

**THIS WEEK'S CONTEST**

## Week 781: Our Greatest Hit

**Inoculate:** To take coffee intravenously when you are running late. (Chuck Smith, 1998)

**Idiotarod:** An annual Alaskan race in which morons pull huskies sitting on sleds. (Chris Doyle, 2003)



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Empress held out as long as she could — 82 weeks since she last succumbed. But requests — and even entries — are still coming in for the contest we first ran in 1998 and have repeated a few times since, most recently in Week 699 (indeed, last week the E received an entry for “Week 699”). Here’s this year’s version: **This week: Start with a word or multi-word term that begins with I, J, K or L; either add one letter, subtract one letter, replace one letter or transpose two adjacent letters; and define the new word, as in the examples above.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — courtesy of our secret correspondent in Oman — two bars of soap: Virginity Soap (“feminine tighten”) and Classic Placenta Soap (if the Virginity Soap didn’t quite work, we suppose).

**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](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Sept. 15. Put “Week 781” 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 Oct. 4. 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 Tom Witte. This week’s Honorable Mentions name was thought of independently by Chris Doyle and Brendan Beary.

**REPORT FROM WEEK 777**

Our annual limerick contest that furthers the quest at [Oedilf.com](http://Oedilf.com) to include a limerick about every word in the dictionary. This week, da- words. Once again, limericians contributed more than 700 five-line gems (and not-so-gems) from all over the English-speaking world (look at the place name if you see “calm” rhyming with “charm”). But as you’ll see, it’s da-rned near impossible to top the work of our own veteran Style Invitational Losers. Anyone who submitted a limerick for this contest is welcome to post it now at [www.oedilf.com](http://www.oedilf.com). And 17 more Honorable Mentions — several of them in the not-for-grandma tradition of the genre — are at [www.washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational](http://www.washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational).

**METER HALFWAY: HONORABLE MENTIONS**

**A heavy girl often went dateless; She feared that in life she’d be mateless.**

**A friend warned, “Your inner Tube has to get thinner. So when you’re at dinner, inflate less.”** (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

**Had your fill of McCain and Obama, Yet still craving political drama? Though you’re not the real thing, Why not wire Beijing: “Where’s my visa, guys? (signed) Dalai Lama.”** (Chris J. Strolin, Belleville, Ill.)

**The bridegroom (from Brooklyn, I guess) Was under unusual stress. “Hey! Duh bridal gown’s red! Man, I ain’t gonna wed Any damsel,” he said, “in dis dress!”** (Sheila Blume, Sayville, N.Y.)

**An advantage to baldness, I note, Is my dandruff concerns are remote. Now my scalp has no flakes, And it shines! All it takes Is a clear polyurethane coat.** (Brendan Beary)

**“He was nattily dressed, very dapper, Yet handsome and rugged — a strapper. I stood by the wall As he entered a stall . . .” (From “The Memoirs of Senator Tapper”)** (Chris Doyle)

**5 The damselfish lurks in the sea, Self-centered as ever could be. Hunting food in the deeps; All it finds there it keeps: It seems pretty dam selfish to me.** (Hugh Thirlway, The Hague, a First Offender)

**4 I’m trying to stay cool and calm . . . I’m ready to taste her sweet charm . . . Oh such edible flesh And I like them this fresh! She’s my date (and she comes from a palm).** (Doug Harris, Stockton-on-Tees, England, a First Offender)

**3 The dachshund, each hair and each wart of it, Serves for the wags to make sport of it. With a sharp, pointy snout, He is squat but stretched out. And that is the long and the short of it.** (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

**2 the winner of the downtown Washington-map necktie: Michelangelo’s David, we’re told, Is a fabulous sight to behold. I’ll admit to this crowd That he’s poorly endowed; But come on, that museum is cold!** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

**AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER**  
Will our nation be *damning* its fate When McCain and Obama debate, And we choose ‘tween a fib From a fib who is glib And a lie by a guy who talks straight? (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

**Mona Lisa, though hardly well read, Was a classmate of Leo’s, they said. We know not her history; She’s mostly a mystery We call the da Vinci Coed.** (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

**Ahmadinejad asks for a day Touring Frisco, our town by the bay. If we schedule it right, He’ll be spending the night At the Castro Street YMCA.** (Chris Doyle)

**I’m dazed by the beauty of Kabul, A jewel of a place, it’s a baubol. It’s considered uncool To call it Kabool. That can get you in all kinds of trambul.** (Edward Peck, Chevy Chase, a First Offender)

**Daft means you’re weak in the noggin, The runners are off your toboggan, Your Bic isn’t clickin’, Your tape doesn’t stick, an’ Your windshield’s in need of defoggin’.** (Mae Scanlan)

**The Day of Atonement is when Jews ask God for His pardon. Amen. When our sins have been purged (Despite all we’ve been urged), We can’t wait to commit them again.** (Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland, a First Offender)

**And Last: I’m a dittant poet, a dabbler, Just a step above blithering babbler. For a magnet or mug Or a shirt that’s too snug, I’m supposed to write what, “Hedda Gabler”?** (Brendan Beary)

**Read more Honorable Mentions at [washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational](http://washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational).**

**Next Week: Tied Games, or Sportmanteaus**

## Green Roof Makes A Good Neighbor

ROOF, From C1

ments — fire escapes and clothes lines, manhole covers, antennas and, yes, eminently forgettable rooftops.

