

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 805: Brand Ecchs

- 1. A bad name for a new beauty product.
- 2. A bad name for a new Web site.
- 3. A bad name for a new candy bar.
- 4. A bad name for a new college.
- 5. A bad name for a new fast-food restaurant.

**T**his week: Give us an original name in any of the above categories (not an actual badly named product). It's easy to write entries for a contest like this — writing good entries is another story — and when we did the same contest 11 years ago with different categories, we got a reported 40,000 entries. That's too many for one Empress to judge. So: **No more than 10 entries per category.** If you send more, we'll just stop reading after the 10th.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a vintage roll of toilet paper with pictures of Jimmy Carter on it, courtesy of the otherwise courteous and dignified Loser Beverley Sharp.

**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" (Fr 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, March 2. Put "Week 805" 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 March 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. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Kevin Dopart; the revised title for next week's results is by Beverley Sharp. We were reminded of the 1998 version of this contest (Week 263) by Russell Beland, who never forgets anything related to The Style Invitational.

**REPORT FROM WEEK 801**  
*in which we asked you to supply questions, "Jeopardy"-style, for any of 12 pretty much random phrases: As you'll see, the contest was announced the weekend after the inauguration.*

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE? HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Because he is an idiot:** According to his psychiatrist, why does Rod Blagojevich display such erratic behavior? (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

**Why does a male think he can outsmart a female?** (M. Lilly Welsh, Oakton)

**Orange, but not purple:** What was Stanley Kubrick's response when asked why he wouldn't adapt an Alice Walker novel? (Ed Gordon, Georgetown, Tex.)

**How is William III of England different from Fox's Bill O'Reilly?** (Russ Taylor)

**What's a good color for an orange?** (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, N.Y.)

**A wasabi-and-jelly sandwich:** What's better than a mercury-and-salmonella sandwich? (Kevin Dopart)

**What exactly was it that Bush 41 barfed at the Japanese state dinner?** (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

**Is there anything that sells less well at Benihana than its butterscotch sashimi?** (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

**What is the first challenge on the popular Japanese game show "Super Sexy Fire Tonsils Hernia Hour"?** (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

**What is the traditional home remedy for a low-blood-sugar diabetic with sinusitis?** (Andrea Kelly, Brookerville)

**Oy. So I invite this shiksa to seder with the mishpocha, and what meshugeh thing does she bring instead of horseradish and charoset?** (Marc Leibert, Jersey City)

**4 A. Ferret booties. Q.** According to a recent poll, what are most male ferrets interested in, way ahead of "good ferret personality" and "good ferret sense of humor"? (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

**3 A. The best Washington Monument topper. Q.** What is a scaled-down version of Aretha Franklin's inauguration hat bow? (Kevin Mellema, Falls Church; Mike Anderson, Billings, Mont.)

**2 the winner of the gross-out toy harmonica: A. Oops, that was a typo. Q.** What phrase has no teen ever texted? (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

**A. They forgot this Cabinet post. Q.** Why did President Obama and his advisers get a good talking-to from Marian Robinson, the First Mother-in-Law? (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**Aside from bailout money, what is another definition of TARP?** (Sanford D. Horn, Alexandria)

**What has more yardage than the Redskins' offense?** (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

**What required more of a stretch than "Mission accomplished"?** (Peter Ostrander, Rockville)

**What does Kirstie Alley hope to be able to fit into by summer?** (Lee Dobbins, Arlington)

**Either Topeka or Yemen:** When Ben turned the wheel on "Lost" and the island "moved," where did it go? (Chad Pridgen, Marshall, Va.)

**If the Gitmo detainees click their sandals together three times upon their release, where will they end up?** (Howard Walderman)

**Where did you park when you went to the inauguration?** (Don Kirkpatrick, Waynesboro, Pa.)

**Who will get senators of their own before D.C. does?** (Ira Allen)

**After informing President-elect Obama that Blair House was not available, what other options did Bush suggest for pre-inaugural housing?** (Irving Shapiro, Rockville)

**Where do local leaders require that science be taught from holy books?** (Kevin Dopart)

**Where would our president be now if his name were Barack Obama Hussein?** (Bridget Goodman, Philadelphia, a First Offender)

**The best Washington Monument topper:** What is bald eagle poop? (Phyllis Reinhard)

**What is the Eiffel Tower?** (Beverley Sharp, Washington)

**What is a flashing neon "Going Out of Business" sign?** (Lawrence McGuire)

**Oops, that was a typo:** What words do you not want to hear while getting a blood transfusion? (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.; Barry Koch)

**How did Fox News explain a news crawl saying "Islamofascist arrives at White House to begin reign of terror"?** (Marc Naimark, Paris)

**Wow, does that headline say, "Wizards Win Two in a Row"?** (Cy Gardner)

**The Post's upcoming new feature:** What is the Tic-Tac-Toe Puzzle? (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

