

The Style Invitational

Week LXXVIII: X's and Oaths



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Old pledge: **Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night shall stay these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.**

New pledge: **They will try to deliver the mail without offing no one, okay?**

This Week's Contest was proposed by Russell Beland of Springfield, who was recently reading the Hippocratic Oath and discovered just how goofy it is. It swears allegiance to "all the gods and goddesses," pledges never to perform surgery, particularly (for some reason) in cases of kidney

stones, and promises to love the sons of your teachers as you would love your own. Russ suggests you take any oath, pledge, declaration or slogan and update it, as in the example above. First-prize winner gets a really spiffy Jesse Jackson mask, with seemingly real hair, a value of \$30.

First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by U.S. mail to The Style Invitational, Week LXXVIII, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, July 31. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and telephone number. E-mail entries must include the week number in the subject field. Contests will be 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 in four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Stephen Dudzik of Olney.

REPORT FROM WEEK LXXIV,

in which we asked you to construct "Tom Swifty" witticisms that use appropriate adverbs to modify adjectives. Many people did not quite get this one. No, "staggeringly drunk" is not remotely clever. "Wretchedly drunk" is.

◆ Fourth Runner-Up:

I hear Dick Cheney is depressed after his recent medical problem—he's only halfheartedly involved in his work.

(Sandra Segal, Rockville)

◆ Third Runner-Up:

Did you hear about the shocking vandalism committed during Martha Stewart's lawn party? Her house was devilishly egged.

(Sue Lin Chong, Washington)

◆ Second Runner-Up:

My maw fixes my socks. She's purty darn special.

(Inger Pettygrove, Charlottesville)

◆ First Runner-Up:

My family was so poor, we all had to share one baseball glove. Our games were only intermittently enjoyable.

(Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

◆ And the winner of the country store display of fishing lures:

Let's face it, good oxymorons are plenty scarce.

(Chris Doyle, Burke)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

What did the prune say? I'm plum dried up!

(Chris Doyle, Burke)

No one could find baby Jessica. She was well hidden.

(Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

Why are Log Cabin Republicans conflicted? Because they're outright straitlaced.

(Chris Doyle, Burke)

Did you hear about the Civil War soldier who had both legs amputated without anesthesia? He was soundly defeated.

(Greg Arnold, Herndon)

Steak tartare is rarely enjoyable.

(Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Did you hear about the accountant who couldn't add? He was summarily dismissed.

(Bob Sorensen, Herndon)

"I believe in restrained, economical speech; I never like to use the same vowel twice in the same word," he said, facetiously abstemious.

(Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

How does he look in his new toupee? Ruggedly handsome.

(Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

Did you hear about the guy who was addicted to Viagra? These days, he's hardly seen in public.

(Joseph Romm, Washington)

Did you survive the enema? Yes, but it was fleetingly uncomfortable.

(Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

The first writers used chisel and stone. Today's writers use computers. Ink was invented penultimately.

(Mike Genz, La Plata)

"Why can't I get a date?" the girl kept wondering, doggedly curious.

(Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

On the eve of her gender reassignment surgery, Christine was predictably excited.

(Sandra Hull, Arlington)

Nate went to a lawyer seeking legal protection for his invention, the fork. The attorney turned him down, saying his attempt would be patently absurd.

(Mike Genz, La Plata)

The new chairman of the finance committee is inappropriately tightfisted.

(The Sparrow family, Springfield)

Joe: I'm mad at my barber. My haircut is okay, but when I comb it from the other side, it doesn't look right. Moe: Well, you're partly to blame.

(Jeff Seigle, Vienna)

Did you hear about the guy who stood in front of the Zamboni demanding free hockey tickets? He was flatly refused.

(Judith Cottrill, New York)

Gore has become alarmingly pro-gun.

(Chris Doyle, Burke)

Poultry farmers have found that removing the beaks of chickens makes them easier to deal with. They suddenly become impeccably well behaved.

(Dina Feivelson, New York)

That depends on what the meaning of "is" is, the president declared parsimoniously.

(Vance Garnett, Washington)

"They billed us for an extra 12 dozen mangos," complained the store manager. "We were grossly overcharged!"

(Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Sue entered the limbo contest because she was musically inclined.

(Judith Cottrill, New York)

When the Wienermobile overturned on the Beltway, causing hour-long delays, many commuters were frankly annoyed.

(Rob Balder, Alexandria)

Marcus: So, O.J., I hear you are going to marry Nicole. O.J.: Yep, she is strikingly beautiful.

(Ned Bent, Herndon)

The proctologist's questions were open-endedly vague.

(Russell Beland, Springfield)

◆ And the Mary Ann Madden memorial hifalutin pick:

Bitsy's mother and father could afford the finest boarding school, which left her only inchoately prepared for life.

(Sandra Hull, Arlington)

Next Week: New World Reorder