

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1099: Yours for the asking – it’s Questionable Journalism

Plus the winning TankaWanka 5-line poems on current events



"This is the place that made me what I am today." (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**, Style Invitational editor
November 20, 2014

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning TankaWanka poems on current events)

Sentence from a Post article: This is the place that made me who I am.

Question that sentence might answer: What’s so special about the back seat of your parents’ SUV? (Jay Shuck, 2007)

Post: It’s a blasphemy wrapped in an atrocity.

Q: Have you tried our new kosher cheesesteak on Wonder Bread? (David Kleeman, 2003)

Post: Great legs in a short skirt make me melt.

Q: Hey, Pillsbury Doughboy, why won’t you work with Tina Turner? (Jean Sorensen, 1998)

This week’s second prize: Our copy is a bit tattered, but Pat Boone’s advice for adolescents is 1958-fresh.

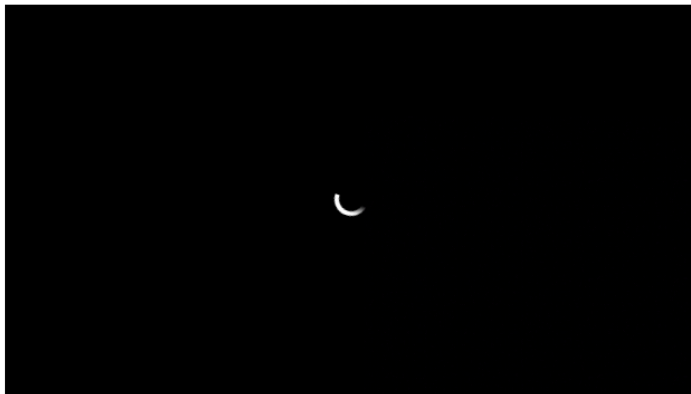
It’s a contest that keeps on giving — not surprisingly, since the pool of source material is almost infinitely vast. The Empress’s predecessor, the

Czar, first presented this challenge in Week 254, and we’ve done it about a dozen times since. **This week: Take a sentence (or most of a sentence) that appears in an article in The Washington Post or on washingtonpost.com dated Nov. 20 through Dec. 1 (in print, any article from those days’ papers), and make up a question that the**

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article from those days' papers), and make up a question that the sentence could answer, as in the examples above from three of our earlier contests. For print stories, please include the date and page number; for online stories, copying out the URL above or below your entry would be very helpful.



Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a fabulously fabulous genuine 1958 hardcover advice book, donated by Christopher Larsen, titled "[Twixt Twelve and Twenty: Pat Talks to Teenagers](#)" — by Pat Boone. Let's say that it won't be confused with Dan Savage's "Savage Love." Here, Pat (who was considered square even then) explains why he dumped his "first steady": "She was a very pretty girl . . . but she let me see her in her curlers. Invited me over when she was suffering from a cold in the head. Next thing you know, even when she was all fixed up I could still see those curlers and that runny nose. Sad, isn't it? But that's the teenage male." Pat also notes, uncritically, that his mother routinely beat him and his siblings with a sewing machine belt, and that he was spanked until he was 17 years old.

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 in one of our two new Bob Staake designs: either "[The Wit Hit the Fan](#)" or "[Hardly Har-Har](#)." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "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, Dec. 1; results published Dec. 21 (online Dec. 18). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include "Week 1099" 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. This week's headline for the results is by Jeff Contompassis; the honorable-mentions subhead was submitted by everybody. 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.

The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column (published late Thursday) 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](#) . . .

Haiku plus two: The winning 'TankaWanka' poems on current events

In Week 1095 we asked for a poem relating to events in the news, in a form something like the Japanese tanka: five lines with a syllable count of 5-7-5-7-7. But since real tankas don't rhyme, and we insisted on at least one rhyme

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per poem, we're calling ours TankaWanka. The deadline for this contest was before Election Day.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

"Gamergate," harassment of women in the gaming world:

Gamer dweebs all say
Girls are not supposed to play.
Hey, guys: Get a clue.
We have learned what we can do
With our joysticks, without you. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

2nd place

and the shell sculpture of a farmer riding a stack of turtles:

Midterm votes are done:
Optimism's fading fast
That the folks who won
Somehow will — unlike the last —
See that more than gas gets passed. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

3rd place

Sunni on Shia,
Russian troops in Crimea,
Ebola, ISIS,
Worldwide crisis and drama —
As per Fox: Thanks, Obama! (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

4th place

Re Ms. Zellweger:
Were she the sole entrant in
A contest to choose
The one who looked most like her,
Could Renée herself still lose? (Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.)

