

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 906

in which we asked for ideas for Loser Mug 2: The Next Generation, a prize for third- and fourth-place finishers that replaces the design we've used since 2007.

(Mike Gips, Bethesda; Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.; Howard Walderman, Columbia; they also win the mug)

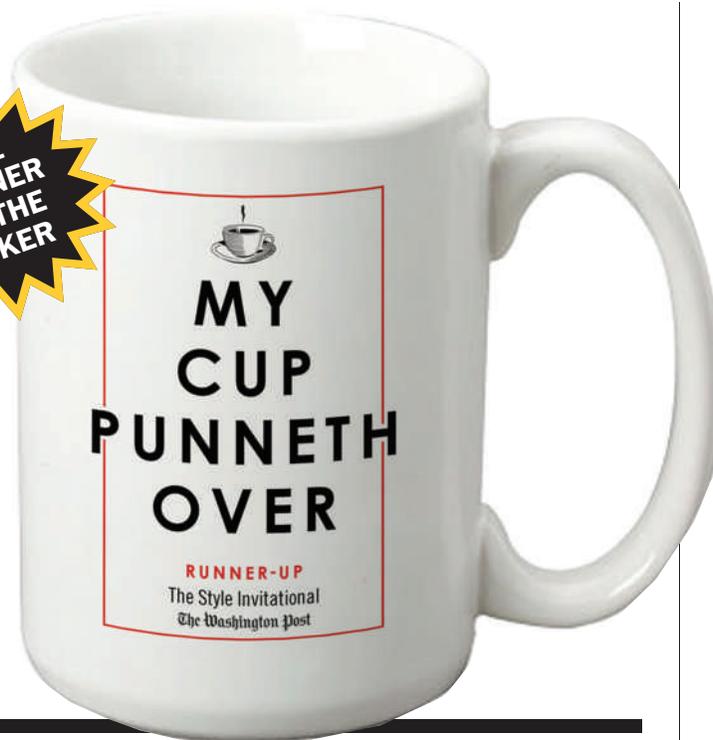
Winners of the mug with someone else's idea on it:

2 One Ounce Short of a Pint: Runner-Up, the Style Invitational (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn; the mug is indeed a 15-ouncer)

3 [Front] Sometimes You Lose . . . [Back] . . . and Sometimes You Lose (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

4 Middle-Wit Champion: Runner-Up, the Style Invitational (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

THE
WINNER
OF THE
INKER



More java scripts: Honorable mentions

Model it after those mugs with the pictures of all the presidents — but instead, feature each election's losing candidate. (Drew Knoblauch, Arlington; Seth Tucker, Washington)

Genius Is Its Own Reward. I Got This Mug Instead. (Josh Feldblyum, Philadelphia)

Style Invitational Official Travel Spittoon (Kevin Dopart, Washington; Chris Doyle, traveling in Iguacu Falls, Brazil)

If You Don't Get It, You Don't Get This (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)



Graphic with the Robert Indiana square LOVE design, with an S scribbled over the V and an R added to crudely turn it into LOSER — trying to show this as art instead of a description. (Drew Knoblauch; Peter Jenkins, Bethesda; Suzanne Cross, Chantilly, a First Offender)

Cartoon of a man at the supermarket "Self Checkout" line. He's looking down his pants. Caption: LOSER. (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

Caution: Contents Tepid. Runner-Up, the Style Invitational (Russell Beland,

Fairfax; Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)

Sunday DriveL (Tom Witte)

Do you know how many ceramics had to die to make this mug? (Craig Dykstra)

Warning: Content provider may be hot. But we doubt it. (Kevin Dopart)

A Venus de Milo statue looks down at a crouching Thinker, saying, "Loser." Thinker is holding a mug: "Only a mug? But I'm so funny." (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Venn diagram: Left oval, "Think"; right oval, "Drink"; in the center, "Ink." (Chris Doyle)

Next week: Naming rite, or Branding irony

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 909: Reprizing

- Inker
- Loser T-shirt
- Loser magnet
- Loser mug
- Loser magnet
- The FirStink air "freshener"
- Pantyhose with a run
- Old National Geographics
- A handful of pennies
- A charger for your previous cellphone
- One perfectly good shoelace
- Tattered underwear

Fewer than 5,000 people anywhere in the Milky Way galaxy have won even a single Style Invitational prize in its 18 years — this week! — of existence (the Invite's, that is; the galaxy is dozens of years older).

But a handful of the truly obsessed Style Invitational Losers, reputedly residents of Planet Earth, have accumulated hundreds or more: enough to crash the mantel to the floor, to make the refrigerator door sag on its hinges. While Loser Mike Gips boasts a mere 23 prizes — including the Inker and mug he scored in this week's results — he suggests a contest to make use of these otherwise worthless objects.

We've filled out the list with a few other items that end up lying around the house. **This week: Suggest humorous uses for one or more of the items above, alone or in combination.** You may use any quantity of each item, except the one shoelace, the pennies and the FirStink for First Ink, since you can win only one of those. If you want to construct some physical thing, send a photo of it as an attachment to your e-mail.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the Style Invitational Breakfast Set, consisting of Inflatable Toast plus a whole Inflatable Fruitcake all atop a bacon-motif place mat (utterly nonfat). Food donated by Jeff Contompasis, the place mat by Russell Beland.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable mentions win a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, March 20; results to be published April 3 (April 1 online). Put "Week 909" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it may be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See more rules at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. The revised title for next week's results is by Chris Doyle; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Russell Beland.

STYLE CONVERSATIONAL Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join us at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

MUSIC

Kix Brooks ropes acting roles after life as half of country duo

BY CHRIS TALBOT

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Turns out Kix Brooks is a bit of a renaissance man.

Six months after splitting from Ronnie Dunn, ending the 20-year run of country music's best-selling duo, Brooks & Dunn, Brooks is branching out.

Already a radio host, songwriter and professional vintner, he's trying out the acting business. He recently wrapped a small part in

the upcoming movie "Thriftstore Cowboy" and has accepted a leading role in another, "The Last Ride," which will be shot in May in Arizona.

Brooks describes "Thriftstore Cowboy" as a "kind of a modern-age, urban-cowboy sort of scenario," saying, "I guess I didn't screw it up too bad, or they wouldn't have offered me the role" in "The Last Ride."

Brooks said that he was leery of taking on a leading role with so little experience in acting but that he liked the story, which chroni-



JOSH ANDERSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MULTITALENTED: Kix Brooks, renaissance man.

cles a lawman duped into helping with a deadly bank robbery that sends him to jail. It's set in the 1940s and is told in flashbacks that won't require Brooks to turn in his trademark cowboy hat.

"It's really fun," Brooks said. "You kidding? Every kid wants to play cowboy."

A lot of kids want to play guitar, too, and Brooks has been doing plenty of that as well. He has been taking his radio show, "American Country Countdown," on the road and has hosted a handful of "radio appreciation" concerts with up-

and-coming acts such as Luke Bryan, Randy Houser and Lee Brice.

And, like Dunn, Brooks has been writing songs for an album that will be released on a Sony imprint.

"I'm probably halfway done with it," he said. "The label seems real excited about it, so I'm writing a lot of songs. I want it to be as good as I want it to be, and I'm not in a hurry, and I'm not saying when it's going to come out. Because when it's done and I'm proud of it, it will come out."

—Associated Press