

The Style Invitational »

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 797: Be Resolute!



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Rod Blagojevich: Whisper!

Sure, you can go ahead and make your New Year's resolutions and then feel like a failure for 342 days or so. You deserve it! But why not spare yourself the guilt and make someone else's resolutions instead? **This week: Make a humorous resolution for some particular person or institution to accomplish next year.** This contest was suggested by Superloser Russell Beland, who resolves each year that the Empress will learn how to judge a humor contest.

Winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets this fabulous tabletop wine bottle holder in the shape of a flamingo, donated by not-yet-a-Loser Patty Hardee of Flint Hill, Va. You put the bottle of wine between the flamingo's legs as he/she sprawls on the table, perhaps from sampling your vino. It's one of the few cases in which someone looks *more* decorous when clutching a wine bottle between his legs.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. 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 Monday, Jan. 5. Put "Week 797" 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 Jan. 24. 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 is by Drew Bennett.

REPORT FROM WEEK 793 in which we marked the Empress's fifth anniversary of Empressing by inviting readers to enter any of the 65 previous contests, but the answers had to relate somehow to the number 5, or to the traditional fifth-anniversary gifts of silverware or wood:

4 **Week 742, crossword puzzle clues:** RUNON: Now that it's Nov. 5, Mr. Nader, what will you do now? (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

3 **Week 767, a question that a sentence in The Post might answer:** A. "Well, this is our last year here," Mrs. Bush, wearing a red Oscar de la Renta wool suit and pearl earrings, told reporters. Q. "Do you really think it's okay for your husband to steal all that silverware from the White House?" (Roy Ashley, Washington)

2 **Week 756, a subhead for a Post headline:** Four Armed Men Rob Pr. George's Bank, Police Say Getaway Driver Said to Have Five Arms, but One Was in Sling (Pie Snelson, Silver Spring)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Week 726, a limerick featuring a word beginning with Cl- to Co-: In seeking an honorable mention, An old Roman's CLEVER invention Failed to survive Among the top V, DefiVILLing his hope IV aXtion. (Rob Cohen, Potomac)

WOODEN NICKELS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Week 726: Way back in the Civil War days 'Twas decreed, and accepted with praise: On the nickel we must Feature "In God We Trust"; And that's what's called coining a phrase. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Week 728, a word containing the letter group S-A-T-R in any order: Sextras: Actors at the end of the credits of a porn flick, like "Swinger #5." (John Bunyan, Cincinnati)

Week 729, a passage from The Post translated into "plain English": Original: Medical and surgical residents in hospitals should work no more than 16 hours without taking a mandatory five-hour sleep break, and they should get one full day off a week and at least two back-to-back days off a month, a panel of experts at the Institute of Medicine recommended yesterday. Plain English: Hospitals can work residents 138 hours per week all year. Now about your appendix . . . (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Week 734, rhyming couplets containing words that are anagrams of each other: With REGARD to Ms. Palin, we watched her and weighed her, And found her no smarter than any fifth-GRADER. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Week 736, questions for the Car Talk guys or Miss Manners: I drive a large truck and I'm looking to increase my gas mileage by at least 5 mpg. Would it help if I had my wife tow it with her Prius? (Hugh Pullen, Vienna)

Week 739, untrue "facts" about political figures: The freckles on Hillary Clinton's thigh form a perfect pentagram. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Week 746, a motto for a country: North Korea: Will the last person to leave please switch off the lights? Ha ha, only

joking. We don't let people leave, and anyway, we haven't had electric lights for five decades now. (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

Somalia: First in the Fifth World (Kevin Dopart)

Week 751, a play on the name of an existing or former TV show: The Five Wives of Henry VIII: A PBS documentary that had to be cut back because "viewers like you" didn't contribute enough. (Russell Beland)

Week 759, the "foal" resulting from two actual horse names: Etched + Big Truck = Knife the Mack (Kevin Dopart)

