

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 978

In which we asked for news-themed “framed couplets,” tiny verses with lots of rules: Each of the two or four lines had to have exactly nine syllables in the iambic (ba-DAH) meter, except that they had to start and finish with accented syllables — like all the ones in today’s results. And not only did each pair of lines have to rhyme, but the first syllables of each pair had to rhyme, too. And of course, the verses had to be humorous, even if darkly so.



GOP'ers wail about Barack: "He puts forth a socialistic crock!"
Say the Dems, "Well, Mitt and Ann are snobs."
Hey — do you guys have a plan for jobs?
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

2 Winner of the children's book "Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder: Bubble in the Bathtub":

Obomneycare Candidate Obama can relax. "Mandate," Roberts said, "just means a tax."
"Why!" cried Romney, "What you say's not so! I invented it, so I should know."
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

3 Morsi, Egypt's president, should fear: Fortune kicked Mubarak in Tahrir.
(Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)

4 Lonesome George dies Bigger tortoise seldom will you see; Rigor mortis claimed a victory. Ran his race; his future holds no risk: An Eternal Banquet, not a bisque.
(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Cuts my power off; ah, that's my luck. Nuts! Derecho's Spanish for "You suck!" *(Tom Cary, Hollywood, Md., who last inked in 2005 — what's with the vacations here?)*

Mendelson to lead D.C. Council: D.C. Council chairs have played the clown: We could laugh at Downtown Kwame Brown. What a snooze we may have now with Phil, But at least his hand's not in the till. *(Nan Reiner)*

Yay, JetBlue, where prices are insane! (Maybe, too, the guy who flies your plane.) *(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)*

Seventeen magazine to show teen girls "as they really are": Verbal outbursts, zits and cramps and all? Circulation's headed for a fall. *(Beverly Sharp)*

Judge declares Zimmerman a flight risk: "Stand your ground" we heard would be his plea. Planned instead were really ways to flee. *(Mary E. Moore, Gladwyne, Pa.)*

After 115 years together, mated Galapagos tortoises have a fight: She attacked! What caused this dreadful rage? He remarked, "You know, you look your age." *(Beverly Sharp)*

Texas GOP opposes "critical thinking" education: Texas says that thinkin' isn't right: Wrecks the need to sit 'n' be polite. *(Amanda Yanovitch, Midlothian, Va.)*

"Doomsday" computer virus predictions: They were wrong; they missed the boat — and how! Say! I'll send my entries in right *(Beverly Sharp)*

More framed couplets in the online version of this column at bit.ly/inv981a.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 981: Feeling testy

Entrance exam for a security guard: Q. An alarm starts blaring loudly while you are at your station. What do you do? A: Hit the snooze button. You should have a few more minutes until the next shift comes in.

This week's contest, suggested by Mike Gips: **Write a question that "ought to" be on a qualifying test for a particular job.** You may supply a straight question with a humorous answer, as in Mike's example above, or you could put the whole joke in the question itself, such as with a funny series of multiple-choice answers. Whatever's funniest.



SHELL ON WHEELS: This week's second prize.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives an extraordinarily tacky little sculpture, entirely made of seashells, of a cat (?) driving a motorcycle. Donor Nan Reiner has made it even more, um, compelling by painting "Loser" on the "license plate" and the red A of what used to be the Style Invitational print logo, embellished with flames. This is the best tacky shell sculpture we have offered as a prize since the famed "Shells Playing Poker" of 2009.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 6; results published Aug. 26 (online Aug. 24). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 981" in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviterules. The subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Kevin Dopart. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

STYLE CONVERSATIONAL Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join us at washingtonpost.com/stylconversational.

Went down in frames: Honorable mentions

Monster named Sandusky in the news; Yon Ohio city has the blues. Many say to change the name they've got; Anyone for "Stalin" or "Pol Pot"? *(Nan Reiner)*

CNN! When news breaks, we are first . . . Even if we get our facts reversed. Every day we ferret out the scoops . . . Never mind if later we say "Oops!" *(Robert Schechter)*

"Wine, in fair amounts, may help your heart." Fine! I've had a 60-year head start. *(Mae Scanlan, Washington, 1931 —)*

Nik Wallenda crossed Niagara Falls; Tricky trek — the gentleman had guts. *(Mae Scanlan)*

"Magic Mike" my good wife recommends; Bah! I don't see why — just guys' rear ends. *(David Moore, Philadelphia, who last got Invite ink in 2003)*

Crash! Derecho fells another tree, Smashes my new car with its debris,

ISO: Funny folks. Money is involved.



Are you an armchair humor writer, a closet Dave Barry or James Thurber? Have you thought that, if you ever got around to writing, your wit could be your Plan B? Now's your chance.

Introducing: **The WP Magazine Humor Contest.** Win \$1,000! Or less.

Readers can submit original, unpublished material to any or all of three categories:

A true memoir: Entrants must write 1,000 words or fewer; one entry per person. Prize: \$1,000.

A 140-character Twitter joke: Submit by tweeting using the hashtag #wphumor. Prize: \$140.

A funny photo, real, not staged: One entry per person. Prize: \$300.

Celebrity judges include standup comedians Lewis Black and Erin Jackson, authors Emily Yoffe and Steve Friedman, and Twitter humorists Lisa Cohen and Harris Wittels.

Find out how to enter at wapo.st/wphumorcontest. Entries must be received by 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, Aug. 10, so don't delay!



MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

FUNNY PHOTO: The Wigwam Hotel is in Holbrook, Ariz.