

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 779: Gripe for the Picking

Some of us must have truly charmed lives, notes Very Occasional Loser Irv Shapiro of Rockville (for whose children, coincidentally, the Empress babysat decades ago, when she was but a mere princess). At a time when few are untouched by economic woes, or health woes, or family strife, or deep angst over What the World Is Coming To, some very lucky people evidently have nothing worse to concern them than a neighbor giving a dog the same name as their relative, or coughing at a concert. The latter crisis was addressed about in a 546-word tirade published in The Post this past summer, prompting reader Chris Krisinger of Burke to write in: "Of all the pressing local issues that need airing through additional public discourse such as the editorial pages, coughing at symphony concerts would not have made my top 100 or so." **This week: Rant about an issue that wouldn't make your top 100 for airing in The Post.** So that we can air it in The Post, of course. As always, longer entries must be worth their length. Anything over 75 words must be gosh-durn hi-larious.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a brand-new 2008 Liberace calendar — including a photo of Wladziu in spangled hot pants — direct from the Liberace Museum in Las Vegas, donated by Priser Maja Keach of New Carrollton, who picked it up at this year's Loserfest, an annual vacation organized by the Style Invitational Losers themselves. (Last year, you may remember, we featured an ear picker picked up at the Loserfest in Williamsburg.)

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. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air freshener (Fir Stink for their First Ink). 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, Sept. 2. Put "Week 779" 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. 20. 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 Elden Carnahan. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Brendan Beary.

REPORT FROM WEEK 775
in which we asked you to combine the beginning and end of two words within a single ad in The Post or WashingtonPost.com and define the new word: This contest turned out to be a little harder than expected, because, as several Losers reported, the paper isn't exactly exploding with ad copy these days.

- 4 Spamily:** The deposed former vice president of Nigeria, his niece the banking heiress, and her brother-in-law the diplomat trapped on foreign soil. (Joshi Feldblyum, Philadelphia)
- 3 Beau-ger:** An unfortunate pick from the personal ads. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)
- 2 The winner of the 2002 outhouse calendar (usable again in 2013):** Brasort: A semi-nudist colony. (Marc Boysworth, Burke)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Exclu-less: Oblivious to how much the people in coach hate you and your roomy leather seat and your pretty little cookies on the pretty little tray instead of the three pretzel sticks. (Beth Morgan, San Francisco)

AD ABSURDUM: HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Ex-rid:** Remarry. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)
- Rabbiole:** Knishes (Barrett Swink, Annandale, a First Offender)
- Sanson:** A man with no heir. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)
- Pandorks:** People who ruin their cooking by adding unnecessary ingredients. "What pandork put cilantro in my spaghetti?" (Lee Dobbins, Arlington)
- Out-chitecture:** Homes designed with no closets. (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)
- Hybr-hoe:** A hermaphrodite prostitute. (Lisa Trossarelo, Rex, Ga., a First Offender)
- Ameriment:** The reaction of people in other countries when hearing President Bush pronounce their leaders' names. (Beth Morgan)
- Perflush:** A pay-as-you-go plan. (Beverley Sharp, Washington)
- Colonhopping:** What a promiscuous proctologist does. (Beverley Sharp)
- Gutprints:** The craters left by obese sunbathers at the beach. (Marc Boysworth)
- Pharma-fond:** Using, but not addicted; as characterized by Amy Winehouse, Pete Doherty and Rush Limbaugh. No, really. They said so. (Marc Boysworth)
- Natsender:** An event that occurs annually sometime between mid-June and the All-Star break. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)
- Fu-ville:** A town that doesn't exactly put out the welcome mat for strangers. (George Vary, Bethesda)
- Gohoma:** Fu-ville is this state's capital. (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul)

- Outagement:** The Pepco board of directors. (Barbara Turner)
- Finantiques:** Old money. (Barbara Turner)
- Swimpy:** How a half-hour in the pool leaves one's manhood. (Tom Witte)
- Buff-sect:** A religious group that observes the Day of Tonement. (Larry Yungk)
- Cavetend:** An early predecessor of Good Housekeeping (Larry Yungk)
- Whirlponies:** Extreme Carousel (Pam Sweeney)
- Brotel:** The Y. (Pam Sweeney)
- Comfort-cure:** Becoming a parent. (Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia)
- Opera-slim:** Pleasingly plump. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)
- Telaborate:** Give TMI via cellphone. "She telaborated on her bowel movements all the way to Shady Grove." (Kevin Dopart, vacationing in Athens)
- Federelves:** Those jolly, dependable creatures who appear not on Dec. 24 but on April 15. And in a quaint twist, you give THEM presents. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)
- Excertificate:** Recognition of an exceptional work effort with a totally symbolic gesture, rather than the money you were expecting. (Russ Taylor)