**What is Tim Geithner's Tax Tips?** (David Garratt, Glenn Dale)

**What is Obituary Jumble?** (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

**What is Today's Schadenfreude?** (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

**Ferret booties:** Why did the sequel to "Alvin and the Chipmunks" get a PG-13 rating? (Andrea Kelly)

**What do they make with Joe Biden's old hair plugs?** (JL Strickland, Valley, Ala., a First Offender)

**With what do you secure a ferret boo?** (Bruce W. Alter, vacationing in Port St. Lucie, Fla.)

**Next Week: DreckTV, or DespiCable**

Seeing 'Milk' as the Best Picture For Aiding the Gay-Rights Cause

MILK, From Page C1

— something a "Milk" Oscar or two could draw attention to.

In the gay universe at least, "Milk" is a blockbuster, and everyone involved with it — from its producers and director to its stars, studio head and publicists — is just bursting with pride on Oscar eve over the movie's eight nominations, including Best Picture.

Bets favor Sean Penn to win Best Actor for the title role, and many in the gay community hope the outspoken actor and others will eloquently stick it to Prop 8 all night long, through every microphone they encounter.

A group called WhiteKnot is trying to get as many celebrities as possible to pin little white bows on lapels for tomorrow night's ceremony, in support of gay marriage. (Last year it was orange ribbons and bracelets — a Guantanamo protest — because there is always a new way for Hollywood to tweak the culture war.)

"It's about equality," says WhiteKnot organizer Frank Voci, who has spent the week making sure that anyone going to the Oscars "at least has access to [a white knot] so they can make the decision to wear it." He really hopes Sean Penn will do one. "He or [director] Gus Van Sant or the producers could really connect the dots so simply to what we're fighting for."

Since its release three months ago, "Milk" has earned nearly \$27 million at the box office, which is terrible money for a movie about a serial killer or a pratfall-prone mall cop but impressive for an arty hagiography of an outspoken civil-rights proponent.

"Milk's" biggest week came before Christmas, and even then it did not crack the Top 10 box office list; the Oscar nominations failed to provide much "bounce" in ticket sales, for "Milk" or most of the other nominees. At its greatest distribution, "Milk" played in almost 900 theaters — barely one-third of what's considered wide release.

"This was not a movie designed to explain gay people to straight people but a movie about a specific piece of gay history, created by a gay director, a gay writer and two gay producers. Finally," says Mark Harris, an Entertainment Weekly columnist and the author of "Pictures at a Revolution: Five Movies and the Birth of the New Hollywood."

It's a mistake, Harris says, to expect more from "Milk" than it could give.

"I don't think movies change votes or write bills or get legislation passed," he says. "But for me, 'Milk' wasn't dutiful; it was maybe the first gay movie I've ever seen that showed gay men arguing with each other, smartly and realistically, about



BY REED SAXON — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Robin Tyler, left, with her partner, Diane Olson. Tyler views "Milk" as a galvanizing force in the fight over Proposition 8.

policy and tactics and strategy. . . . So it doesn't surprise me at all that the movie has only grossed, what, 26, 27 million [dollars]. . . . It's a prestige gay political period movie that has made almost twice as much as this season's prestige straight political movie, 'Frost/Nixon.' Harvey Milk getting twice as many votes as Richard Nixon? I call that progress."

Then there's the other world, the multiplex world, the America outside Los Angeles and San Francisco, starting in surrounding California exurbs and counties that voted to approve Proposition 8. Gay activists acknowledge that Prop 8 won partly because of voters who are opposed to homosexuality, but some say it also won because not enough people feel connected to, or take an interest in, the gay rights debate.

"I still have straight friends who haven't seen 'Milk,'" says Matt Palazzolo, 24, who co-founded the Equal Roots Coalition, a West Hollywood grass-roots group seeking to re-energize the gay rights movement in the wake of Prop 8. "Some of my closest friends wouldn't get that for them to go see 'Milk' means a lot to me. They say, 'I just don't want to see it,' or 'Maybe if I can download it for free — I just don't want to pay 12 bucks,' or something." It's not that they're unfriendly to Palazzolo's cause; "they're just not interested, I guess." Meanwhile, he says: "For

me, it's the perfect movie for our time. . . . It's in the air, you can see it, you can smell it, you can sense it. It couldn't be more significant."

That feeling recalls Oscar night in 2006, when the good money was on "Brokeback Mountain" to win Best Picture (and the box office take was three times what "Milk" has made; it lost to "Crash," but Ang Lee won the directing prize). For as many people who did go see "Brokeback" in theaters, there remained a large segment of people who have nothing against gays but were unwilling to watch the love story of two male ranch hands. Culturally, "Brokeback" became a punch line as much as a breakthrough. As hard as it was to get "Milk" made, it's nearly impossible to draw crowds. It looks serious, and long, and . . . gay.

