

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 992

In which we asked — in the wake of Mitt Romney's debate vow that his administration wouldn't fund PBS — how the network, its shows and its characters would adapt to the commercial TV world. This rushed-into-print contest stepped awfully close to Week 959 (moving shows from one network to another), and really, there's not much on PBS that's not comparable to *something* on cable or the broadcast networks. But the Losers soldiered valiantly on; here are the successes. And we'll fill out the page with some Invite classics from some better-thought-out contests on screen themes.

THE
WINNER
OF THE
INKIN'
MEMORIAL

"The Civil War" will be remade with two different endings, depending on the part of the country you live in. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

2 Winner of the seat cushion lined with genuine shredded U.S. currency: The Teletubbies would be used as punching bags on pay-per-view channels when the boxers warm up before a fight. People would pony up an extra \$9.99 just to see this. (Gregory Koch, Storrs, Conn.)

3 "Sesame Street" would be produced by the Children's Television Sweatshop. (Alan Hochbaum, Marietta, Ga.)

4 "American Masters" celebrates the oeuvre of Thomas Kinkadee. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Downturn Abbey: honorable mentions

"Nature" would now be called "Damn, Nature, You Scary," hosted by Tracy Morgan. (Dave Ferry, Purvis, Miss.)

The production costs, but not the adventure, would be scaled back with "Where in Newark Is Carmen Sandiego?" (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

After a move to the Syfy channel, "Ask This Old House" would air after "Ghost Hunters" and specialize in seances. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

The world's favorite cartoon monkey and the Man With the Yellow Hat

finally hook up on the new Hustler TV series "Very Curious George." (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

After a move to BET, we'd have "Master P's Theatre." (Jason Russo, Annandale; Gina Smith, Rockville, a First Offender)

Bill Nye the Science Guy gets a contract with "Breaking Bad" and boosts the production and quality of the meth. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Pledge Drive: No more begging you for money! This MTV version chronicles rush week at various Big 10 universities, as freshmen debauch and demean themselves to get into a fraternity or sorority. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

What else is on? Classic reruns

Lessons learned from the movies (Week LXXXIX, 2001):

At all speeches, the microphone will squeak once, before allowing the speaker to continue with no further problem. (Alan Hochbaum; Timothy Gotwald, Chambersburg, Pa.)

When a man and a woman get very, very mad at each other, it usually turns quickly into passionate kissing. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

In the future, everyone will wear jumpsuits yet no one will look fat in them. (Kelli Midgley-Biggs, Columbia)

Eveboody vit akhsent spik Engleesh lik deez. (Gary Patishnock, Laurel)

Slightly altered TV show titles (Week 577, 2004):

"Antique Road Ho": A poignant drama about a broken-down hooker still working the street. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

"The Fraidy Bunch": A family is constantly on guard against pollen, war, strangers, people who are too nice, identity theft and big dogs. (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

"Eighth Is Enough": The Wizards pursue their perennial quest to finish just high enough in their conference to make the playoffs. (Roy Ashley)

"Bunsmoke": Watch the Olympic luge team in training! (Judith Cottrill, New York)

"Gnats Landing": The joys of summer picnicking. (Peter Metrinko, Plymouth, Minn.)

Still running — deadline Monday night — is Week 995, our Ask Backwards contest. See bit.ly/inv995.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST: WEEK 996

A Life-Time opportunity

Combine Gourmet and Cat Fancy magazines: How to prepare the finest meal Tabby will never eat.

Back in Week 985, we published five typically zany cartoons by the Nothing if Not Zany Bob Staake and asked the Losers to tell us which Invitational contest — an actual one or a new idea — it might be illustrating. One honorable mention went to Megaloser Kevin Dopart for his example for the cartoon above. So let's not let Kevin's idea go to waste: **This week: Combine two magazines or journals and describe the result, supply a marketing pitch, or suggest a story or two that it might publish.**

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a fabulous foam-rubber life-size black rat on a ceramic wheel, brought back from Mexico by Beverley Sharp and donated to the Invite. You pull the string and release, and then La Rata rolls leisurely across the floor. See a video of the Empress's cat being decidedly unimpressed by this fine specimen of rodentia at bit.ly/InviteRat.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, possibly the new model whose slogan will be determined in the Week 994 contest. First Offenders receive a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 19; results published Dec. 9 (online Dec. 6). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 996" 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 Brad Alexander. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

It doesn't do the Mexican rat dance, but it rolls on the floor.



BOOKS

Pet residents of White House focus of book

BY JAMIE STENGLE

DALLAS — President George H.W. Bush had a problem so important he sent a memo to White House staff asking them to take a pledge. His dog, Ranger, was packing on pounds.

"WE AGREE NOT TO FEED RANGER. WE WILL NOT GIVE HIM BISCUITS. WE WILL NOT GIVE HIM FOOD OF ANY KIND," the pledge read.

That memo, along with countless anecdotes and 200 pictures are featured in Dallas author Jennifer Boswell Pickens's new

book, "Pets at the White House."

The coffee-table book devotes a chapter to each administration's pets from Kennedy to Obama. And an introduction gives an overview of the animals that were part of first families prior to 1961, which Pickens notes includes the array of pets cared for by Calvin Coolidge and his family, including Rebecca the raccoon, who walked on a leash.

"They became such known pet lovers that if you no longer wanted your pet you could just ship it to the White House and

they were known to keep it," Pickens said.

Among the anecdotes:

Franklin D. Roosevelt's Scottish terrier Fala traveled with him, attended galas with world leaders and even contributed to the war effort by giving up toys for a scrap rubber collection campaign.

When the Kennedys were given a dog by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, the dog named Pushinka — Russian for "fluffy" — underwent tests at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to rule out everything from listen-



FLYING DOG: Presidential pet Bo climbs the stairs of Air Force One.

CLIFF OWEN / ASSOCIATED PRESS

ing devices to bombs.

There's a photo of a greeting card featuring the Clintons' first cat Socks, complete with a paw print "signature," a photo of Laura Bush holding Scottish terrier

Barney eyeing a chocolate replica of himself and a picture of a cookies being decorated depicting Bo, President Obama's Portuguese water dog.

— Associated Press