- Fromagineering:** The process by which a perfectly good idea begets an altogether cheesy product. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)
- Downsizeumbia:** A forced-retirement community. (Brendan Beary)
- Cellulightening:** Toning your thunder thighs. (Brendan Beary)
- Graspality:** A friendly welcome at the bordello door. (Christopher Lamora, Arlington)
- Peonology:** The study of losers. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)
- Invice:** The bill you get from an escort service. (Tom Witte)
- Homost:** Bi but leaning. (Brian Cohen, Potomac)
- Disco-tics:** The heebie-BeeGees. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)
- Ite-ite:** Follower of the philosophy of, oh, whatever it is all those others are following. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)
- Wetbucks:** Laundered money. (Chris Doyle)
- Bris-trick:** The new rabbi found that the skills from his part-time job at Benihana weren't well received in his new profession. (Pam Sweeney)
- Economorrow:** When you'll finally cut back on expenses. (Rick Haynes, Potomac)



Come in second and see the Liberace of the Month.

Ted Kennedy May Be Down, but Don't Count Him Out

KENNEDY, From C1

"The man never quits," said a longtime friend, retired senator Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.). "He's indefatigable. He's a fighter. I asked him how he was doing, and he said, 'Al, life is a bowl full of cherries.'"

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), another close friend from across the aisle, said Kennedy told him: "I've been given a bad hand. But I'm not going to let it get me down. I'm going to fight back, and do everything I possibly can."

Kennedy, 76, has spent much of the summer in hospitals. The cancer, which was discovered in May, required brain surgery in June and daily chemotherapy and radiation treatments for six weeks after that. But the veteran senator has still found time and energy in the past three months to:

- Record an emotional video for the first day of the Democratic National Convention on Monday, recapping inspiring moments throughout his life.
- Fly to Washington in the midst of treatments to cast a decisive vote in favor of legislation that would prevent a sharp cut in Medicare payments to doctors. Several Republicans, moved by his grit, switched their earlier votes on the bill, giving it a veto-proof majority.
- Orchestrate bipartisan talks on a universal health insurance bill he hopes to have ready for Congress to consider by the time a new president is inaugurated.
- Craft a Peace Corpsque youth service bill he hopes to introduce next year to round out his legacy.
- Form a nonprofit group with friends to raise money and build an institute in Boston, next door to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, that will be dedicated to research and education about the U.S. Senate.

And if his condition permits, he might make a surprise appearance at the convention in Denver.

"He's making calls, staying in touch with his office staff and colleagues and still pushing all the issues he cares about," his wife, Vicki, wrote in a recent e-mail to friends and family. He's been exercising each morning at Hyannis Port before heading to Boston for chemotherapy and radiation treatments, the first round of which are now complete. By afternoon, he's usually out on Nantucket Sound, guiding his German-built, wood-hulled schooner, Mya, through the chop.

"I have drawn the line at sailing in thunderstorms, but other than that, he's out on the water just about every day," Vicki wrote.

Dogged perseverance has become something of Ted Kennedy's signature after 46 years in the Senate and 40 years as patriarch of his star-crossed family. "The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives and the dream shall never die," he famously put it at the Democratic National Convention in 1980 after another low moment: the loss of the presidential nomination to Jimmy Carter.

"Most legislators burn out," said former



BY DARREN MCCOLLESTER — GETTY IMAGES

After his brain tumor diagnosis in May, Ted Kennedy, with son Patrick and wife Vicki, leaves Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

"The man never quits. He's indefatigable. He's a fighter. I asked him how he was doing, and he said, 'Al, life is a bowl full of cherries.'"

former senator Alan Simpson

vice president Walter Mondale, another Kennedy contemporary. "And he, for some reason, has not. He has been able to use his expanding congressional advantages — seniority, the right committees, relationships, huge staffs and connections with groups all over the country and the world. He's maintained that kind of internal excitement and drive for, now, nearly 50 years."

