Ugandan missionary who had just visited Rwanda. Kwizera proved crucial to earning the trust of victims and killers, especially since he was a survivor himself who knew four languages.

"He would go in first," Hinson says, "elicit stories and then ask whether they'd be involved."

In 30 days, without permits, which Rwanda may or may not require — "it's not clear" — Hinson filmed 55 hours of footage. She cut it down to 53 minutes on her Mac. Her Emmy-winning composers charged her \$8,000 for a score that would usually cost twice as much. Two families from her church gave her \$18,000. Mia Farrow lent her voice to the narration, after Hinson was introduced to her through

the staff of a Virginia congressman. The Rwandan president agreed to an interview on the last day of shooting. Her total cost came to \$25,000.

"This film typically would've cost at least a couple hundred thousand dollars to make," Hinson says. "It'll never be like this ever again. I know that, but people want to help when you're a student."

The story ultimately appealed to Hinson for its reversal of the genre's clichés. Instead of being a tale of African ruin and our reluctance to help, it was a "tremendously hopeful" picture of people learning to forgive in circumstances, she says, in which *we* never could. Hinson liked to believe she herself had learned something.

Two weeks after leaving Rwanda, in August 2006, the belief was tested. Her ex-fiance called, 4½ years after their breakup. "I feel kinda crazy," she recalls him saying. "And I still love you."

Tom is the guy's name. Today he says of the breakup: "I was just terrified of that level of commitment. I had come from a family that had kind of a bad marriage."

He reconsiders. "Ninety percent of it was me just being a very lame guy. A child in a man's body. Just a guy with a lot to learn."

He visited her a month later. He had gone to a non-denominational seminary in those silent intervening years, studied to become a priest and all the while "worked with a lot of trauma victims, a lot of people who were recovering from some pretty hard stuff, rape victims."

"I dealt a lot in the language of forgiveness," he adds.

Tom had kept the first ring all that time. "I couldn't get rid of it. It was that weird kind of remote possibility sense that maybe if I ever get my act together . . ."

He gave it to her, and a second one. He bent down on one knee in the old-fashioned way and asked the question. Not of nuptials, not at first. There was a more pressing matter.

"I said, 'Laura, do you forgive me?' And she said, 'Yes.' And getting married was almost the denouement, the anticlimax."

Today Tom Hinson and Laura Waters Hinson live in the District, where several documentary companies are based and where he pastors at two Anglican churches. Laura graduated from American last year, and the Student Oscar got her thinking about moving to Los Angeles. "It depends on what Laura wants to do in her career," says the man who gave and took away and gave again.

"Our marriage," she says, "is built on forgiveness."