



The Washington Post

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1087: The core ridiculous — courses you'd like to see

Plus the winning and Losing ideas for phone apps



Want to be schooled by Bob Staake? He'll be speaking and signing books Saturday at the National Book Festival in Washington. See the Style Conversational at bit.ly/conv1087 for details and to join a "Staake Pack" to meet him. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers August 28 at 2:54 PM  [Follow @PatMyersTWP](#)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winners of Week 1083, our contest for funny phone apps)

ENGL 001: Lit Lite. Face it, the only time you're ever going to discuss literature is on a date or at a cocktail party. This course covers the CliffNotes for 20 books you're never going to read: "Moby Dick," "Ulysses," "The Sound and the Fury," etc. Learn that Ahab vs. the whale represents man vs. nature, and on to the next volume. Three multiple-choice quizzes. (Mike Gips)

LANG 238: Ancient Voices. Who were the Ink Spots? Country Joe and the Fish? What does "nanu-nanu" mean? Intense immersion into the language and culture of the late 20th century ago will enable the student to understand and converse with older relatives and prospective employers. Prerequisite for all INTN (Internship) classes. (Doug Frank, Week 626, 2005)

We go back to school today, revisiting [a contest we did almost a decade ago](#), at the suggestion of Loser Mike Gips, who figures that for a couple of hundred thousand dollars, a college ought to teach you something you can use In Real Life. **This week: Come up with a comical class (any type of school) and provide a course catalogue description**, as in the examples above. MLA style is not required.

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives something Loser Larry Neal bought at a Walmart — in Beijing: It's a bag of [Great Value Scarlet Caterpillar Fungus](#), complete with that Walmart Great Value no-brand logo. The Encyclopedia of Traditional Chinese Medicines says it's used "to supplement lung and boost kidney"; we think you'd best do that by using it as a little back pillow.



Brought back from a Beijing Walmart by Loser Larry Neal, this week's second prize.

“freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Sept. 8; results published Sept. 28 (online Sept. 25). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include “Week 1087” 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 wapo.st/InvRules. The “WryPhones” subhead is by Tom Witte; this week’s honorable-mentions subhead is by Danielle Nowlin; the alternative headline in the “next week’s results” line is by Kevin Dopart. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, and click “like” on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired “Whole Fools” [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, either the [Po’ Wit Laureate](#) or [Puns of Steel](#). First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air

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Week 1087: The core ridiculum —

The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

WryPHONES: APP IDEAS FROM WEEK 1083

In Week 1083, we asked you to suggest a humorously useful — or counterproductive — phone app. Some people suggested truly practical apps that probably exist and certainly should, like one that maps out large supermarkets and parking lots; one that listens to a foreign language and translates it; and one that tells you how many jumping jacks you'll have to do to burn off the cookie you're thinking of eating. (Four weeks ago, we credited this contest to Mike Gips, forgetting that Loser Mark Richardson had suggested it long before. The Empress gives a lousy one star to that Stuff From the Losers app.)

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Instagramma: Special filters hide evidence of drug and alcohol use, and add clothing to cover the naughty bits. Now *any* picture can be sent to Nana. Buy the Pro and colorize everyone in the picture to match Grandma's ethnicity! (Robert Falk, Takoma Park, Md.)

2nd place and the 'Barves Bags' to fill and give to Atlanta Braves fans doing that Tomahawk Chop thing:

Where's My Phone?: I am providing here, free of charge, the coding for my new app: *on tap() : display "Right Here!"* (John Kammer, South Riding, Va.)

3rd place

The Teh: An app that un-autocorrects your texts so it makes people think you're busier than

you really are. **Danny Gallagher**, Frisco, Tex., a First Offender)

4th place

Due Process: An app to preserve constitutional guarantees when dealing with law enforcement. If an officer approaches, quickly draw your mobile device from a purse or pocket and you'll get what you rightfully deserve. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

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The appy medium: honorable mentions

Streaming Media tells you what portions of the movie you're missing while you're in the bathroom. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

What's Grandma Saying translates cursive writing into plain block letters. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

iInhale: Every 10 seconds, chimes remind the user to breathe. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

The SimuMater provides a CGI image of the baby you would have with the guy who just asked for your number — get the deluxe version for preschool admission odds. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Bjudblvx Squire translates Metrorail announcements into clear standard English in real time. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.)

