

The Style Invitational »

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



Week 801: Ask Backwards

BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

- Because he is an idiot
- Remote control rabbits
- Orange but not purple
- Why you should never say "bless you"
- The best Washington Monument topper
- A wasabi-and-jelly sandwich

- Oops, that was a typo
- The Post's upcoming new feature
- Ferret booties
- They forgot this Cabinet post
- Aretha Franklin's swimsuit
- Either Topeka or Yemen

You are on "Jeopardy!" (Well, you are on Invitational Jeopardy.) Here are the answers, many of them supplied to us stream-of-consciousness-style within the space of 60 seconds by a feverish man we found rambling incoherently near Eastern Market. You supply one or more of the questions.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets this toy harmonica with gross plastic drippy-looking lips attached to it, donated by Jennifer Jones of Baltimore and modeled with distressing eagerness by 21-time Loser Marleen May of Rockville (Empress at a recent monthly Loser brunch: "Does anyone here want to look ridiculous and disgusting in a photo to be published in The Washington Post?" Marleen: "Oh, me, me!"). See www.gopherdool.com if you are interested in dining with genuine Losers (don't wear your nicer sleeves).

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, Feb. 2. Put "Week 801" 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 Feb. 21. 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 Kevin Dopart.

REPORT FROM WEEK 797

in which we asked you to supply a New Year's resolution for any well-known personage:

4 **Michael Jackson: Keep nose to the grindstone.** (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

3 **Norm Coleman: Make 226 new friends.** (Judith Cottrill, New York)

2 **the winner of the flamingo wine bottle caddy: George W. Bush: Learn an English language.** (Cy Gardner, Arlington)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER
John Wilkes Booth: Turn over in grave.
(Christopher Lamora, Arlington)

UNDER ACHIEVERS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Michael Moore: Stop being so gentle and make a film that really sticks it to the president . . . oh, wait, damn. (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

Oprah Winfrey: Chew each turkey 32 times before devouring. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Joe Biden: Buy better-tasting footwear. (Brian Fox, Charlottesville)

Miley Cyrus: Give Dad a raise. (Cy Gardner)

The SEC: Start keeping an eye on that Madoff guy. (Judith Cottrill)

O.J. Simpson: Find the real robbers. (Russell Beland; Jon Graft, Centreville)

Phyllis Diller: Stay on the "Not Dead" celebrity list. (Jeff Brechlin)

Roland Burris: Wear that asterisk with pride. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Regis Philbin: Stop being Regis Philbin. (Roger Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

The Detroit Lions: Hire a few pros to teach courses, get accredited as a university, and join the Big Ten. Purdue may be beatable. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Hillary Clinton: Train myself to eliminate all traces of sarcasm when I call my new boss "Sir." (Russell Beland)

Joe Biden: Renovate basement dungeon in the new house. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Charles Philip Arthur George, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Baron Renfrew, Lord of the Isles and Grand Steward of Scotland: Talk to Mummy about my future. (Barnaby Roberts, Reedville, Va., a First Offender)

Barack Obama: Get Hillary confirmed,

then fire her. (Russell Beland)

Mitt Romney: Change my hair every 3,000 miles. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

Brett Favre: Consider retirement.

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Plaxico Burress: Stop messing with the safety. (Drew Bennett, sent from Amarillo, Tex.)

Osama bin Laden: Take time out to stop and smell the evil. (Lawrence McGuire)

Sarah Palin: Move to Mongolia so I can see China from my house. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Pete Seeger: Finally go out and just get myself a hammer. (Russell Beland)

Tina Fey: Start working on that Mike Huckabee impersonation. (Jeff Brechlin)

Next Week: Dead Letters, or Bard Stiff



Loser Marleen May: Only too eager to model the prize toy harmonica. (We'll wash it off for you if you win.)

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A 'Public' Life, Long Before Facebook

SUNDANCE, From Page C1

creeps me out."