Stanka: honorable mentions

Department of Homeland Security employees put \$30,000 worth of Starbucks on government credit card

At the DHS,
When they make a coffee run
It costs thirty thou.
If they want to get Starbucks,
They should not pay with OUR bucks. (Nan Reiner)

Kerry won't pander,
So Israelis throw a fit
From State staff's candor:
"Netanyahu's chicken[poop]" —
(I confess I laughed a bit.)
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

The conservative
Wing of the Catholic Church
Was left in the lurch.
The libs are ecstatic in

Pope Francis's Vatican.
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Secret Service guys!
Use your brains and ears and eyes.
Watch the fence posts more.
Sic the dogs – that's what they're for!
(Also lock the White House door?) (Nan Reiner)

Though Colt McCoy won
against the hated Cowboys,
RG3 is back!
Watch and you can clearly tell.
Just look for the big red L.
(Todd DeLap, Fairfax)

Quarantine today!
We can risk no more delay.
Only ban and purge
Can protect us from this scourge:
Lock the Congress up right now. (Nan Reiner)

In Eastern Ukraine
The Russians foment trouble
Surreptitiously.
They're hiding their mischief well –
Says Putin: "Donetsk, don't tell." (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Ebola, viral,
Then became transatlantic.
The news went frantic
And contagiously manic:
There's no vaccine for panic. (Frank Osen)

On the Big Island
Kilauea awakens.
Fox reports this fact,
Then the left goes volcanic
Denouncing "lava panic." (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

College can be hard:
The student athlete suffers
So many questions,
But just one at UNC:
"Would you like an A or B?" (Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)

Fake classes for jocks
At UNC Chapel Hill?
Imagine our shock
That (pick any college name)
Was not busted for the same. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Sarah Palin hopes
To run for office again.
The GOP needs,
So she says, to have "more guts."
(What they don't need is more nuts.) (Chris Doyle)

For 2016 ,
GOP candidate groups
Will soon be on-scene,

Like the Organization
Of Perry Supporters (OOPS).
(Frank Osen)

A new theory that some of J.S. Bach's greatest music was written by his wife:

New discordant notes?
Some of Bach's great music was
Not, perhaps, his own.
Let us credit *all* the Bachs:
Anna Magdalena rocks!
(Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Rick Scott demanded
That Charlie Crist should be banned
From [debates with fans](#),
Although he thought it was fair
When Clint debated a chair.
(Frank Osen)

Doritos topped with
Syrups, spices and veggies:
A Mexican fad.
With each sporkful in your mouth,
Your border moves farther south. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

When donors who spent
Four billion dollars on the
Midterm elections
Cash in on their connections,
They don't expect objections. (Chris Doyle)

Substitute English teacher charged with having sex with student

"I don't tell I show,"
The teacher texted the boy,
And it all came out.
Should she go to the slammer
For the sex, or bad grammar? (Mark Raffman)

Hail fecal transplants!
Changing gut bacteria
Can cure your *C. diff*.
A bitter pill to swallow
So better poop will follow. (Chris Doyle)

Though I write before
Midterm elections are done,
I'll bravely predict—
Whichever senator's picked —
This much: that big money won. (Frank Osen)

Defective airbags
In cars across the country
Pose a threat for some.
But the airbags you should fear
Are those elected this year. (Kevin Dopart)

Still running — deadline Monday night: our contest for funny reviews for products sold on Amazon.com. See bit.ly/invite1098.

Next week's results: Picture This, or Black and White and Rude All Over — another of our Best Snarky cartoon caption contests. This time in Urdu



Over, another of our Bob Staake cartoon caption contests, this time in living black-and-white. See bit.ly/invite1096. (Alternative headline by Nan Reiner, who's having one heck of a day)




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 1 Comment



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

Dershowitz says federal probe in New York, not Mueller, is 'greatest threat' to Trump

"There are no constitutional defenses to what the Southern District is investigating," Dershowitz, an informal Trump adviser, said Sunday.

1 day ago



Opinion

Distinguished persons of the week: Breaking into Trump's inner circle

Who stood tall?

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Trump recently sought his lawyers' advice on possibility of pardoning Manafort, Giuliani says

Trump attorney Rudolph Giuliani said Trump was seeking advice on pardons generally, and was upset that Manafort faced criminal exposure on charges unrelated to his work on Trump's campaign.

