

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Smarty pans: Creative Yelp reviews

BY PAT MYERS

For **Week 1264** we asked you to write humorous Yelp-style reviews of novel places.

4th place

**Dr. Kvack's waiting room** is super-crowded, but you won't believe how fast it clears — it took me just 10 minutes to see him. Even better, as soon as I mentioned my lower back pain, he dashed off a three-month scrip for Vicodin. Quick and easy!! (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

3rd place

If you're a connoisseur of fine art, you've got to get yourself to **Mrs. Fletcher's third-grade homeroom** at Elm Street Elementary. The work is consistently impressive, but that of one prodigy, Bevis Wildenkrantz III, merits extra mention. His "House With Smiley-Face Sun" is worth the trip alone. — B.W., Greenville (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

2nd place and the cute plush E. coli bacterium:

If you're looking for a good Irish pub in Manhattan, do NOT go to **St. Patrick's** on Fifth Avenue. For such a fancy place, the service was lousy — we had to stand in line just to get to the bar, and then all they had were bad wine and some bread. And the bartenders were dressed like they were in a school graduation. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

**Ford's Theatre:** I actually thought the show was pretty good. Now you can all stop asking. — M.T. Lincoln, Washington (Mark Raffman, Reston)

The weak in review: Honorable mentions

Famed for its year-round warmth, **Hades** offers the discerning traveler a sinfully luxurious chance to stretch out on the brimstone beaches of the River Styx and moan along with the wailful whimpers of some of history's greatest dictators. Best of all, accommodations are provided free of charge and you can stay forever. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

The agonizing fire, the throat-searing brimstone, the screams of pain and despair from my fellow damned . . . I worked all my life to qualify for this place, and it's everything I'd hoped for. Five pitchforks! (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

**Bird Feeder at 347 Maple:** A fine exemplar of the whole-grain movement, with a menu that's seedy, nutty and nutritious. The only failing was accessibility problems for the bushily tailed; it required great effort to pick up my order. — Rocket J., Frostbite Falls (Dan Helming, Maplewood, N.J.)

**Mom's Bed and Breakfast:** The proprietor is a control freak. She serves vegetables you don't want to eat, nags you to wear a sweater, even orders you to go to bed. It's free for the first 18 years, which is nice, but that lady needs some boundaries. (Alex Blackwood, Houston)

**I-66 HOT lanes:** Five stars — for now! NoVA commuters, have I got a tip! You heard I-66 has been converted into an outrageously expensive toll road? So I'm fuming about the \$37.25 I'll have to pay to get to work. Then I reach my exit and — get this — they forgot to install the tollbooths! Hurry, enjoy the free commute before those bozos realize their mistake! (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church)

**Jacksonville:** "It's really nice, but New York has a lot to offer, too. Or maybe Arizona?" — K. Cousins, Washington (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

I'm sorry to report that **Jimmy John's** does NOT live up to its promises. Yesterday I ordered a Totally Tuna sub, buried my nose in it, handed it back . . . and was told, "That'll be \$7.21!" "Free smells," my foot. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

I've been hunting on six continents. I've taken down everything from pumas to leopards to tigers. But nothing beats **Narnia** for big game. You won't BELIEVE the lion I bagged. — D.J.T Jr., New York (Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

The sign should've alerted me to



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1268: Play Pinocchio with media fictoids

**Robert Redford almost wasn't cast in "All the President's Men" because producers didn't think he was handsome enough to play Bob Woodward.**

**The Linotype machine was invented by a Latvian machinist named Etaoin Shrdlu.**

**Soy-based printing ink was developed in Britain to add flavor to the fish and chips served in newspaper cones.**

The Style Invitational's never-ending crusade to mislead the world continues this week close to home, thanks to a contest suggestion by Obsessive Loser Jeff Contompasis. **This week: Tell us some humorously bogus trivia about the news media or the publishing or broadcast industries, as in the examples above, the last two by JefCon himself.**

Submit entries at the website [wapo.st/enter-invite-1268](http://wapo.st/enter-invite-1268) (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a stretchy T-shirt that, if you use a whole lot of imagination (and you carry a dark background around with you at all times), looks as if a cross section of the wearer's torso has been cut away with a saw, except for the spine, which now stands cartoonishly between the chest and abdomen. The Empress saw this advertised on her favorite Portal for Cheap Loser Prizes, Wish.com, and sent away for it. Let's say the photo in the ad was more convincing. **Other runners-up** win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "We've Seen Better" or "IDiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, March 5;** results published March 25 (online March 22). See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline "Smarty Pans" is by Chris Doyle; Chris, Jesse Frankovich and Jeff Contompasis each submitted the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev).

**THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL** The Empress's weekly online column discusses the new contest and results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at [wapo.st/styleconv](http://wapo.st/styleconv).



PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

**It looked more convincing in the ad: This week's 2nd prize.**

the shoddiness of **Cindy's "Leminade" stand**, where I wasted a quarter on super-sweetened bilge. Requests for a sprig of basil were met by uncomprehending stares, and demands to speak with management drew threats to "call Mommy." Thankfully, this pop-up joint seems to have gone out of business. (Frank Osen)

**Ben's Chili Bowl:** I'm sorry but that dog was only half-smoked. (Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.)

The **Mordor** volcano tour was fascinating, but the locals were pretty hostile and the giant tower with the CBS logo on it was kind of tacky. Why do we have to have product placement everywhere??? (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

**Oz:** One star — terrible customer service! The people I met were mostly friendly but badly misinformed. When I arrived after a difficult trip, they sent me and some equally frustrated travelers to see some "wizard," who made us go through a bunch of hoops and ended up not helping at all. From now on, I'm staycationing in Kansas. (Ward Kay)

**Washington Monument:** This is terrible! It doesn't look anything like him! (Duncan Stevens)

Has anyone noticed that the **free library box** in front of the Fitzgeralds' house has gone

seriously downhill? The glass hasn't been cleaned in ages, the quality of the books has deteriorated ("Baby-Sitters Club #12"??) — and would it kill them to add a bench and some refreshments? (Frank Osen)

Three stars for the **walking tour of U.S. 1** in Northern Virginia: The scenery is great, and you'd be surprised at what you find on this stretch of road. But try not to go in midsummer or the dead of winter: the orange jumpsuits and yellow vests they give you are either too hot or not warm enough. I think I'd just pay the fine next time. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Go ahead and take a load off at **John's Porta-Potty** at the construction site at Fourth and Main — they're clearly concerned for your privacy and semi-comfort. Rain, snow, they've got you covered. (High winds? Not so sure.) Shallow breathing recommended. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

**Manassas Transfer Station:** Simply put, this place is a dump. (Daphne Steinberg, Alexandria)

**The Bastille:** One star. Accommodations extremely uncomfortable. Staff rude. Fortunately, I am assured that our stay will be short. — M. Antoinette, Paris (Duncan Stevens)

**And Last:** Our class visit to the **Washington Post newsroom** was delightful and informative. The only negative was some woman sitting by herself wearing a ridiculous hat (something with an octopus?), reading a huge stack of paper. She would alternate between cackling like a witch on laughing gas and barking out something about "true rhymes." Frankly, she frightened the children. (Todd DeLap)

More honorable mentions in the online [invite](http://wapo.st/invite1268) at [wapo.st/invite1268](http://wapo.st/invite1268).

**Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 26: our contest for bad ideas for product spokesmen. See [wapo.st/invite1267](http://wapo.st/invite1267).**

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"KINDA SORTA" By JEFFREY WECHSLER	100 Unresponsive (to)	5 Nuclear decay emission	33 Auction array	65 Put another way	90 Mimic
ACROSS	101 Like delicate fabric	6 Sesame seed paste	34 "I approve"	66 Existed	91 Web surfing tool
1 JFK's 109	105 The Jungfrau, e.g.	7 Rudolph's dad, e.g.	37 Pediatrician	67 Symphonic rock gp.	95 North Atlantic navigation
7 Gives in	107 Makeup malfunction	8 Baseball Hall of Famer Slaughter	39 Poet Lazarus	68 European capital on its own gulf	96 Part of a telemarketer's gear
12 Egg white protein	109 Take as one's own	9 ATM maker	40 Entertainer of the year org.	69 Feudal peasant	97 "The X-Files" sighting
19 Bonzoni rival	111 Binary code basic	10 Scrooge visitor	41 Muck	70 Sri Lankan people	98 Attacks, as a wrapped gift
20 Open, as an aspirin bottle	112 Cause of an origami flaw?	12 Flu symptom	42 Child's counting word	71 Armed forces strategy	102 Vichy verse?
21 Quarters and halves	116 "Just like us!"	13 It's measured in degrees for golf clubs	43 Notice	74 Manner	103 Matchless?
22 It's often written in stone	119 Genteel café relative	14 Fed. budget unit	44 Feuding	75 Commotion	104 Requirement
23 Snow in southwest England?	120 Conclude	15 Merkel of "Destry Rides Again"	45 Acorn, functionally	76 General ___ chicken	105 Aqua Velva alternative
25 Snack	121 Feeling guilty	16 Fixes	49 "Phooey!"	77 Head of Byzantium?	106 Movie mogul Marcus
26 Hayseeds	122 Charming small-town street	17 Eisner's successor at Disney	50 Name on a spine	78 Rise	107 Neck, in Nottingham
28 Salad bar container	123 Old lab heaters	18 Fabled loch	51 With 10-Down, Waikiki entertainer	79 Tell what's due	108 Theaters associated with
29 EKGs may be done in them	124 Became less hostile	19 Attraction for a cartoon coyote	57 Mayflower roller	80 European capital	109 Acapulco abode
30 Nice	DOWN	24 Dish using seaweed	58 Prophet associated with Passover	82 Court declarations	110 Unlocks, in verse
33 Waikiki wreaths	1 Like decrees from Francis	27 Small change: Abbr.	59 Western alliance: Abbr.	83 "The ___ bites shrewdly; it is very cold": Hamlet	113 Wash'n ___ towellettes
34 Rte. finder	2 Overused	31 More to the point	62 Is down with president Morales	87 Annoy	114 Charged thing
36 Golf-loving priest's dream?	3 It might come from the horse's mouth	32 Less healthy-looking	64 Role in "Evita"	88 Eponymous apple grower	115 Dynasty after the Qin
43 Cal. locale of the Latino Walk of Fame	4 Portuguese hi				117 "Eureka!"
46 Bottom-row key					118 Cold and rainy