To green the concrete jungle, it could be argued, is to dull the urban edge. Or put another way, what’s wrong with a little ugly?

Not a thing, says Anthony Lanier, president of EastBanc, the developer who planted the garden next to 22 West, which his publicity team billed as “uber-luxury, eco-chic” living at 22nd and M streets NW.

His intention, he says, has nothing to do with making the rooftop as serene as a suburban lawn. Indeed, he’s a fan of urban vistas, even the more unsightly views. He just wants to make them “more fun.” And easier on the eyes.

Imagine a water tower painted yellow or green, he says. “Or you could put a neon band around it that shows Mickey Mouse chasing his girlfriend. Why not?”

When he decided to build next to the gas station, he was determined to embrace what could otherwise be unfortunate geography. As part of an agreement with Exxon, he remodeled the station to make it match his glass-and-zinc design.

At one point, he considered calling the condo X-On West. And he toyed with naming the building’s restaurant High Octane, allowing Exxon’s amber-hued gasoline to loop through transparent tubes above the bar.

“I come up with these things every day,” he says.

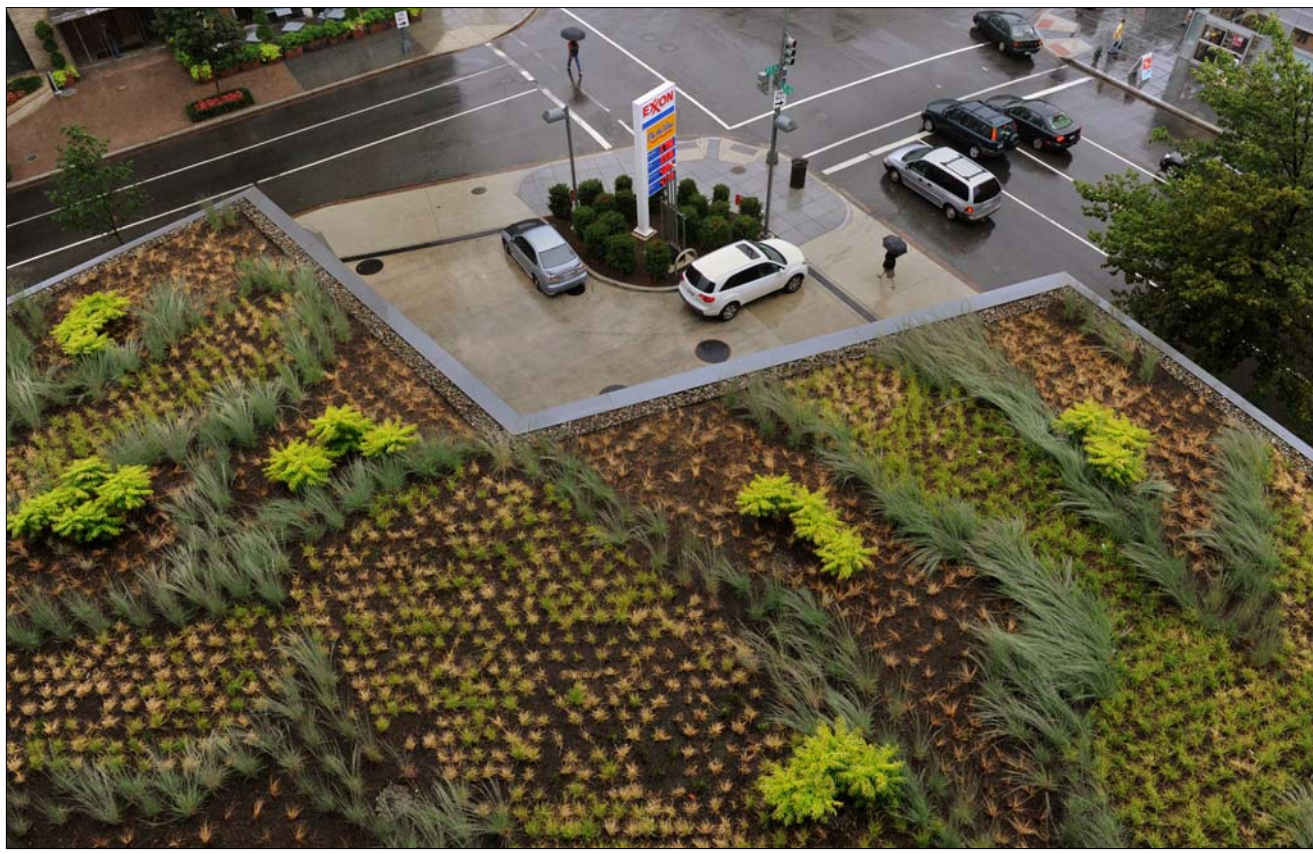
But his sales team nixed the idea. “People told me I was crazy.”

