

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 777:
Limerixicon 5



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

You needn't be Shakespeare or Thackeray
To succeed in PR (known as "flackery"),
But to feel yourself whole
After selling your soul,
You'll be wanting that after-work daiquiri.

Some will see it as the annual anapestilence, but no matter: As we do every August, we'll be helping out with the Yes, It's Still Coming Right Along project of Chris J. Strolin of Belleville, Ill.: the online Omnificent English Dictionary in Limerick Form, which aims to include a limerick illustrating every last word in the language (not to mention the first and middle ones). Chris J. is happy to report that Oedilf.com is quickly approaching its 50,000th "approved limerick" — and it's just finishing up the C's. Let's forge on. **This week: Supply a humorous limerick featuring any English word, name or term beginning with the letters da-**, as in the fine example above by Gene Weingarten of Washington (Gene wins a Pulitzer).

The Empress is notoriously picky about rhyme and meter for limericks, though her rules are less restrictive than some. A link to her guidelines appears on the home page of www.oedilf.com. Once we run the results Sept. 6, you may submit your entries (getting ink here or not) to the Oedilfers as well.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a necktie featuring a map of downtown Washington, donated by Loser Russell Beland. If you work in the Federal Triangle and you dribble your soup just right, you may be able to trace out your way to the office.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, classic or current version. 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, Aug. 18. Put "Week 777" 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 Sept. 6. 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 Kevin Dopart. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Lawrence McGuire.

REPORT FROM WEEK 773

In which we sought ideas for new religions: As often turns out to be the case, the Losers expressed their fervent and unshakable belief in the Power of the Pun.

4 Oxymormons: A sect of polygamous monogamists. (Lisa Marier, Oak Hill, a First Offender)

3 Palindroman Catholicism: Its central tenet was that a nun named Hannah would get elected ePope on 10-02-2001, put the church on the WWW (LOL), level the playing field for the sexes and be deified. Now mum, the faithful are keeping their eye on 01-02-2010. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

2 The winner of the photo book "Brides Behaving Badly": Cheneyism: Premarital sex is prohibited, but you may go [have sex with] yourself. (Kevin d'Eustachio, Lynchburg, Va.)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Church of the Guiding Light: Adherents believe that no one truly dies; those who expire will become renewed as their evil twins — after a season or two. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

A CULT ABOVE THE REST: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Booboodhist: One who seeks spiritual guidance from his Yogi. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

Bud'ism: Adherents strive to become the human ideal: a guy with a beer belly sitting under a tree. (Larry Flynn, Greenbelt, a First Offender)

Bureaucratism: The belief that all inaction has an equal and opposite inaction. (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

Cherisma: A belief in mummification while still alive. (Jack Held, Fairfax)

Church of St. Andrew: Followers of a little-known Scottish monk who manifested stigmata in nine places on each hand; its members celebrate these 18 bloody holes by playing golf every Sunday morning. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Church of the Wafering Stranger: It offers Communion to anyone. (Peter Metrinko)

Confusionism: The belief that death is final. No, just a temporary interruption. Maybe an abstract plane. Or something transcendental. I think. (Don Kirkpatrick, Waynesboro, Pa.)

When they proselytize, the Good Copts promise you heavenly rewards, while the Bad Copts threaten you with hellfire and brimstone. (Chris Doyle)

Depressbyterians: Those who think the End of Days actually did come in 2000. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

Eunuchtarrians: A sect whose hymnal is written for sopranos only. Its most prominent evangelist is the Rev. Jesse

Jackson. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Geek Orthodox: A sect that worships technology, but only up to the 2003 upgrades. (Peter Metrinko)

Hurling Dervishes: Believers in heaven' on earth. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Jews for Allah: A group even more conflicted than Jews for Jesus. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Kinduism: A religion practiced in West Virginia. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Lowest Common Denominationalism: The religion that lets you get away with the most stuff without going to Hell. (Steve Fahey, Kensington)

Monkeepiscopalians: They're true believers, without a trace of doubt in their minds. (Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney)

Netfixism: The belief that when you finish your life, you just send it back, rate it and wait for the next one to arrive. (Michelle Pangallo, Washington, a First Offender)

