

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 774: Tour De Forks



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Ikeaburger:

A Swedish meatball plus 214 other individually packaged ingredients that you assemble yourself. Caution: Failure to add ingredients in the specified order will render the dish useless.

Last year right around this time, we asked readers to come up with a name for a new cocktail and describe it. Now it's time to sit down and eat. **This week: Supply a name for a restaurant dish named after someone (or some product or organization) and describe it.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — concentrate: this is complicated — a large red nylon kite, from which hangs a blue and white parachute, from which hangs a muscle-bound, bearded action figure who is wearing a zippered jacket but no bottoms except for a pair of black underpants with a white Iron Cross on the front and back. This dazzling item was rescued by the Empress from a newsroom wastebasket, where it was consigned by someone who clearly was not considering the needs of The Style Invitational. It won't fly without a crosspiece, but it hangs up swell.

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, July 28. Put "Week 774" 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. 16. 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 Kevin Dopart and probably someone else we forgot about; write in and we'll credit you later. The revised title for next week's results is by Beverly Sharp. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Roy Ashley. This week's headline is by Brady Holt. The Empress just farms this stuff out. What a gig.

REPORT FROM WEEK 770

In which we asked you to take a moment in history, or a famous scene in literature or drama, and transport it to another era:

- 4** Hercules' Fifth Labor: Cleaning out the Augean Inbox. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)
- 3** 1795 to 1998: Martha: "She showed you her WHAT?" George: " 'Twas an undergarment, yet as much like a bridle, with no substance." Martha: "But pray tell, what was she doing under your desk?" George: "Well, I cannot tell a lie . . ." (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

- 2** The winner of the Washington Nationals Abe Lincoln bobblehead: 1941 to 2008: Charles Foster Kane mumbles: "Grand Theft Auto IV." (Roy Ashley, Washington)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER 1864 to 2007:

Maryland activist Barbara Fritchie raises the flag and shouts: "Shoot if you must this old gray head, But spare your country's flag," she said. And for such defiance brazen, The Frederick cops gave her a tasin'. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

MORE SHIFTY CHARACTERS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

1989 to 1599, at the local tavern: Sally to Harry: "O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful!" Gentlewoman to serving wench: "Zounds! Methinks I shall partake of that selfsame victual which yon maiden hath of late consumed." (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

2008 to 1941: A Japanese sailor posts YouTube video of the air fleet leaving to attack Pearl Harbor, forcing Japan to cancel the attack and seek peace with the United States. But the U.S. doctrine of preemptive war leads to an American sneak attack on Japan. Worldwide condemnation eventually leads to U.S. disarmament, U.S. domination of electronic and automotive markets, and a sumo-wrestling Super Bowl LXII. (Scott Mack, Reston, a First Offender)

Metro section, a long time ago: An unemployed couple, Adam Sonofdir and Eve Daughterofrib, were evicted yesterday from their subsidized cottage in Eden Gardens. The two allege that their landlord used an agent provocateur to trick them into violating a minor clause in their rental contract involving fruit grown on the premises . . . (Ari Unikoski, Tel Aviv)

1967 to 3500 B.C.: "I want to say one word to you, Benjamin. Just one word." "Yes, sir."

"Are you listening?"

"Yes, I am."

"Bronze." (Russell Beland, Springfield; Kevin Dopart, Washington)

If Apollo 13 were manned by World War II Royal Air Force pilots: James "Ginger" Lovell: I say, Houston, bit of a sticky one here!

Control (pausing while lighting pipe): What's the prob, Ginger? Lovell: Bally oxygen tank's gone pop. Going to have to flip the old kite round the moon and ditch her in the briny. Control (dropping match): Blimey! Hang in there, chaps! [Turns to assistant.] Marjorie, dear, better put the kettle on. (Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)

Peter Abelard (1079-1142) in Yoknapatawpha County, 1920s: "Hush, Luster said. Looking for them ain't going to do no good. They're gone." (Kevin Dopart)

2008 to 1860: Talk radio analyzes the Lincoln-Douglas presidential race: Abraham . . . Isn't that some sort of Jewish name? (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

If the baby carriage scene in "The Untouchables" were set in ancient Peru: The stroller wouldn't roll down the pyramid because the Incas didn't have wheeled vehicles. And so the baby and mother would live happily ever after — until they were sacrificed as part of a fertility rite. (Robert Doherty, Daleville, Va.)