Answers to last week's puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Feb. 25:** This year, you will follow your feelings, and as a result, you will land like a cat on all fours. You often feel conflicted between what you should do, what you must do and what you want to do. If you are single, you will encounter a potential romantic partner. Still, what you want to do with this bond will be your call. If you are attached, you and your sweetie often close yourselves off from the rest of the world. Cancer knows how to make you relax and smile.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) You could be a bit off-kilter. What you feel, you feel with greater intensity than usual. Your imagination knows no limits, and when you apply it to various situations, it becomes even more colorful.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) Your communication is as clear as it can be. Don't feel as if you must do anything right now; however, if an invitation appeals to you, by all means, accept it. Know that you can't avoid a serious conversation. Postponing this talk will not make your day better.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20) You could be easily irritated, especially if someone gives you a hard time about what is occurring. Avoid taking any financial risks. You might be too serious when dealing with a partner. Try not to make any harsh statements.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22) You smile because you hear news that you have wanted to hear for a while. Do not push so hard to get someone else to notice you. This person sees you but might not want to let you know what he or she is feeling or thinking just yet. Give it time.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) Use today for you and perhaps only one other person. You will flourish by going off on an adventure. You always worry about others, but right now you need time and attention. Allow a loved one to indulge you.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You suddenly might have to change your plans. A child or loved one needs some of your time and attention. Understand that your creativity and unusual ideas might not be welcomed by them right now. Give this person some space, and everything will work out fine.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Reach out to someone older, as you often like to join this person for brunch or some other Sunday happening. Your sixth sense keeps playing into your decisions, which is a good thing.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You will need to follow through on a conversation that keeps starting up but never seems to finish. You need to complete this conversation to free yourself up. A trip could be in the offing in the near future, especially after a phone call.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You know what you want, but a partner might have different ideas. Avoid getting into an argument. Just roll with the moment for now, and eventually the two of you will see eye to eye. Be more forthcoming about your feelings.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You might feel unusually challenged by a loved one. Usually you see eye to eye with this person, but you both might be too emotional to have a valid discussion right now. Avoid being caught in a situation that is difficult to manage.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Stay mellow, despite a sense of irritation that seems to be building. Be careful to process what is happening, or else you could experience a backfire somewhere along the line. Take a walk or indulge in a favorite sport, and you'll feel better.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) Your creativity surges, despite the fact that a friend could be difficult. Try not to worry so much about others and opt to hook up with a friend with whom you always have a good time. Let your inner child emerge.

Answers to last week's puzzle.

R	O	A	D	E	O	L	O	S	E	T	O	D	E	R	A	L	T	E
E	V	E	R	T	S	O	N	H	A	N	D	I	T	A	L	I	A	N
C	U	R	I	O	U	S	G	E	O	R	G	E	C	A	R	E	E	N
A	L	I	E	N	H	O	A	G	T	O	T	I	E	L	A	U		
N	E	E	D	S	T	O	L	I	G	H	T	B	U	L	B	J	O	K
E	S	S	U	E	C	C	L	R	E	A	R	I	O	W	A	S		
S	P	A	R	K	A	C	A	R	I	H	A	T	E					
S	I	T	F	I	E	L	D	O	F	D	R	E	A	M	S	S	A	N
A	N	I	L	L	R	V	E	R	U	N	D	O	H	O	M	E		
M	A	R	A	C	A	I	N	G	R	A	M	I	S	E	E	N	O	W
P	R	E	S	I	D	E	N	T	I	A	L	M	O	N	O	G	R	A
L	A	S	T	O	R	Y	I	S	O	B	A	R	Z	E	S	T	E	D
E	G	O	S	I	D	O	S	E	G	O	N	S	H	A	N	A		
R	E	F	P	A	I	N	T	E	D	E	S	E	R	T	S	T	Y	
P	A	N	E	L	D	U	O	C	E	A	S	E						
S	A	N	D	L	I	M	A	M	B	O	D	Y	A	H	A	S		
U	N	I	F	O	R	M	N	U	M	B	E	R	L	E	S	T	O	I
R	O	K	M	A	C	E	S	A	A	R	E	W	H	O	I	S		
E	M	O	T	I	N	G	C	H	U	R	C	H	S	T	E	E	P	L
S	I	L	E	N	T	E	L	E	S	L	E	Y	V	A	R	L	E	T
T	E	A	R	O	S	E	E	X	C	E	S	S	S	T	E	A	D	Y