He is the second-longest-serving senator in Congress right now, bested only by 90-year-old Democrat Robert Byrd of West Virginia, who's served for 49 years. And Kennedy has every intention of finishing the last four years of his present term if he's well enough.

Most scholars of the Senate now consider Kennedy to be one of that body's ablest legislators. Political commentator David Shribman put it this way: "His brothers' words are in large letters on the sides of buildings and in the hearts and memory of a nation. But the youngest brother is the fine-print Kenne-

dy. His words are in the fine print of the nation's laws."

Vicki writes that Ted is employing the same "grit and determination he's shown in his career" to fight the tumor. "He remained strong and was able to stay on schedule throughout this shock-and-awe phase of the treatment and his doctors — and we — are enormously pleased with his progress," she said in her most recent e-mailed update. (Vicki is not doing press interviews currently, a Kennedy spokesman said.)

Lately Ted Kennedy has been researching experimental treatments, which would be a logical next step if the cancer returns.

"I think if he can get that immune system up to where he can tolerate being around a lot of people, his intention is to come back [to the Senate] after this recess," said Hatch.

Kennedy had a malignant glioma diagnosed in the upper left portion of his brain, after suffering a seizure at his home on Cape Cod. Surgery on June 2 to remove the tumor

was called a success, and apparently made chemotherapy and radiation treatments easier for Kennedy to handle.

About 10,000 cases of malignant glioma are diagnosed each year in the United States, and only about half of those patients survive one year. After two years, perhaps 25 percent are still alive. However, new drugs are extending survival in some cases, researchers say, and some patients survive longer than four years.

The grimness of his prognosis has not escaped Kennedy, and he's concentrating on burnishing his political accomplishments, friends in the Senate say.

"We are working on a number of things that he is very excited about as part of his legacy," said Hatch. "One of them is a young persons' volunteer bill. We're finding today that a lot of young people do not serve. They don't serve in the military, they don't give service to the government, to communities, to charitable organizations. So we're trying to come up with a bill that will encourage young people to give two years of service."

As for the health insurance initiative, Kennedy has said his interest in the issue began in childhood, sparked by his sister Rosemary, who suffered from what may have been mental retardation or an undiagnosed form of severe depression. She was the inspiration behind Eunice Shriver's founding of

the Special Olympics for disabled athletes.

Sen. Mike Enzi of Wyoming has been working closely with Kennedy as the ranking Republican on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which Kennedy chairs.

"He wants to be ready," said Enzi, "and I want to be ready to go with something right after the first of the year that will make sure that every American can be insured, and lowers the cost and increases the access. And that's possible."

Now that the most difficult phase of his treatment appears to be over, Kennedy has had more free time to bask in the company of family, friends and supporters from across the country. Those close to him say Kennedy has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of goodwill he's experienced since his seizure.

Hatch, who has gold and platinum records hanging on his office wall for a Christian pop tune he co-wrote called "Unspoken," has written a song for Kennedy. Democratic leaders are talking about playing the tribute at the convention.

It's a ballad called "Headed Home."

*Through the darkness we can find a pathway
That will take us halfway to the stars.
Through the rainfall, we can find a clear day,
Shoo the shadows and doubts away
And touch the legacy that is ours.*

(It's actually the second song Hatch has written for his longtime friend. The first was a love song, "Souls Along the Way," penned to celebrate Ted and Vicki's fifth anniversary, in 1997. If you listen hard, you can hear the tune in "Ocean's Thirteen" — it's the background music during the wedding banquet.)

On the day Kennedy's condition was first announced, hundreds of phone calls, 19 bouquets and more than 2,500 e-mails reached his office.

"I send him terrible cards," said Simpson, particularly pleased with one involving proctological humor, and another warning Kennedy that yeast infections sometimes result from visiting bakeries. "He called me and said, 'Al, these cards you send are scurrilous.' I said, 'I know, but I can't send them to anybody else.'"

"Even in the midst of this very serious business, we've shared a lot of laughter," Vicki wrote to friends and family. "But that's not surprising to those of us who love and know Teddy — there's always laughter when he's around."

"He has a wonderful sense of humor," Simpson added. "His laugh will just carry. I can hear it at this instant. He'll throw his big leonine head back, and . . . what a laugh."

Vicki echoes Simpson's imagery. In one of her e-mails, she confessed that the cancer has been a bear for Kennedy, but "my guy's a lion."

And, she wrote, "I'm betting on the lion."