Close to the Vest + He's Sum Charmer = Five Card Stud (Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney; Laurel Gainor, Great Falls)

Week 762, combining two words from dictionary page headings: Maple-manual: Pronouncing "about" as "aboot" and other tips on acting Canadian. (Kevin Dopart)

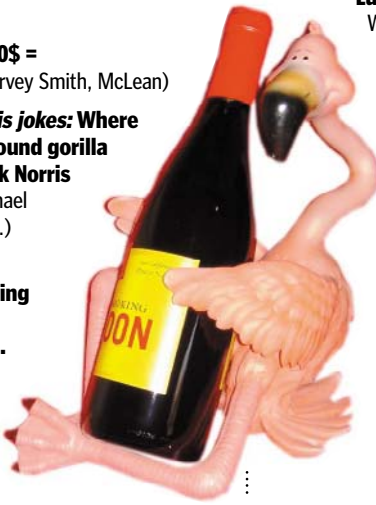
Week 763, The "foal" resulting from two winning horse names from Week 759: Hamburger Hamlet + \$0\$ = Washing Silverware (Roy Ashley)

Torah!Torah!Torah! + \$0\$ = FiveBucksOffMoses (Harvey Smith, McLean)

Week 764, Chuck Norris jokes: Where does a five-hundred-pound gorilla sleep? Wherever Chuck Norris knocked him out. (Michael Turniansky, Pikesville, Md.)

At Chuck Norris's restaurant, the only thing on the menu is a five-knuckle sandwich. (Hugh Pullen)

Week 768, fictitious movie trivia: Woody Harrelson



BY PATTY HARDEE

can jump. He just can't hop or skip. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Week 769, portmanteau words: Sequintuplets: The winning entry at last year's Twins and More Junior Pageant. (Rob Pivarnik, Stratford, Conn.)

Week 772, literature translated for "Los Angeles residents under 40": Matthew 25:1-2: Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto town virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Under-40 version: No, no, no, no, no. Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho. (Chris Doyle)

Week 774, new restaurant dishes: The John Cage Special: Place silverware and an empty plate in front of the diner; leave him for 4 1/2 minutes; give him the check. (Roy Ashley)

Week 780, how you know you're in a particular place: You know you're in Detroit's Ford Field when someone calls out "nickel defense" and you realize someone's putting in an offer to buy half the team. (Kevin Dopart)

Week 781, change a word beginning with I through L by one letter: Lumberjock: A male porn star. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Week 784, proverbs for 21st-century life: If you want to succeed as a panhandler, don't ask people to "give me five." (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Week 787, a word containing M-I-N-E in any order: Pinemagnet: A bench warmer. (Tom Witte)

Next Week: Ripped Off From the Headlines, or Onion Ringers

« For the well-appointed Loser table, this week's second prize.

Tracing the Joy in Blacks' Turbulent Past

EXHIBIT, From Page C1

associated with such coronations — challenged the white population's notions of black inferiority," the exhibit says. "In most cases, much was made of the evidence of royal African blood."

But by the 1850s, most Election Day celebrations had stopped because of prohibitions against black slaves and freedmen from gathering in groups of more than three. Some laws were so stringent that no more than 12 slaves could attend a funeral. Such an era is hard to imagine as the country prepares to celebrate the inauguration of its first African American president, and the exhibit is a powerful reminder of what was.

In the District, the black code prohibited free blacks "or mulatto persons from having a dance, ball or assembly, at his, her or their house, without first having obtained a license or permit." They were not allowed to "go at large through the City of Washington" after 10 p.m. without "a pass from some justice of the peace or respectable citizen." Even then, some found a way.

The exhibit takes you on a tour through the calendar year, beginning with New Year's, a day many believed decided their fate for the rest of the year. Black-eyed peas would bring good luck, a pot of greens would bring wealth, a woman coming first to your door was bad luck. But the first day of the year was also known as Heartbreak Day — because New Year's was the day when slaves "who had been sold or hired out by their masters were sent off to neighboring plantations or to unknown destinations and often never seen again."