1963 to 1369: JFK in West Germany: And certes, if you can herre me above this din, Ech free man, wherever he may lieve, is citizen of Berllinn. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

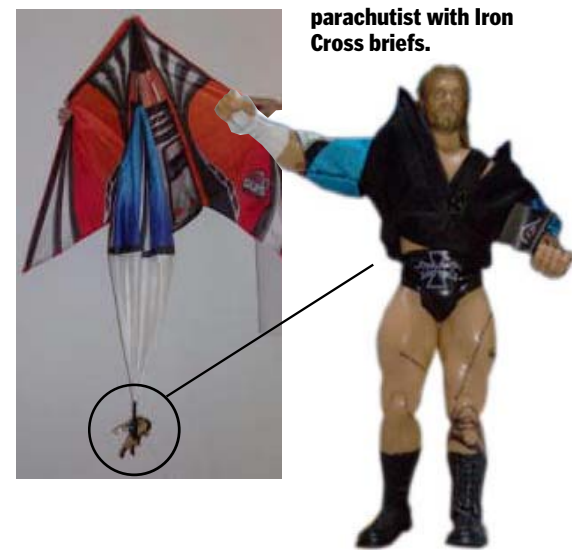
2008 to 1863: Fox News bulletin: In a landmark ruling today, the Supreme Court has struck down President Lincoln's radical labor law, the Emancipation Proclamation, 5 to 4. "The right to set wages and working

conditions belong to employers," wrote Justice Antonin Scalia. Conservative activists were elated: "This ruling means jobs! Not jobs that pay money, exactly, but . . ." (Cy Gardner, Arlington)

1976 to 1776, the play "Hackney Coachman": Mr. Bickle buttons waistcoat while standing in front of a looking glass, musing: "Sir, to whom are you speaking?" [Brandishes dueling pistol, then tucks it into the sleeve of his blouse.] Is it? Might you be speaking to me? To whom in the Devil's name would you be speaking, my good sir? [Pauses, turns around, turns back toward the looking glass with a saucy smirk.] I appear to be the only gentleman here." (Francesca Kelly, Bethesda)

Next Week: Groaner's Manuals, or How-To Doody

The kite won't fly, but you have to love a half-naked parachutist with Iron Cross briefs.



The Irrepressible Michael Caine, Savoring the Good Life

CAINE, From C1

as the Joker. Ledger's Joker is rattlingly intense, a slurring fast-cycling psychopath who got into mommy's lipstick case and daddy's razor blades. The critics agree the Ledger performance is the scariest/best thing about this summer blockbuster, and of course interest in the movie is only stoked by the sudden death of Ledger earlier this year at a Manhattan apartment, where he succumbed to an overdose.

"Lovely guy," Caine says. "So sad with an accident like that. And it was with ordinary drugs. It wasn't heroin. It was like aspirin and stuff and taking them in the wrong order, which any of us could do." Actually, according to the New York medical examiner, Ledger died from a lethal cocktail of sedatives, tranquilizers, opiates and cold medicines.

"Yeah, okay then," Caine says. He spent just a short time with Ledger. "I got to see Heath's performance close-hand, which I had never done. And I got to know him a little bit. Just on the set a bit. I was so impressed by his performance. And when I saw the movie, I was bowled over. On set, we would be chatting about this or that. Then the director would say, 'We're ready, Heath,' and then he'd go straight into that maniacal thing. I told him, 'I'm too old to play a part like that. I don't have energy to do that, what you do. Come to think of it, I don't think I had the energy to do it at your age.' It was stunning on the screen. But to be there when he was doing it . . ." He lets out a long, slow profanity.

We mention that Caine himself lived some wild years. In a recent piece in the British press, he mentions drinking bottles of vodka.

"Oh, I just drink wine with food now. Though I thoroughly enjoy it. You know, I was never an alcoholic, but it is true I was on occasion very, very drunk." The smile. "But you know, I used to go out on the town with Peter O'Toole, so I had a bloody master craftsman teaching me." (Caine was an understudy for O'Toole on the London stage.)

On this topic, the topic of drink, Caine unspools his theory of the social history of the late 20th century. Oh, we had our times, he says, "but the difference with us, we were always getting pissed, with alcohol. Booze we were. That's why the '60s were so successful. Because with booze you're all out together, drinking. What screwed up the '70s was drugs, because you had to stay at home and take the bloody drugs and you couldn't go out or you got busted by the police. The '60s got finished around 1975 when everybody was high as a kite and couldn't go out. Couldn't find their bloody shoes if they wanted to go out. You don't go out and take drugs."

