



Style

Week 964: The Grossery Bag – our new runner-up prize – needs a design



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

March 23, 2012

We're always trying to think of new ways to lose. Now we've decided to add to our choice of runner-up prizes — currently the coveted [Loser T-shirt](#) or yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) — a featherweight but spacious (20-by-16-by-6-inch) non-woven polypropylene tote bag, that pseudo-fabric kind that's often used as reusable grocery bags or as totes for convention swag. We're going to order 100 of them. The Empress is especially jazzed about this plan because (a) she doesn't have to stock them in different sizes, like T-shirts; (b) she doesn't have to worry that they'll shatter in shipping, like mugs; and (c) they cost less than either of those options — The Post doesn't exactly have wads of money to toss around these days.





What's the bag going to look like? That's where you come in: This week: **Suggest a design and/or slogan to go on the side of the ardently desired Style Invitational Loser Bag;** our big-whoop-artist-who-slums-for-the-Invite Bob Staake will do the actual artwork. We'll be including, for sure, the Washington Post logo, the words "Style Invitational" and our Web address; fortunately we have a nice big 12-by-8-inch space to work with. We can use two colors plus the color of the bag itself (which will depend on what design we use). The design will be on one side of the bag. It's fine if you just describe your design to us in words, but if you'd like to make a graphic depiction, you may include it as an attachment to your e-mail.

This week, the winner may choose between the bag and the usual [Inker](#), the Style Invitational trophy. All runners-up, however, each get one of these bags. Because how better to really lose — to get second, third or fourth place — than to get a prize plastered with the entry that beat you?

Honorable mentions, as usual, get a lusted-after [Loser magnet](#). First Offenders get a tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4030. Deadline is



Most Read Lifestyle

- 1 Analysis**
 A short investigation into Trump's claims of 'RIGGED' Google results against him 
- 2** John Goodman reveals Roseanne will be killed off in 'The Conners' spinoff 
- 3 Perspective**
 The perils of being a woman who's just asking to be left alone 
- 4** Why our culture's mild obsession 

mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, April 2; results published April 22 (online April 20). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 964” in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. The revised title for next and the subhead for this week’s honorable mentions are both by Mae Scanlan. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

Report from Week 960

in which we invited you to write complimentary but goofy “reviews” for any of five household products sold through Amazon.com.

The winner of the Inker

“Coats & Clark Dual Duty Thread 400 Yards — White”:

As a Mormon Republican, I wear a lot of white shirts. And because I’m “just folks,” when one of them gets a hole I never throw it out, or hand it to an assistant to fix, or have my personal tailor, Alessandro, weave me a new shirt immediately from the hair of an albino yak. Gosh, no. I mend it myself, using this humble thread and . . . some sort of thread-attaching device. By golly, I do. (*Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.*)

2. Winner of the pair of owl-vomit boluses:

“Clipper-mate Pocket Comb 5” All Fine Teeth”:

O Sacred Tines! How rigid teeth delight
To forge from chaos rows of ordered haire,
Still plow the furrows, scourge of louse and mite,
To render e’en the Gorgon passing faire.
’Tis sure the Bard of Avon oft didst tuck
Like implement across the seething mane;
A steal at 88 more than two buck:
Dare bid anon, or covering abstain?
But hark! Take action ere this offer’s lost:
If mate be bought, the shipping hath no cost.
(*Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.*)

3. “Morton Iodized Salt, 26oz.”:

Yum! This tastes just like McDonald’s french fries, but it’s not fried and has no fat at all! (*Gregory Koch, Storrs, Conn.*)

4. “World’s Best Dish Cloths — Set of 12 — Assorted Colors”:

Sure, you can purchase other dish cloths, but you’ll need to buy these in the end anyway — just so you can wipe up your salty tears of regret from having bought the World’s Second Best Dish Cloth first. (*Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.*)

Sub-blurbs: Honorable mentions

Dual Duty Thread 400 Yards:

What a bargain — I measured this out and found that you actually get 402.56 yards of thread! (*Julia Shawhan, Silver Spring, Md., a First Offender*)

I found this thread especially good for playing Hostage with your child’s Barbie dolls. It’s strong enough to keep them tied to the Barbie Dream House Chandelier by the wrists and ankles, but also versatile enough to give way if the child starts ripping at it in panic . . . (*Daniel Rosen, Washington, who last got ink nine years ago*)

with Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen
may never end



5 Perspective
Carolyn Hax: A kiss-and-don’t-tell
with an ex-boyfriend’s buddy



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This dual-duty thread is at once sartorial and celestial: It is so ultra-white and ultra-pure that it will easily pass through the eye of a needle: This must be what garments are made of in the Kingdom of Heaven. (*David Ballard, Reston*)

“Plus” is right! Not only have I found it great for sewing and mending, but it can also serve as baby dental floss, Cornish hen trussing, clothesline for damp tissues, and bug leashes. (*Phyllis Rudnick, Leesburg, Va., a First Offender*)

This spool is perfect for retrieving your wallet from the top of the Washington Monument. Simply attach a fishhook to one end and let it fly. You have almost 600 feet of wiggle room, so you can work from a distance to obtain the optimum angle. (*Gregory Koch*)

For 1,003 performances, I’ve worked this thread — laced with with pink plastic beads — through the sinus, down the throat and out the mouth. It works without a hitch, over and over. Even during colds, when nostrils, you know, aren’t so fresh. See me on YouTube! (*Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.*)