FixFox: Visiting Gramps? This app offers real-time, subtitled corrections to all Fox News stories. (Frank Osen)

The Booth: A Ma Bell surrogate app that creates a 7-foot-tall, 3-foot-wide cylinder of dense fog, allowing Superman, once again, to change in privacy. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church, Va.)

Swig & Share keeps tabs on your blood alcohol level until it hits .08, then starts sending transcripts of all your texts to *damnyouautocorrect.com*. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

Lalalalala: You input a list of forbidden topics — Justin Bieber, Benghazi, “Duck Dynasty,” etc. Then it issues white noise to cover up when anyone mentions a banned topic, and blanks out the offending text on your screen. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel, Md.)

'Hit & Run alerts you that a diaper is in the process of being dirtied; comes with a list of excuses you can give your spouse to account for your hasty departure. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

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Just Do It detects the announcement at a concert that patrons should turn off their phones — and would turn off the phone. (David Williams, Dunbar, W.Va.)

Ahem: A classroom app that displays a flashing “MY EYES ARE UP HERE” when a student looks at the phone during a lecture. (Kathy Cutler, Dickerson, Md., a First Offender)

The Emotican't: Wipe that smile off your text with this emoticon remover. (Harry Farkas, Columbus, Ohio)

Ticked-Off Flying Squirrels: Don't get bored playing the same old games: In this all-new app, you fling Ticked-Off Flying Squirrels at Evil Sheep! (Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.)

Reality Check: Point your phone's camera at someone you would like to date, and the app automatically calculates your chances on a scale of Def to NITL. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Happy Trigger will launch your surface-to-air missiles remotely, so long as there is a 51 percent chance the target is military. (Ken Gallant, Conway, Ark.)

Stage Fright B Gone provides public speakers with X-ray images of audience members in

their underwear. (Mark Raffman)

Step on It measures your speed for a particular stretch of road. Compare your score against others on our leaderboard and earn badges! (Not responsible for visits by actual badges.) (John Kammer)

What's-the-Fourteen-One-One?: An informative app about events in this 15th-century year such as the Battle of Harlaw and the death of artist Paolo di Giovanni Fei. (Mike Ostapiej, Mount Pleasant, S.C.)

Future Tat will analyze a picture of that tattoo you are about to get for how deformed it will become over time after expanding, sagging, etc. Prevents that cute little butterfly from metamorphosing into an attacking pterodactyl. (Wayne Rodgers, Satellite Beach, Fla.)

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Just Chill electrically paralyzes the user's jaw muscles every time it senses an imminent sarcastic retort brewing. (Tim Livengood, Columbia, Md.)

Oral Intelligence Test: Just lick the screen of your phone and it tells you your IQ. (It's actually just a Magic 8-Ball-type generator, but it's a fun, photo-friendly way to get your friends to lick their phones. Which is why "inconclusive, try again" comes up 3 out of 5 times. (Bird Waring, Larchmont, N.Y.)

The Spoiler Spoiler blocks all references to sporting events you are DVR'ing and shows you haven't watched yet. (Mark Raffman)

YelpHelp screens reviews for fakes. It must really work — it's got five stars! (Danielle Nowlin)

The Clickbaiter: An editor types a proper news headline, and the app gives you "You Won't Believe What Happened When These Nine Judges Spent a Day Talking About Federal Labor Laws." (Josh Feldeblyum, Louisville)

App Endectomy: Save big bucks with these cut-by-cut, stitch-by-stitch self-surgery instructions. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Throes: An audible battery level indicator that increases in histrionics from “I’m getting a little low” to “I’M DYING! I’M DYING!” (Jim Stiles, Rockville, Md.)

Kismet!: An app that identifies for you, from among all the women on the planet, the one you’re meant to spend the rest of your life with — and then sends her a picture of your junk. (Mark Raffman)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our contest to make a new term from a 12-letter word or multi-word term. See bit.ly/invite1086.

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Next week’s results: Limerixicon XI, or Give Us Five, our contest for limericks featuring words that begin with fi- through fo-. See bit.ly/invite1084.

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