

The Style Invitational

By the Empress

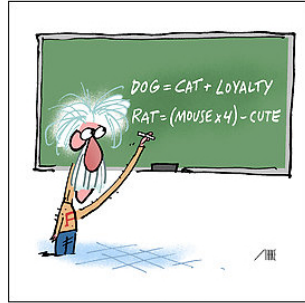
Style Invitational Week 807

Saturday, March 7, 2009

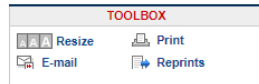
In our era of thumb-based communication, the well-constructed essay, paragraph -- sentence -- is increasingly seen as some quaint, fusty literary style better suited to a quill and parchment. We don't want to have to read through all those *words* to see the point.

Craig Damrauer is here to help you. His Web site <http://MoreNewMath.com> is a compilation of witty and often insightful thoughts, each expressed in the form of a mathematical equation, as in the ones by Craig in Bob Staake's cartoon.

This week: Express some insight as an equation or other mathematical expression. What we're not looking for is a translation of a well-known platitude into graphic form, such as "Bird in Hand = 2(Bird in Bush)." It very well might be hard to out-Craig Craig here. We're a word person ourself.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)



Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets the Guest-B-Gone Emergency Kit, a cheap little red plastic bag including fake chickenpox spots, a CD of "Inhospitable Ambience" (Track 2: Broken Alarm System) and a tablet to make your dog's mouth foam.

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, March 16. Put "Week 807" 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 April 4. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Chris Doyle; the revised title for next week's results is by Tom Witte.

Advertisement Report From Week 803

in which we asked for diary entries by people throughout history:

4. June 12, 1994, 11:30 p.m.: Dear Diary: Stopped by Nicole's. Her new boyfriend was there. Lost one of my gloves. Didn't fit anyway. (*Arlee C. Green, Newington*)

3. [Date redacted]: Dear Diary: Today I met with some people who are none of your damned business. We talked about things that are none of your damned business. We met at a location that is still none of your damned business. We had steak for lunch. -- **Dick Cheney** (*Cy Gardner, Arlington*)

2. the winner of the Bittersweets conversation hearts with cynical sentiments: July 18, 1266: Dear Diary: Today I swam in the Kublai Khan's palace pool and was surprised to hear children shouting my name! (*Chris Doyle, vacationing in Cape Town, South Africa*)

And the Winner of the Inker

June 20, '76: Working on draft of document for T.J. I've articulated two unalienable Rights -- Life, and the Pursuit of Happiness -- need a third. Well, it will come to me. -- **Sally** (*Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.*)

Journal Leasts: Honorable Mentions

00/00/00: Went into work early today, was up at the crack of dawn. -- God (*A.E. Casey Hermanson, Sioux Falls, S.D., a First Offender*)

10,000 B.C.: The interim program review went well. I asked the tribe to leverage synergies in order to take it to that next level of excellence. Tomorrow we execute my master plan for the mammoth hunt. -- Oog the Caveman (*Jeffrey Contompasis, Ashburn*)

2580 B.C.: My plan for the Great Cube is jeopardized by a shortage of building material. I must find a way to economize . . . -- Imhotep (*Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.*)

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Satan's Work Record Journal, 600
B.C., Monday: Tortured that guy Job. Persecuted Job. Worked over Job. Broke for lunch. Pastrami on rye. Power nap. Gave Job a papyrus cut.
(*Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf*)

Dec. 25, 0032: My birthday, and no one remembered. Sigh. (*Jeff Brechlin*)

March XX, XXXIII: Another day dealing with a two-bit troublemaker. I feel destined for obscurity. -- P.P. (*William Kane, Arlington, a First Offender*)

Nov. 30, 1343: Cut myself shaving this morning. -
- William of Ockham (*Jeff Brechlin*)

July 13, 1793: Note to self: Replace lock on bathroom d
... -- Jean-Paul Marat (*Gary A. Clements, Bethesda*)

Oct. 17, 1796: Had a dream that I lost my sight!
Terrifying! -- Beethoven (*Jeff Brechlin*)

April 15, 1802: Wandered lonely as a cloud all day. Stepped in cow pie. Fell in mud.
Mosquitoes. Horrible, horrible. -- William Wordsworth (*Jeff Brechlin*)

