

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 979

in which we asked simply for ways to tick people off. Given that we asked this in the wake of the Washington area power outages, many people equated the verb "PO" with the noun "P—o." More results online at bit.ly/invite982.

THE
WINNER
OF THE
INKIN'
MEMORIAL

Whenever a colleague swears, tell him, "Every time you say something like that, a fresh tear trickles down the cheek of Our Savior."

(John Shea, Philadelphia)

2 Winner of the Annoying Orange key chain and Lil' Stinker Bubbles:

When the woman in your life tells you that "I need your support," cup her breasts. (Dion Black, Washington)

3 In the supermarket, when a parent is refusing the request of a whining toddler, rush toward the product and load up your cart, exclaiming, "I LOVE these things! They're the BEST! I'm going to have as MANY as I WANT!" (Amanda Yanovitch, Midlothian, Va.)

4 Ask a woman in a bar, "Hi, babe, can I buy you a light beer?" (David Genser, Poway, Calif.)

McCooley, Rehoboth Beach, Del.)

When someone says, "Glad to meet you," reply, "Why?" (Travis McKinney, San Antonio)

Post a comment under someone's Facebook photo of cute kittens: "Cats have their place, and that place is under water." (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

In conversations, let your gaze drift gradually to the left until you're looking at a space about a foot from the other person's head. Suddenly say "Ding!" and shift your attention back to the face. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

At a watch-the-game party, stand up and announce that you are NOT ready for some football, nor are you ready to rock. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Make this your answering machine message: "Hello? [pause] Hello, is anyone there? [pause] Could you speak louder? [pause] If anyone is there, hang up and call again." (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

When you're about to pass gas, first strike the John Travolta disco pose from "Saturday Night Fever." (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Carry a box of apostrophes with you, so you can insert them around town in correctly punctuated signs. (Bruce Niedt, Cherry Hill, N.J.)

Breathe. — B. Obama, Washington (Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge)

And last: Tick off all the perennially unsuccessful Style Invitational contestants by getting ink on your first try. (Doug Norwood, Washington, a First Offender)

Still running — deadline Monday night — is the Week 981 contest for funny test questions for particular jobs. See wapo.st/StyleInv.

daily commute. (Kathy Atkins, Fredericksburg; Anna Day, Rockville, both First Offenders)

When you call tech support and the guy asks if you have a pen handy to write down the case number, ask what a penhandy is. (Gregory Koch, Storrs, Conn.)

Answer the phone by saying, "It is I." (Ann Martin, Bracknell, England)

When you're on jury duty, bring a daisy into the deliberation room and start to pull out each petal while saying "Guilty . . . not guilty . . ." (Mark Raffman, Reston, a First Offender)

Bring one of those huge foam "#1" fingers to the Metropolitan Opera. (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)

Taking a cue from tennis stars, scream-grunt while performing any task: Pushing the elevator button? "Huh-aaaiee!" Turning the doorknob? "Huh-aaaiee!" Playing your Scrabble tiles? "Huh-aaaiee!" (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.; John

Ticking off: The seconds honorable mentions

Fill in a half-dozen incorrect answers in the crossword of the in-flight magazine, then leave it in the seat-back pocket for the next passenger. (Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)

When reading responsively during a religious service, loudly try out various speech defects. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

When arriving at your Red Line station, jump up from your seat, yell, "This is a Green Line train?!" and bolt out the door. As the train departs, watch the confused tourists hurriedly consult their pocket maps. (Richard Wong, Derwood)

Hashtag all sentences: in e-mails, documents and conversation. #hackneyedjoke #nomagnetforyou (Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.; Daria Zahalsky, Vienna, Va., a First Offender)

Use Metrorail's "doors closing" chimes as your ring tone for your



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

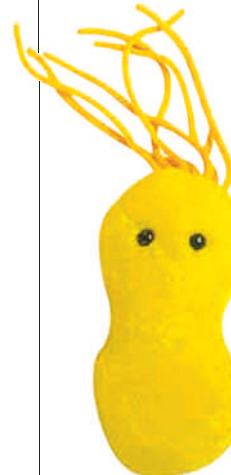
Week 982: The parody line

**Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
A chill runs up my spine:
My pal's first name's escaped my thought,
But he remembers mine.**

Here's a different take on our annual-or-so song parody contests, this one suggested by Matt Monitto, an Elon University student and one of the Invite's most intrepid parodists: **Set your own, humorous words to the tune of a well-known song — except that you must preserve one of the original lines, as in Matt's example above.** Your song shouldn't be more than one verse and one chorus; the original line may be in either of them (indicate the original line plus the name of the song it's from).

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives an adorable plush *Helicobacter pylori* ulcer bacterium, complete with flagella hanging out of its mouth (it also has cute, rather unbacterial eyes and fur). About 4.2 zillion times life size. Donated by life-size Loser Dave Prevar.

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. 13; results published Sept. 2 (online Aug. 31). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 982" 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 Beverley Sharp. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.



CUTE AS A BUG: The 2nd-prize toy ulcer bacterium.

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

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:

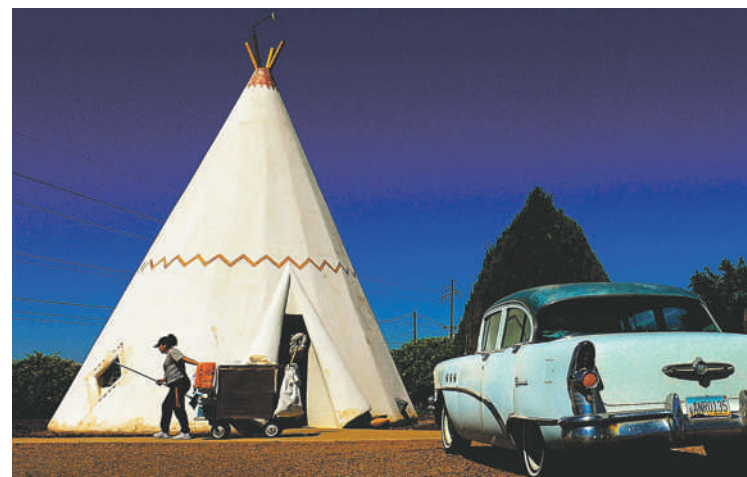
A true memoir: Entrants must write 1,000 words or fewer; one entry per person. Prize: \$1,000.

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.