Nitarrians: They believe nothing is too trivial to argue about at any time or any place. (Brent Spence, Arlington, a First Offender)

OCDeism: God will come to Earth to reveal His plan once He's sure the oven's turned off. (David Kofalt, Gaithersburg, a First Offender)

Pagangsterism: A church that receives large donations because "you wouldn't want no Acts of Gods on ya's kneecaps." (Kevin Dopart)

Rhythm Methodists: The world's

fastest-growing religious group. (Jon Graft, Centreville)

Roman Candlecism: It holds that our existence will end with a Big Bang. (Marc Boysworth, Burke)

Salvationists: They not only speak in tongues, they speak in drool. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

She'ites: A group dedicated to removing all sexist references from the Bible. Prayers conclude with "Aperson." (Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)

Shihtzuists and Caninites: Their creed is "God spelled backward is Dog." (Dave Ferry, Key West, Fla.; Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Spoonitarians: Offer prims of haze to their gourd Lod. (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

Sunnitarians: Believers face Mecca five times a day and then form a committee to figure out why. (Anne Paris, Arlington)

The Church of Latter-Day Stains: This group still believes the marks on the Shroud of Turin came from Christ, even though fabric was found to be much more recent. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Transcendentalists: They believe God is one of us, just a stranger on the bus. (Chris Doyle)

Next Week: Tour de Forks, or Saturday Morning Snackdown



BEIJING OLYMPICS | 北京奥运



BY EZRA SHAW — GETTY IMAGES

With a giant scrim circling around the top of National Stadium — also known as the "Bird's Nest" — and a large scroll rolled out inside, the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing got off to a dazzling start.

TOM SHALES

For the Television Viewer, All That Glitter Was Golden

SHALES, From C1

lines of "There's a lot of energy in this stadium tonight."

The stadium, nicknamed the "Bird's Nest" and looking from the exterior as if it were somehow woven from giant ribbons of steel, was an integral part of the spectacle. Costas pointed out the giant scrim that ran around the circumference at the top, above the highest seats, which wasn't always visible as part of the TV picture.

During the most amazing part of the show, sneak-peaked in still photos and brief rehearsal clips, a giant globe rose from the center of the stadium with dancers clinging to it, secured by wires, while fireworks blazed into the night sky. On the scrim, Saturn flew by at one point, and whales swam above the spinning globe below.

Two singers performed from the very top of the globe — the North Pole, as it were — and later the stadium floor was covered with a sea of children's faces imprinted on giant cards. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

After the Parade of Nations and a speech or two came the finale, the traditional lighting of the Olympic Flame. At first it seemed that this part of the ceremony would never end, as the torch was passed from one runner to another, around and around the enormous stadium. But when, finally, the last athlete accepted it, he amazed the crowd by flying into the air (on wires, of course) and proceeded to run along the scrim, on which designs and photographs were projected where the whales and Saturn had been.

He eventually reached the penultimate point, a small receptacle to which he touched the torch. The flame then whizzed along a wire and at the top of the

stadium burst into the gigantic ceremonial flame that will burn until the Games end. Costas was understandably flabbergasted. "When it comes to opening ceremonies, retire the trophy," he said.

Providing a kind of electronic stage for the various hordes of dancers, marchers and other performers, and for many of the special effects, was what Costas described as one of the biggest LED television screens ever constructed. Light-emitting diode screens are among the new video technologies replacing the old way TV pictures are displayed in American homes, with the long-running CRT (cathode-ray tube) fading away after about 50 years of faithful — but often fuzzy — service.

If the ceremony was China's farewell to the old established image of itself, it was also a goodbye to low-definition television. Viewers watching on high-def screens, especially those of 50 inches or

more in size (and with the new 16:9 aspect ratio instead of the long-dominant 4:3) had a tremendous advantage over those watching on outdated or small-screen TV sets.

But never mind the technical details, nor the various statistics parceled out by the commentators (91,000 in the stands, 11,000 athletes participating, 15,000 performers in the show); the cumulative effect of watching the spectacle keep topping itself was to be utterly and gratifyingly wowed.

"I don't see how anyone could dispute the quality of this opening ceremony," Costas said.

I don't either.

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