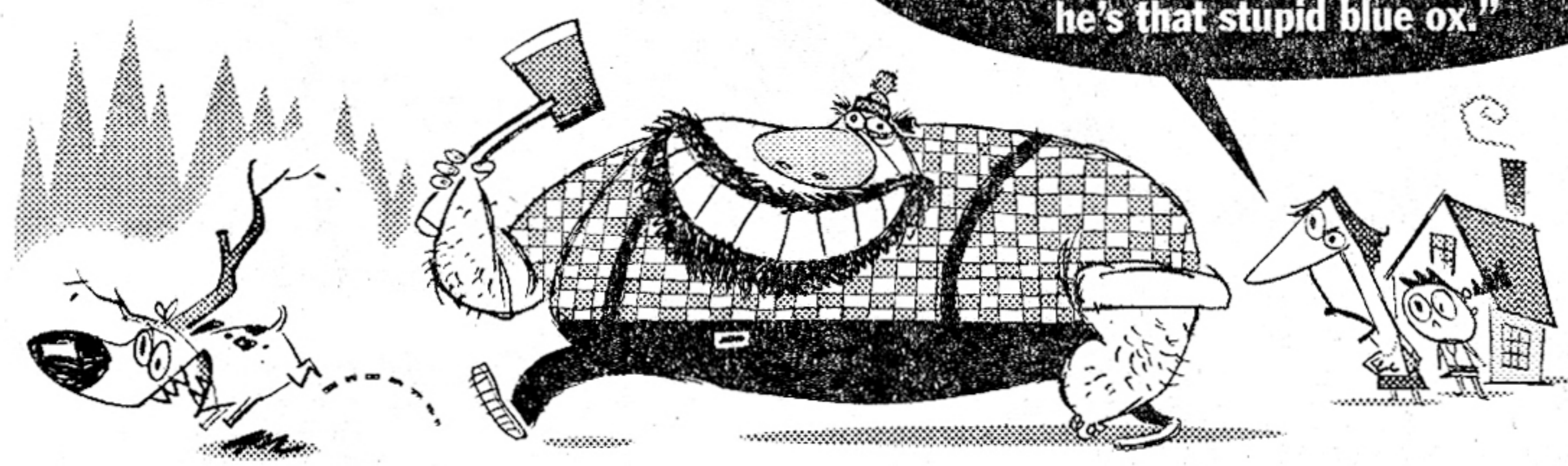


# The Style Invitational

## WEEK 187: RACE TO THE FINISH LINE

1. You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings.
2. On an April night in 1993 I sat in the cab of my pickup truck with a rifle in my lap, deciding whether to kill myself.
3. "The marvelous thing is that it is painless," he said. "That's how you know when it starts."
4. It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.
5. This was an extraordinary mission. No presidential aides had ever done what they were about to do...
6. He was a big fellow, looking seriously pale on the streets of Harlem in deep summer.
7. "Where's Papa going with that ax?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

"Your father," said mother, "thinks he's Paul Bunyan. He even ties branches onto Scruffy's head and pretends he's that stupid blue ox."



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**This Week's Contest:** Above are the real first lines of some famous literary works. In 75 words or fewer, continue the story line in a productive fashion. Do one, or more than one.

You do not have to know the actual work to complete it; this is a humor contest, not a literary quiz. First-Prize winner gets a framed print of *Dogs Playing Poker*, a value of \$75.

Runners-up, as always, receive the coveted Style Invitational Loser's T-shirt. Honorable Mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to The Style Invitational, Week 187, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, fax them to 202-334-4312 or submit them via Internet to this address: losers@access.digex.net. Internet users: Please indicate the week number in the "subject" field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, Oct. 21. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, humor or appropriateness. No purchase necessary. The Faerie of the Fine Print & the Ear No One Reads wishes to thank Jennifer Hart of Arlington for today's Ear No One Reads. A fine prize awaits the person who correctly identifies the most first lines, above; a tie goes to the first entry received. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

### REPORT FROM WEEK 184,

in which we asked you to come up with hole-in-the-head, hyper-liberal editorials as a counterpoint to Ed Anger, the insanely conservative pseudonymous columnist for the Weekly World News.

- ◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **While thousands of children in Third World countries continue to go to bed hungry each night, shockingly we continue to bury our dead ...** (Robin D. Grove, Washington)
- ◆ Third Runner-Up: **It is not health care we need to socialize. It is health. The federal government should require that everyone be equally healthy. The sick should be compelled to infect the well ...** (David Genser, Vienna)
- ◆ Second Runner-Up: **If we must execute criminals, death by lethal injection seems an unusually cruel method. People are afraid of needles. Why can't they just put the medication in a lollipop and ...** (Kathy Kennedy, Vienna)
- ◆ First Runner-Up: **I'm not satisfied with merely suspending that 6-year-old boy for kissing a girl. Let's just castrate him now and ...** (Joseph Romm, Washington)
- ◆ **And the winner of the 48-Star American flag: No one seems to realize we could save the lives of thousands of innocent animals with organs harvested from human donors ...** (John Kammer, Herndon)

#### ◆ Honorable Mentions:

**We aren't doing enough to save wetlands. It's not enough to just stop people from building in the Everglades and other swamps. I say people shouldn't be able to build within 100 feet of any puddle, or, for that matter, 100 feet of where anyone spits. There's life in spit, you know, and it needs protection.** (Joseph Romm, Washington)

**If all pedophiles were required to do community service in kindergartens, they would see how adorable little children are, and regret their actions, and there would be no need for further punishment ...** (Leslie Pierce, Alexandria)

**Motorcycle helmet laws are clearly not enough. It is obvious from examining accident statistics that a law requiring Americans to wear helmets at all times, including while asleep, would vastly reduce the number of head injuries and lighten the burden of our health care system. A greatly expanded corps of OSHA inspectors ...** (Ken Clair, Charlottesville)

**PETA activists are right, but they don't go far enough. Driving should be outlawed since a car traveling down the highway kills countless insects each day. Vegetarianism is wrong, since vegetables are living organisms. People should not be allowed to bathe, since that most decidedly kills any number of defenseless bacteria and other microorganisms ...** (Mark Farrell, Vienna)

**My kid came home from school the other day and showed me a picture she'd drawn of George Washington. You can imagine my shock**

**and horror when I saw she had drawn a white male. Why we must always define our heroes by race and gender ...** (Ellen Lamb, Washington)

**They can take my bong when they pry it out of my cold, dead hand ...** (David Genser, Vienna)

**In the next Olympics, medal winners should be awarded certificates of participation instead of medals so that no one's feelings will be hurt ...** (Stephen Dudzik, Silver Spring)

**It is long past time for at least one rap verse in the national anthem ...** (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

**We have not gone far enough in bilingual education. The self-image of a child whose first language is neither Spanish nor English will tragically drop. Why not trilingual? Why stop there? I think a different language for each class is needed. Homeroom in English. Math in Russian. History in French. English in Spanish ...** (Philip Vitale, Arlington)

**How can these right-wing knuckleheads be for the death penalty but against abortion? What, now it's like fishing? You have to throw 'em back until they're big enough to kill?** (Jessica Steinhice, Washington)

◆ And Last:  
**I'm as steamed as a medley of spring vegetables over the noninclusiveness of The Style Invitational. By not printing all submissions, the editor of this feature is invalidating the aspirations of thousands of non-selected contributors. All entries should be printed regardless of merit ...** (Michael Baird, Derwood)

Next Week: **Wonderlust**