The whole thing likely crept out many attendees at Sundance, which is distinctly less populated this year and has showcased far fewer buzzed-about movies. Most of the films at Sundance seem to be decent; a few are brilliant (the fiction film "Push: Based on a Novel by Sapphire," the documentary "Burma VJ"), and some will never be seen again.

On one hand, Sundance, which wraps up Sunday, is supposed to chart the future of indie film (at least for the next year). On the other, virtually every film in Oscar contention this year is a period piece. So it's oddly appropriate that "We Live in Public" makes the '90s look like ancient history, while waxing allegorical about our contentious online present and uncertain future.

It took Timoner, who lived in the bunker, 10 years to make "We Live in Public." It had taken her seven overlapping years to make the rock doc "Dig!" about the Dandy Warhols and the Brian Jonestown Massacre, which won the 2004 Sundance documentary competition. While long-term projects seem to intrigue the award-winning director, she said it's not really about that. "My interest is in groups, and fitting in, and what we sacrifice to join groups," she said. "In the case of the Internet, it's incredible because you're alone but you're not. We seek to be online, and we seek to be in social networks, and we want to share the personal and private details of our life for that feeling of connection, or attention, for what we think is no cost. But there may be a cost."

Arriving at that conclusion is what took so long.

"It took me eight years to figure out what the film was all about," she said. "My friends started posting their lives online, and I was like, 'What?' I'd get an update that someone was driving down the freeway, and I'd say, 'A: Why does that person think I care?' And, 'B: People do care — look at all the responses he's getting!'"

Thus Timoner had her "eureka" moment.

"It took me a beat to realize that what Josh Harris created in 1999 was a physical metaphor for where the Internet would take us," she said. "It was his way of saying, 'No matter what I put together, no matter how fascistic it



"We Live in Public" documents Josh Harris's extreme online experiment.

may appear; whether you have to wear uniforms or you have to be interrogated, or the fact that you can't leave — people won't care about that. They won't bother with the details. He knew they would pour through the doors for the promise of 110 surveillance cameras and being part of what, right then, was the place to be."

The name of the bunker experiment was Quiet and it was perhaps the logical step for a guy who was addicted to television and had a slightly nightmarish childhood (Timoner opens her film with a tape Harris made, in which he says goodbye, long-distance, to his terminally ill mother). He also had enough money to indulge his creative whims. "I'm probably the first great artist of the 21st century," Harris said during a sit-down in which he described the next few pieces in the puzzle that is Josh Harris. "I know what I'm doing."

But how could he know, back in 1999, that what he was doing would so accurately foreshadow Facebook and other networking sites, or that so much of modern life would be lived virtually, nakedly and without regard for personal privacy?

"There wasn't even broadband then," Timoner said. "But the guy was raised by technology. TV was an obsession." As the film shows, Harris was inclined to dress up as in a persona he called "Luvvy" (based on a "Gilligan's Island" character), who wore clown paint and scared away investors.

Timoner said. "I found it fascinating and recorded it all and stuck with him even when he overloaded and had to get off the grid and leave New York. But part of my contract in making this film was that I would get to follow him and film him wherever he wound up."

Where he wound up is all in the film, which Harris originally financed but which Timoner says the former millionaire is now borrowing against. "It was supposed to be this wild art movie about this thing that happened in downtown New York that only some people knew about, and how did it exist for 30 days in the middle of New York?" she said. "But thank God we didn't finish it at that point, because we needed society to catch up to it."

And what, after 10 years of Josh Harris, did Timoner discover?

"I think here's an undeniable need we have from the moment we're born to be loved and not be alone and to feel connected in some way," she said. "And if you wake up and are feeling down and go on Facebook and someone's poked you with a birthday cake or a hatching egg, it makes you feel better. It makes you think that someone cares. It's a feeling of connection."

Timoner said there's a lyric by songwriter Daniel Johnston that she had wanted to fit in the film somewhere, but couldn't quite find a place for it.

"It's something like, 'If you take my picture, maybe I'll feel that my life mattered,'" she said. "That's a large part of it: 'I matter. I exist. I'm online. I exist. I have friends. I have 500 friends!' Josh called it. He called it because it's important to him."