As if pushed by time, the exhibit moves swiftly to the end of the transatlantic slave trade into Jubilee, when on Jan. 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, declaring the abolition of slavery in Confederate states.

Firsthand accounts of the celebration capture the joy. The Rev. Henry McNeal Turner, pastor of Washington's Israel Bethel AME Church, tells this story recorded in 1913: "Seeing such a multitude of people in and around my church, I hurriedly went up to the office of the first paper in which the Proclamation of freedom could be printed, known as the 'Evening Star.'"

Turner tells of squeezing himself through the crowd waiting for a paper. He grabbed a paper. "And off I went for life and death. Down Pennsylvania I ran as for my life." When people saw him coming, they shouted and cheered. They lifted him to a platform, and he started to read — but he was winded, and someone else had to take over. "Men squealed, women fainted, dogs barked, white and colored people shook hands, songs were sung, and by this time cannons began to fire at the navy yard and follow in the wake of the roar that had for some time been going on at the White House. . . .

"It was indeed a time of times, and half time, nothing like it will ever be seen again in this life." The best-known Emancipation cel-



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A natty boy and girl at the 1898 White House Easter Egg Roll, one of few public events blacks were allowed to attend.

ebration is Juneteenth — named for June 19, 1865, the day Union troops brought news of the Confederacy's defeat and abolition to Galveston, Tex.

A photo shows a Juneteenth committee in East Woods Park in Austin on June 18, 1900. Two women in long dresses, tall, standing in front of four men in suits and top hats. They are not smiling, as was the custom with photographs taken then. And they are well dressed. One wonders who they were and how far removed from slavery they were, standing there on the side of a road, carriages in the background. Hands folded. Were they the hands of former slaves? Where were they going?

As the exhibit moves into spring, it captures Easter celebrations of rebirth and regeneration. A photo shows a black boy in his Sunday best and cap, holding the hand of a little white girl in a bonnet. Women wear long black dresses. The White House portico looms in the background. The annual Easter egg hunt on the White House lawn was one of the few public events that blacks were allowed to attend.

We move through graduations and Easter Rock and Decoration Day, which has become Memorial Day. We move into summer

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with Negro Leagues baseball, all-black resort towns and road trips with shoe boxes packed with cold fried chicken and maps telling a driver where to stop in the South because stopping in the wrong place could be fatal.

We push a button and hear children's ring games, hands clapping: "Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack / All dressed in black, black, black / Silver and gold buttons, buttons, buttons / Up and down her back, back, back /

She asked her mother, mother, mother / For 15 cents, cents, cents / To see the elephant, elephant, elephant / Jump over the fence, fence, fence."

We come full circle back to Watch Night, commemorating Jan. 1, 1863, when slaves waited for the Emancipation Proclamation to take effect. Even in the silence of a black-and-white photo, you can feel the sway of gospel music, the eyes closed, heads tossed back, hands clapping, feet moving. The thickness of many voices rising in emotion. The church mothers in their cat-eyed glasses praying away the bad times. Their hands stretched out like wings. The chorus of saints in the upper room, shouting: "Sing it, sister!"

An escaped Maryland slave, Mary Diner, described the end of the first Watch Night: "When the city bells rang in the New Year — the year of their freedom, men and women jumped to their feet, yelled for joy, hugged and kissed each other and cried for joy. Many could not stand the excitement and fell into trances all over the house while the crowd yelled, 'Praise God,' and kept yelling, 'Freed at last.'"

And black people were jubilant, for they had reason to celebrate.



ABOVE: COURTESY OF JUDITH BOATWRIGHT; BELOW: BY MICHAEL BARNES — ANACOSTIA COMMUNITY MUSEUM

Regalia in "Jubilee" includes the intricately crocheted wedding dress created for and worn by Judith Boatwright of Charleston, S.C., and a Mardi Gras Indian suit.

