The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 790: If Only!

If the atomic bomb had never been developed, that beach movie would have been called "How to Stuff a Wild Two-Piece Swimsuit."

We wouldn't have believed the following assertion had it not come from Russell Beland, late of Springfield and now of Fairfax, who has an entire shelf in his Pentagon office filled with loose-leaf binders containing clipped copies of the past 789 weeks of The Style Invitational. Russell swears that we have not done this simple contest before, one he came up with with his son Zack. **This week: Explain how the world would be different had some event not occurred,** as in Russell's example above.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a used Potty Elmo, a special version of the Elmo doll that, when you squeeze some body part (no, it doesn't have THAT body part), will ask for a drink, say that he has to use the potty, and discuss the achievement. Obviously, it is an excellent decoration for one's office at the Pentagon, accompaniment at shareholder meetings, etc. Potty Elmo was hand-delivered to The Washington Post's front desk by erstwhile Loser Mary Ann Henningsen of Hayward, Calif., who once appeared at the Losers' award brunch wearing a tube top fashioned from Loser magnets.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air freshener (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to *losers@washpost.com* or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 17. Put "Week 790" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are 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 Dec. 6. 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 results is by Larry Yungk. This week's Honorable Mentions headline is by Beverley Sharp.

A

B

C

D

REPORT FROM WEEK 786

in which we asked for captions for any of four Bob Staake cartoons:
A surprising number of people, seemingly of all ages, identified the person on top of the really big shoe as Ed Sullivan.

4 Cartoon B: **"Doctor, I think you used the time machine instead of the EKG machine again."** (Ed Gordon, Fort Lauderdale)

3 Cartoon B: **Holding on-campus keg parties proved to be a boon for Dr. Kyle's organ theft syndicate.** (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

2 ***the winner of the Mental Block platitudinous desktop toy:***
Cartoon A: **"Pumpkin, the world knows you're Elastic Girl, but would it be possible, just this once, for you to go to bed like any other 6-year-old?"** (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Cartoon D: **"There goes the Jenga world champion. They say she flushes her toilet only twice a year."** (Ned Bent, Oak Hill)

SLIGHTLY OUT OF TOON: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Cartoon A:

" . . . and then the Magic Bed fell from the sky on the Evil Ex-Wife, and the Good Dad and Beautiful Daughter were finally free to move to California to be closer to Daddy's friend Lisa." (Jeff Brechlin)

Ever competitive, Mom could not stop at simply letting her family walk all over her. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

"Well, Agent 99, according to this report there's only one other place on Earth to look for Bin Laden." (Anthony DeVico, Alexandria, whose only previous ink was in May 2003, also for a caption contest)

"Well, your mother said we had to keep two feet on the floor." (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

No, Mommy is doing it right. Look, it says right here: "Travelers can press clothes by putting them under a mattress" — it doesn't say anything about having to take them off first." (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

"Honestly, Mommy, 'Goodnight Moon' is not THAT scary!" (Marc Boysworth)

Cartoon B:

"Wow, these painkillers are amazing — I could swear I see a nurse growing out of the doctor's back!" (Anthony DeVico)

"Look, doc — I told you the circumcision would help my virility." (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

"Hey, go ahead — I'm from Oslo and I haven't felt my toes since I was two days old." (Rob Pivarnik, Stratford, Conn., a First Offender)

While still in critical condition, Iceland's economy has begun to recover. (Kevin Dopart)

Did someone call for a Norse? (Frank Yuen, Forest Hills, N.Y.; Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Cartoon C:

Hey, don't blame me — maybe if she hadn't had all those children she could have made a few mortgage payments. (Dean Evangelista, Rockville; Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney)

I can never get these European shoe size conversions right. (Art Grinath)

"Hey, all I did was borrow a little foot cream from Barry Bonds, and . . ." (Mike Ostapiej, Tracy, Calif.)

The new James Bond thriller "Quantum of Shoelace" cried out for a last-minute rewrite. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

"It's cozy, but some days I want to chuck it all and move to a Birkenstock in Maine." (Arch Lamont, San Diego, a First Offender)

Cartoon D:

Miss Litella rushes to get all the stock out of the market. (Drew Bennett, sent from Dalian, China)

Pat, as a strict grammarian, refuses to acknowledge the "10 items or less" sign. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

"I shudder to think what would happen if she ever married and had a family." (M.C. Dornan, Scottsdale, Ariz.)