All the gals in our ladies’ auxiliary swear it’s white thread or nothing! And Dual Duty Plus is the best. We want our men’s robes and masks looking as spotless as can be when they set out on their missions to rescue America from the powers of darkness. (*John Shea, Philadelphia*)

Morton Iodized Salt, 26oz:

Nothing coats the rim of a blue-rim margarita glass like Morton’s. The 26-ounce size is just about right for a Jimmy Buffett concert weekend. And when’s the last time you saw a Parrothead with a goiter? (*John McCooey, Rehoboth Beach, Del.*)

This product works great for killing the slugs in my garden. I just roll the cylinder between the rows and it smushes them really good. Please send me the next size up so I can deal with the gophers. (*David Genser, Poway, Calif.*)

I’m not sure if it’s the grain size or the iodine, but this salt is much better than kosher or sea salt. Just sprinkle on any open wound and oh, oooooh YES! (*Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.*)

With Morton’s, my interrogators always get the answers they want from our wounded dissidents — because when it pains, they pour. — B. al-Assad, Damascus (*Kevin Dopart*)

Since iodine is an antiseptic, I rub this salt over my daughter’s scraped knees before applying a band-aid. It works so well that when I ask her if she needs another treatment, she shouts, “It’s better! It’s all better!” (*Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.*)

World’s Best Dish Cloths:

In this candidate’s opinion, a set of these makes the ideal high school graduation gift. Not only are they good for drying dishes, they’re also just right for shining shoes, buffing hubcaps and many other jobs you can attain without attending some elitist college like the ones I’ll be sending my kids to. (*Melissa Balmain*)

I manage boxers, and these towels are fantastic for throwing into the ring when my fighter has had enough. In the past, I’ve had to throw in two, three, sometimes four towels before the referee noticed and stopped the fight, while my guys were getting the you-know-what kicked out of them. Plus, I like to match the assorted colors with the color of the shorts my fighter

wears. (*Bruce Harris, Scotch Plains, N.J.*)

These double-layered, natural-cotton, absorbent cloths are the same ones Great-Grandma and her sisters used month after month — they're still the best. Can also be used for washing dishes. (*Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church, Va.*)

These dish cloths were compact, foldable and lightweight, but serving beef stew on them didn't work out well, to say the least. Making dishes out plastic still works a lot better. (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.; Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

"World's best" understates the case — these are the best dish cloths that *could* exist in *any* possible world. And you can never go wrong with a color selection like "We ship an assortment of what we have on hand at the time." (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Clipper-mate Pocket Comb 5"

For guys like me with unruly back hair, the fine teeth of the Clipper-mate pocket comb are a godsend. Now I never go on a date without one of these in my back pocket. I only wish that finding women who are into social grooming were so simple. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

Before my wife gave me one of these, I didn't even realize my pockets were disheveled. Now that they're neatly combed, we seem to get better tables in restaurants. (*Gary Crockett*)

This product worked perfectly right out of the box — I didn't even read the instruction manual. Its classic design is so simple a child can use it, yet sophisticated enough to create stunning styles, from the easy middle part to the tough left-sider. With its 76 indestructible teeth, it is deceptively powerful, too — like a pocket Black Hawk helicopter that will seek and destroy the nits in your preschooler's hair. (*Megan Durham, Reston*)

To the music of "[YMCA](#)":

Young man, what's that thing on your head?
They say, looks like, some poor critter that's dead.
They say, young man, should have stayed in your bed,
Or put on . . . a . . . foot . . . ball . . . hel . . . met.

Young man, your coiffure's in distress,
They say, young man, a hirsute SOS,
They say, young man, just cut off the whole mess,
Or put on . . . that . . . foot . . . ball . . . hel . . . met.

I smile and reach for my C-O-M-B.
Just grab my Clipper-mate C-O-M-B.
Only five inches long, unbelievably strong,
You can buy one for just a song.
A couple strokes with my C-O-M-B.
Wild hair's no match for this C-O-M-B.
All the teeth are real fine, comfy pocket design,
Get a Clipper-mate — don't touch mine! (*Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.*)

Revlon Compact Emery Boards, 24 Count

I file my fingernails for hours and hours every day, and these boards never let me down. They're so gratifying that lately I've been compelled to stop young women on the street and file their nails, too. Thanks, Revlon! (*Rob Cohen*)

Visit the online discussion group [The Style Conversational](#), where the Empress discusses today's new contest and results along with news about the Loser Community — and you can vote for your favorite among the inking entries, since you no doubt figured the Empress chose the wrong winner. If you'd like an e-mail notification each week when the Invitational and Conversational are posted online, write to the Empress at losers@washpost.com (note that in the subject line) and she'll add you to the mailing list. And on Facebook, join the far more lively group [Style Invitational Devotees](#) and chime in.

Next week: *The End of Our Rhops, or Play It Again, Same*



Eats & Drinks newsletter

The latest buzz on the D.C. area dining and bar scene, featuring restaurant critic Tom Sietsema, every Wednesday.

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Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. [Follow](#)

The Post Recommends

A bride-to-be sent an invitation to the wrong address. It came back with this note.

"I wish I knew you," the note started. And there was something tucked inside.

Mar 27



Opinion

Trump meets his real enemy

This was not a bank shot. It was a direct hit.

5 days ago



She was worried how a 'teacher of the year' treated her 5-year-old son. So she made a secret recording.

School administrators said they needed proof. So she recorded the teacher. "Aaron y tu loser," the Florida teacher said.

Jul 6

