

The Style Invitational

Week CXLVIII: Homonymphomania



BY BOB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Kneeo-Nazi: One of those comical photos of Hitler in lederhosen.

Gasolean: A crouching posture assumed at the pumps during the sniper spree.

Communicashun: The "I won't dignify that accusation with a response" tactic adopted by a politician who is guilty of wrongdoing.

Camarodderly: Male bonding over guns.

This week's contest was suggested by Carl Northrop of Washington. Carl suggests that you create a new homonym of any existing word, and define it, as in the examples above. Warning: The new word must be spelled in such a way that it is obviously pronounced identically to the original word. First-prize winner gets a genuine photocopy of "John Train's Most Remarkable Names," a most remarkable book of true aptonyms and other noms-de-silliness. 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, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. U.S. mail entries are

no longer accepted. Deadline is Monday, Dec. 2. 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 Jos. Romm of Washington.

Report from Week 2 of Week CXLIV, in which you were to provide the opening lines to a very bad novel. As always, the line between very bad and very good sometimes blurs. And so no prize is awarded to Dennis McDermott of Hutchinson, Minn., who showed a few too many writerly moves with: *Her silk blouse entered my office first, like a dead heat in a dirigible race.*

◆ Third Runner-Up: **Goldie took a bite of her bagel. She chewed it slowly, and her husband could tell this was the precursor to some profound insight into the human condition. Swallowing, she leaned forward and said: "Pourquoi 'L'Affaire de la Famille' a-t-il un valet qui s'appelle French s'il n'est pas du tout français? Que c'est pretentieux, n'est-ce pas?" Her husband chuckled at the irony.** (Bruce W. Alter, Fairfax Station)

◆ Second Runner-Up: **There were these five guys hanging around and then one guy said to another guy, "Hey, what're you doin'?" and another guy looked around and said, "Not much," but the first guy wasn't talking to that guy, so he had to re-ask the other guy—the first guy he was actually talking to—"Hey, what're you doin'?" but by this point that other, second, guy had become interested with the logo on some completely other guy's shirt, causing immense frustration on the part of the first guy.** (Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)

◆ First Runner-Up: **Dawn arrived like the dawn man dumping a load of fresh dawn on the front lawn.** (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

◆ And the winner of the "Maid in Manhattan" ostrich feather duster: **The Kraut machine gun raked the bunker behind which Biff and the men hid. They were pinned down. The bullets whizzed by like projectiles shot from a gun. Each bullet carried death, but not if they missed, which they currently were doing. Biff was afraid that one of the bullets had his name on it, but he doubted that even the Germans were that anal-retentive to put individual names on bullets. Still, he kept his head down because it would have been ironic to be killed by a bullet with someone else's name on it.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

Mr. Eddings waited at the corner for the streetlight to change, unaware that when his story was made into a major motion picture, this scene would be part of a later flashback, in which slow-motion cinematography from multiple angles accompanied by overly dramatic music would gradually reveal the complete stranger half a block away who was masterminding the kidnapping of his daughter. (Danny Bravman, Potomac)

The motorcade with the president moved slowly down the street. Harold glanced up and saw the window open at the Texas School Book Depository. He pulled the Stinger missile system out of his duffel bag. He had not traveled back in time three decades unprepared. (Joseph Romm, Washington)

As an erotic fiction writer, Felicia, with her small, perky breasts and ever-hard nipples, knew that any story could be saved by the inclusion of more titillating prose. Too bad there was no such quick fix for her own life, the author thought, her supple body stretched naked across the satin sheets of her bed, glistening with sweat from a just-finished workout to tone the compact muscles of her perfectly rounded buttocks. No, Fluffy was dead, the house about to be repossessed—and no amount of boinking with well-endowed strangers was going to change that. (Sara Wright, New Haven, Conn.)

Mary watched the train rumble off down the track, and as the powerful engine rushed into the gaping maw of the tunnel, she thought about her last night with Peter—not so much because of the train/tunnel symbolism, for she and Peter shared the vegetable love noted in Marvel's "To His Coy Mistress," but because they had come to fierce words over the nature of symbolism itself, not that she didn't wish at times that Peter would simply shut up and get on track, so to speak. (Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

He stared at her the way an antiques appraiser would stare at a roomful of antique furniture, her hair a delicately crafted lamp, her legs an inviting love seat with a tacky floral design, and her chest a chest of drawers, which is funny because although her drawers weren't on her chest, he was interested in getting into them as well. (Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)