Greening the unsightly is not new for Lanier. Another condo he built, at 3303 Water St. NW, had the misfortune of overlooking a Pepco substation. *Ouch!*

Now the substation’s roof is home to a 6,500-square-foot meadow. Birds, bees and squirrels have been spotted, although no deer, says Lanier — “not yet.”

“In real estate you’re always faced with let’s call it, ‘issues,’” he says. “Your job is to make the issues go away. A nice thing is to have something grow over it.”

Eco-chic is all the rage in real estate circles. Every other day, it seems, developers across the country tout their glass designs and vegetated rooftops as vital in the fight against global warming. Yet the wave also stirs a bit of murmuring among urban aficionados, who see beauty in tar, steel and



PHOTOS BY NIKKI KAHN — THE WASHINGTON POST



**A 5,000-square-foot garden blankets the roof of the Exxon station next to pricey condos at 22 West, turning a potential eyesore into an eco-chic part of the community.**

concrete, and prefer their cities a tad unruly.

“The view of those trying to greenify everything seems to be that unless you have X amount of green, then your soul is going to be destroyed,” says Francis Morone, a New York-based architectural historian.

“When you see a city’s infrastructure, the jumble of buildings and crowded sidewalks, to a real urbanite those things are beautiful,” he says. “Just in the same way that the Sierra Club guy finds trails in the Adirondacks beautiful.”

Joel Kotkin, an urban historian based in Los Angeles, ponders the notion of a gas station garden and he detects a broader, less appealing narrative: the revival of cities as suburban-style playpens for the wealthy.

“It’s almost like you have the emer-

gence of the designer city,” he grouses over the phone. “What made cities different was that they weren’t places that were controlled. This desire to control everything is overwhelming. Now cities are like Disneyland for adults.”

The greenery above the Exxon station, a \$1 million mix of ornamental grass, perennials and shrubs, is growing tall enough so that tufts are visible from the sidewalk. The garden has become something of a conversation piece. Max Hirschfeld, a photographer, stood across the street the other morning and wondered if someone — not him, of course — could grow marijuana up there. (Answer: no roof access.)

Remus, a real estate broker, can see the garden from her sixth-floor apartment, for which she paid nearly \$1.5 million. Her friends, she says, were a bit baffled by her choice, given that her profession abides

by the credo “Location! Location! Location!”

Whatever. She’s living downtown, has a rooftop pool and can walk to a gazillion restaurants. A gas station isn’t going to rain on her parade, she says, not even when she’s paying “\$1,000 a square foot to live next door.”

“It’s better than looking at a heat pump,” she says.

Anne Williams and her husband spent nearly \$2 million for their apartment, but it’s on the other side of the building, so the gas station is conveniently out of sight. Still, she can see it from the building’s roof, where she eats dinner or cools off in the pool. She’s not pleased with the view of the garden these days.

Brown. Far too brown. “You’re not supposed to be living in a prairie,” she says.

**Music**

## A Double Dose Of Diva at AARP

AARP is pulling out the stops for its gargantuan 50th anniversary celebration this week, bringing a slew of big-name (and over-50) performers to the Washington Convention Center. Things got off to a spectacular start Thursday night, when singers Chaka Khan and Natalie Cole put on powerful — if very different — back-to-back sets before a crowd of thousands.

The impossible-to-pigeonhole Khan opened the evening with an hour-long set that jumped from rhythm and blues to disco to funk, tearing into her 1984 hit “I Feel for You” and delivering Rufus-era blockbusters from “Do You Love What You Feel” to the iconic “Tell Me Something Good.” Khan’s voice is still a thing of ferocious power, and at 55 she’s hardly over the hill. But in spite of a flashy, gazillion-watt light show that could easily stun a small country, she turned in a rather tepid set. As if on autopilot, she never put her spectacular pipes to full use, and only really connected with the audience with a closing, heartfelt version of “I’m Every Woman.”

Cole, who on Tuesday is releasing more American standards on “Still Unforgettable,” was a different story entirely. Backed by a small orchestra, Cole sang elegant, eloquent classics, including “Come Rain or Come Shine” and “All the Things You Are,” as well as lesser-known gems like Carmen McRae’s “Coffee Time.” Sophisticated but warm and unpretentious, Cole, 58, had the huge crowd with her from first note to last, and brought the house down with a moving duet of “Unforgettable” — sung, as on her huge hit version of it, with a tape of her father, the late Nat King Cole.

— Stephen Brookes



BY JASON DECROW — ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Chaka Khan shared the bill with Natalie Cole.**