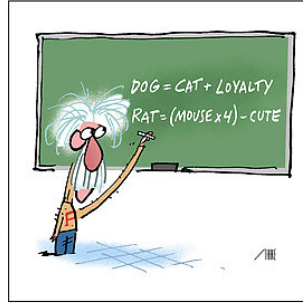
June 27, 1862: O Alice, light of my life, fire of my jabberwock! -- Lewis Carroll (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

April 15, 1865: Terrible show last night -- that diva Booth stepped on my funniest line. --
Harry Hawk (*Chuck Smith, Woodbridge*)

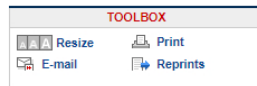
Advertisement 1/15/1882: Revealed the new product line today. It seemed to be well
received and I know I should be glad, but it vexes me that I be destined to toil in obscurity. I
had hoped so much to become a household name! -- Thomas Crapper (*Jack Fiorini,
Williamsburg*)

Sept. 23, 1899: Mr. Johnson came to Vienna to see me. He said his wife constantly
fantasized about the Eiffel Tower, obelisks and lighting poles. I struggle to explain this
obsession. He said he has his eye on a new red Peugeot. I am envious. -- Sigmund (*Stephen
Dudzik, Olney*)

Captain's Log, 14 April, 1912: An uneventful day, which is a good thing on a maiden
voyage. I must remember, however, to tell the stewards that the passengers want more ice.
(*Russell Beland, Fairfax*)



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)



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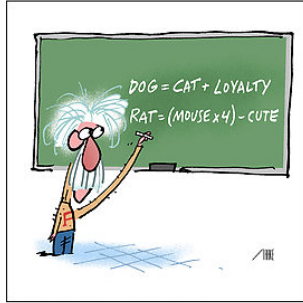
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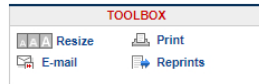
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Oct 5, 1931, Paris: Henry Miller left his toothbrush, so I used it all afternoon to clean the grout in the bathroom, then did the laundry and ironing. Leftovers for dinner. Just a boring day. I wish my diary were more interesting! -- Anaïs (*Russ Taylor, Vienna*)

June 27, 1932: I messed up a whole batch of chocolate cookies today. The chocolate bar I chopped up and mixed into the dough didn't melt - there were just little chips all through them. I hope the Toll House Inn guests will eat them anyway. -- Ruth Wakefield (*Kyle Petrick, Newark, Del., a First Offender*)



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)



May 18, 1959:

I do not think that I can cook,
But I must eat, to write my book,
So in the kitchen I explore
What's left behind the icebox door.
How old is this? -- I wish I knew:
The ham has a quite striking hue. -- Ted
(*Anne Paris, Arlington*)

July 7, 1947: Crash-landed in desert a few nights ago. Alien life-forms captured our ship. Now we're being held in a place called USAF. Got a feeling we're gonna be here awhile. -- Frglzp (*Beverly Sharp, Washington*)

Nov. 2, 1948: Began measuring for drapes. -- Mrs. Thomas Dewey (*Marc Boysworth, Burke; Mae Scanlan, Washington; Chuck Smith*)

Advertisement April 1, 1952: Drunk, spilled a can of paint on a fresh canvas today. Oh well, who'll know? -- Jackson Pollock (*Jeff Brechlin*)

July 25, 2008: Yayyyyy, the test is positive -- I'm pregnant!! What's in store for me? I'll ask the Magic 8-Ball. -- Nadya Suleman (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village*)

7/2/2008: The crew did a fantastic job on the set today -- I really appreciate their talent and effort. But, you know, I don't want them to think I'm some kind of pushover . . . -- Christian Bale (*Roy Ashley, Washington*)

Dec. 13, 2008: My annoying cousin Muntadar, the big-shot reporter, wants to borrow my new shoes to wear to that Baghdad press conference tomorrow. Like President Bush is gonna notice his shoes! Well, he'd better not scuff them up. (*JL Strickland, Valley, Ala.*)

1/20/09, 3:30 a.m.: I guess I shouldn't have stayed up this late playing Minesweeper -- I hope I can focus on my one little task at noon. -- John Roberts (*John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.*)

1/20/2009, 12:30 p.m.: Finally the madness is over! I got so tired of hearing, "You look just like George Bush." -- Alfred E. Neuman (*Arlee C. Green*)

Oct. 25, 1982: Dear Diary: Today I started work at The Washington Post! How fortunate I am to embark on a career in which I can give voice to the undeserved! I mean underserved. - The Pre-Empress (*Rob Cohen, Potomac*)

Next Week: Our Type o' Humor, or Headline Ruse

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