Caine is dressed this afternoon in jeans and wears large gold-rimmed glasses. His skin is pink. He has most of his hair, all of his marbles. He is sitting in a \$1,000-a-night suite, down the hall from the even bigger room where he is staying. He likes to tell stories, so it is a shame not to have him holding forth over a three-hour lunch. We make do.

One of the reasons it is so delicious to be Sir Maurice Joseph Micklewhite Jr. — he was knighted — is that he came from a two-room, gaslit, cold-water flat. Caine is the son of a charlady and a father who worked as a porter at a fish market. There was really no more bottom rung of the ladder in Depression-era England. During the London bombings in World War II, young Maurice was evacuated to the countryside with his mother and brother, while his father went off to war. "We lived on a farm. It was fantastic," Caine remembers. "In my



Michael Caine as Bruce Wayne's loyal butler, Alfred, in the latest installment in the Batman series.

later life, I've returned to that farm, in a way. I live in a great big barn with a great big garden. When you get old, you relive your childhood, which is what I'm doing."

But with better wine. "Bloody right," Caine says. He recalls: "After the war, we lived in a prefabricated house. Because we were bombed out. You put the house up in a day. If I were to show you this house, which was the size of this room, it was like paradise for me. If I were to show it to you, you'd think it the biggest piece of [junk]. But it was luxury for us. Hot and cold running water. It had a bathroom. Electricity! For me it was incredible."

After he became a movie star, he brought his mother to Los Angeles for a look. "I took her to Beverly Hills, like in February, when in England it's rain and snow and bloody bleak. We're driving along. It's all plants and flowers everywhere. I say to my mother, what do you think? And she says the truest thing ever said about Beverly Hills, even though it was a mistake. She said, 'Look at it, all that hysteria, growing up the walls.'"

Caine is laughing with pleasure at the memory. He can barely finish the story. "Boy, are you right, mum. Would you just look at it. All that hysteria growing up the walls."

Caine never formally studied acting. "When I got out of the Army — he served in Korea for two years, got malaria, the treatment almost killed him — 'I was working in a factory and I told this old guy I was going to be an actor, but I didn't know how to go about it. Where I came from, it wasn't a milieu where you'd even know there was such a thing as drama school. It was a very tough area. This old guy says to me, 'There's a newspaper advertises for actors, it's called the Stage.'"

Caine got a job as assistant stage manager out in the boonies. He had never been to see a professional play. "Never," he says. "I didn't have the money to go to the theater. It wasn't like that. It was also a very tough area where I'm from. Tell someone you were going to see a play, they say, 'What is he? Gay?'"

He learned his craft doing 50 plays a year in regional repertory theaters in England. He says, "I played a lot of butlers, which was prep for this Batman movie," which is a role, let's be honest, that Caine could do handcuffed in a shark tank.

Over his career, Caine has appeared in more than 100 films — many of them memorable ("Zulu," "Alfie," "Sleuth," "Educating Rita," "The Cider House Rules," "The Quiet American") and many of them duds (like, um, "Beyond the Poseidon Adventure"). That is another reason that people like Michael Caine. The turkeys. Is there not a certain pluck — a reckless appetite — for an actor who appears in Woody Allen's "Hannah and Her Sisters," gets nominated for Best Supporting

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Michael Caine, on growing up in Depression-era England

Actor Oscar, wins, but at the very same time is making a film called "Jaws: The Revenge."

"It was only a 10-minute role. It was only 10 days' work. In Nassau. In the Bahamas. And they were going to pay me a million bucks for 10 days, and I said, 'Hey, I'll do that.' I didn't take any notice of it," Caine says. "They made this disastrous movie. I've never seen it. I didn't write it, direct it, photograph it, produce it, didn't play any of leading parts, but I get the blame."

Fair is fair. "Well, I bought my mother a house with the money," he says, "so I was very pleased with myself. But I don't do that anymore."

Make bad movies? "Right." He explains. "Movie actors do not retire, the movies retire you." It almost goes without saying: He doesn't need the money. But they do keep sending him scripts. He makes a little joke. "So I have retired mentally, but I didn't retire physically." Michael Caine gives us a nice last laugh.

"I've become very good at holiday-making," he says. "I'm practicing it. It takes time to get it right." Now he's off to lunch with his wife. He says he's starving.

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