Next week: Tour de Fours V, ***or*** **The MINE Field**

BY DAVID JONES

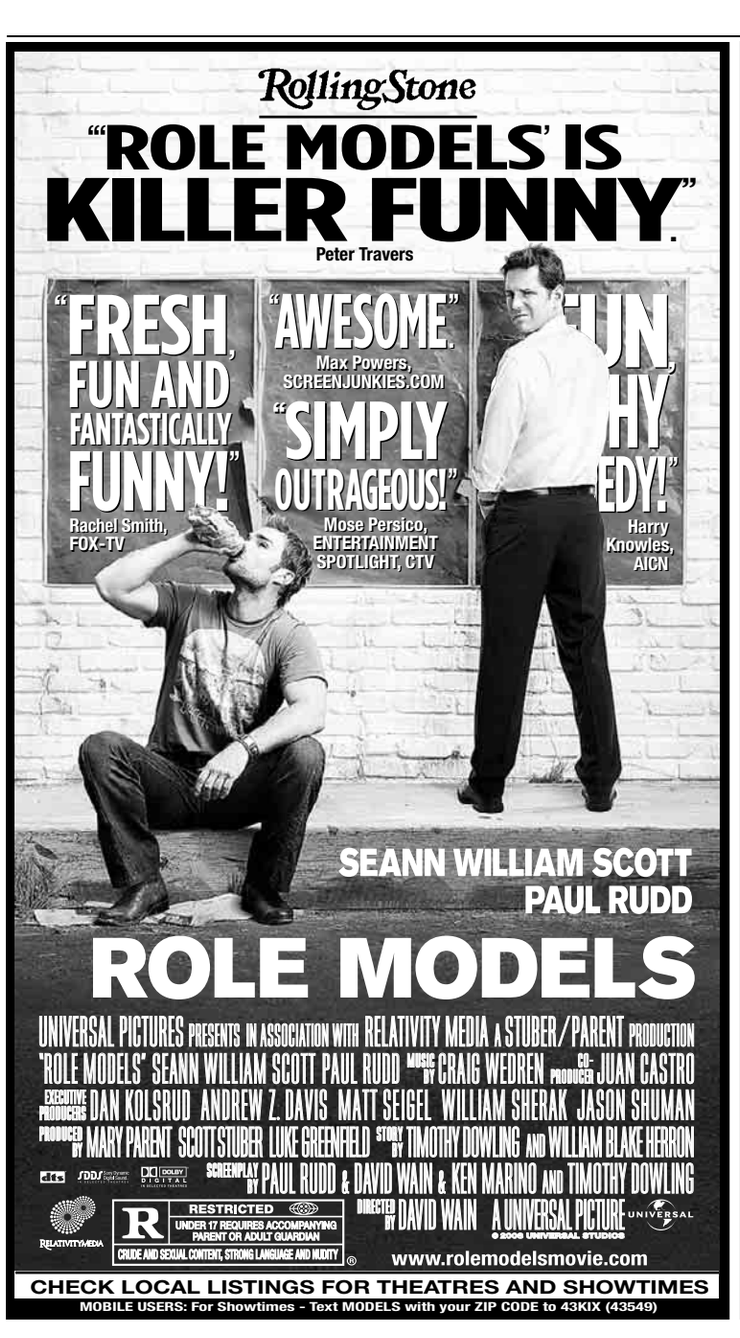
Angel Gil-Ordóñez conducts the Georgetown University Chamber Singers at a sprawling concert by the Post-Classical Ensemble.

Music

'Mexican Odyssey': A Journey Too Far

On Thursday night at the Harman Center for the Arts, the Post-Classical Ensemble closed its latest tribute to the little-known history of Mexican music. The concert, appropriately titled "The Mexican Odyssey," sprawled to an epic length of three hours by wandering all over the historical landscape and lingering in many places, calling to mind the words "too much of a good thing."

Much could have been omitted, including the set of baroque sacred pieces by Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, already heard on an associated concert last weekend and not up to professional standards as performed by the Georgetown University Chamber Singers. We also could have done with fewer of the several piano works performed with more daring than virtuosic polish by Pedro Carboné. The same is true of the many guitar pieces by Carlos Chávez and Manuel Ponce, presented with greater accuracy and delectable, if occasionally cautious, flair by Roberto Limón. The evening was further extended by narration offered not only by the group's artistic director, Joseph Horowitz, but also by Gregorio Luke, a lecturer on Latin American art.

All of this ultimately detracted from the real attractions of the program, more contemporary works for chamber ensemble. Mario Lavista's "Three Secular Dances" explored otherworldly sounds of the cello, performed ably by Evelyn Elsing with the sotto voce but frenetic shadowing of pianist Naoko Takao. Ana Lara's "Serenata" was a noise collision for 10 instruments, but by the time we reached Silvestre Revueltas's masterpiece "Homenaje a Federico Garcia Lorca," part of the audience had bolted. An announced post-concert discussion seemed like unnecessary sadism.

— Charles T. Downey