"Welcome to my world," says James Schamus, who produced "Brokeback Mountain" and is head of Focus Features (which released "Milk"). "Would I like for the box office to be stronger for 'Milk'? Of course I would. We can always want more for a movie. Do I think we made a great step forward? Absolutely. It's a modest success, and maybe it's a harbinger of more to come."

Schamus (who is straight and married, if it matters) still collects anecdotal evidence that "Milk" has made a difference in smaller cities and faraway states. And he has his own personal example of what he deems progress: "Milk" might not have been a blockbuster hit in flyover territory, but his 12-year-old daughter has watched it six times, and she's pretty picky. All her friends watched it, too.

"Her whole class," Schamus says. "They were honestly fascinated. I think it was transformative for them. It's a good message — about standing up for your rights."

Wait, the students all came over to the house to see "Milk," or went to the theater, or . . . ? "No, the whole class," Schamus says. "We showed it at [the] school."

There's nothing like Oscar night to remind you that L.A. really is sometimes a different world. "My name is Harvey Milk and I want to recruit you," is a popular line that Penn delivers in the film, seen in all the trailers that tried to get America to buy a ticket and join the story and cause of Harvey. Consider Hollywood long since recruited, white knots and all.

**1 ON WASHINGTONPOST.COM** Find full coverage of the road to the Oscars, and join [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com)'s Liz Kelly and Jen Chaney at 6 p.m. Sunday for a live discussion during the red carpet and ceremony, at [washingtonpost.com/oscars](http://washingtonpost.com/oscars).



BY STAN BAROUM

Jeffries Thaiss is convincing as a painter in drag, with Peggy Yates, left, and Julie-Ann Elliott.

THEATER

Here Today, Her Tomorrow In Twain's 'Is He Dead?'

By NELSON PRESSLEY  
Special to The Washington Post

Drag can be a sophisticated undertaking in nightclubs and theaters these days, but in Mark Twain's time, it was pretty straightforward. Man in dress: funny. Especially if man doesn't want to be wearing one.

That's the engine of "Is He Dead?," the recently discovered Twain play adapted for the stage by David Ives. Picture Huck Finn by way of "Some Like It Hot," and you'll get a glimmer of the satire and farce colliding with sporadic hilarity now at the Olney Theatre Center.

The satire comes in the form of Twain's take on the art biz. Twain tossed Jean Francois Millet — that's right, the 19th-century French painter — into the thick of his plot, casting him as an artist whose customers would buy his paintings if only he were deceased.

"It's a question of value, you know," explains an English ninny, sniffing at the work in Millet's attic studio (high-ceilinged and cluttered with paintings in Jon Savage's set design).

Enter the farce. Millet's colleagues — a Yank, a German and an Irishman (jovially played by Eric Messner, Carlos Bustamante and David Frankenberger Jr.) — hatch a scheme to fake Millet's death. The real Millet, meanwhile, will masquerade as his made-up twin sister, allowing him to enjoy his sudden sales burst while cavorting in a pink dress.

So Twain has his day as Feydeau, though even with the help of the clever Ives — who recently adapted Feydeau's 19th-century farce "A Flea in Her Ear" — the Olney production doesn't always find the skip in the old play's step. A lot of it boils down to the dress: Jeffries Thaiss is peculiarly com-

fortable as the painter stuffed into the guise of a widow. Rather than playing for laughs, he almost convinces you that the crazy get-up makes sense.

Not that Thaiss doesn't flutter with joy at times, or allow the widow to forget herself as she swaggers through a room chomping on a cigar. But he still seems to be adjusting to the fit of the hoops of the skirt and the flounce of the curls, gauging how much license he can take.

Tara Giordano, on the other hand, has mastered her drag turn as a woman who suspects that her man — Millet's American friend — has fallen for the brawny widow. Sporting a mustache and pants, Giordano slinks in sideways and glances out of the corner of her eyes before speaking confidently in a French accent cribbed from Peter Sellers. She's straight out of a Blake Edwards movie, and the funniest thing in the show.

Director Halo Wines actually has a fairly solid cast on her hands, including Richard Pilcher as a mustache-twirling villain and Nick DePinto clowning sharply in multiple roles (the English ninny among them). The second-act set is a teal drawing room with five doors, and Wines keeps the actors scooting in and out with the clockwork precision that farce demands. It's all quite conventional — a few crossed romances help keep things zipping along — but for Twain buffs, perhaps novel enough.

**Is He Dead?**, by Mark Twain. Adapted by David Ives. Directed by Halo Wines. Lighting design, Charlie Morrison; costumes, Kathleen Geldard; sound design, Jarrett C. Pisani. With Elizabeth Jernigan, John Dow, Julie-Ann Elliott and Peggy Yates. About 2 hours and 20 minutes. Through March 8 at the Olney Theatre Center, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd., Olney. Call 301-924-3400 or visit [www.olneytheatre.org](http://www.olneytheatre.org)