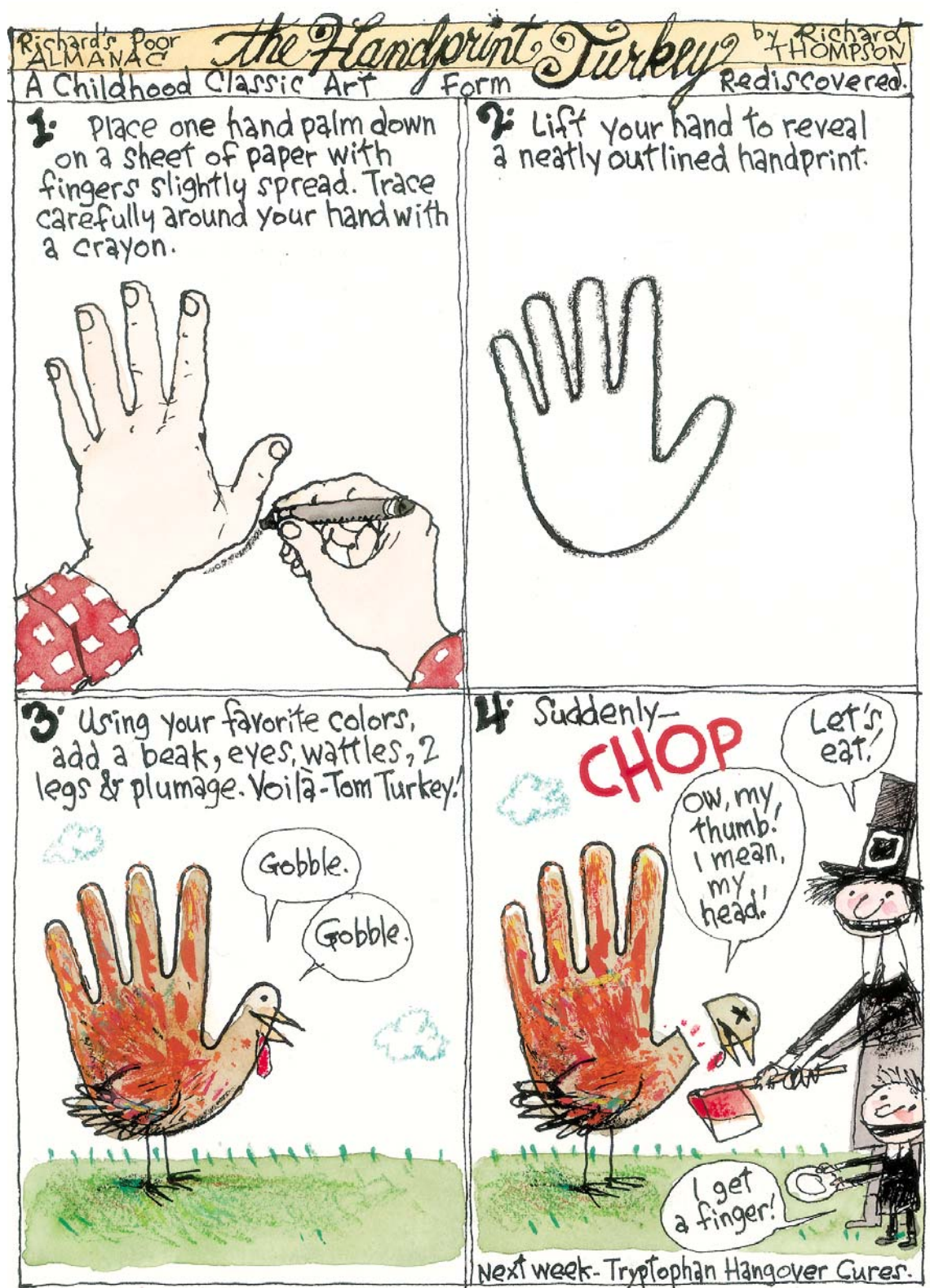
Joe settled into his favorite chair and started reading his newly purchased novel, which began, "Howard settled into his favorite chair and started reading his newly purchased novel, which began..." (Jerry Pannullo, Kensington)

He was the king of hearts, looking for a diamond in the rough, but alas, he had no aces up his sleeve. Some jack was giving him trouble tonight at the club downtown, but he knew how to handle this joker. Deal him out, call a spade a spade, and get on with the business of finding his queen. Though he wore a poker face, inside he was sure his luck would turn, the deck had to be stacked in his favor eventually, didn't it? (Colette Zanin, Greenbelt)

The leggy blonde behind the desk spelled trouble with a capital T, not having her Word preferences set for autocaps, and unable to change the default. (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

Jack did not appreciate the gravity of the situation. He just didn't comprehend that every object exerts an attracting force of 6.6668 joules, independent of magnetic, strong and weak nuclear forces, and covalent bonds. He further didn't understand that the gravitational constant was not enough to counteract relativity (energy equals mass times the speed of light squared), and that, given the relative motion of him, and the bullet, (factoring in air resistance), he was (barring a space-time anomaly) about to be seriously hurt, or maybe killed. (Greg Krakower, New York)

Next Week: **A Mindset Is a Terrible Thing**



TELL ME ABOUT IT

TELL ME, From F1

be, "Yeah, I leave them in my [wherever]." For what it's worth, she's more likely to keep them in a [wherever] that she won't forget, as opposed to burying them next to the aspirin, and that could easily mean they're in a desk or dresser or nightstand drawer.

In exchange for this last bit of reassuring information, I request that you please not use it to toss your whole dwelling in search of the mystery pills. Have the guts to ask difficult questions (ideally, before you move in).

Hi, Carolyn!

I am 24 and dating a 34-year-old man. We have been together six months, and the relationship has moved very fast. I care a lot for him and trust him but I have some concerns. He is very friendly and flirts with many women, and occasionally goes out with them. It's always an old friend he happened to bump into. I am not jealous but I do have a problem because, after they go out, he'll inform me a few weeks later that he's no longer speaking to the woman because she's now in love with him, etc. And although I tell him that makes me uncomfortable, he

makes it seem as though I am being insecure because I am so young. Am I being paranoid or should I believe my instincts, which are that he likes the attention and leads these women on? —A.H.

If you're asking me to choose between your instincts and his story, congratulations, you win the steak knives and valuable parting gifts. They all fall in love with him? That goes in the Oh Please Hall of Fame. Even if that somehow managed to be accurate—imagine the street value of his pheromones—it hardly reflects well on anyone to be everyone's number one guy.

Regardless, I'd call this a choice between your instincts and his empty condescension. How stupid does he think you are? And when does excusing him become stupid? Besides, when you voice a thoughtful concern, you deserve a thoughtful response, not beside-the-point blame simply for being yourself.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com, and join Carolyn's live discussion at noon Fridays at www.washingtonpost.com/liveonline



IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T TRUST YOU, BUT I NOTICED YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TAKING THE PILL.

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST