REPORT FROM WEEK 968

in which we asked you for stupidly funny research grant proposals. We figured that this contest would draw lots off unny observational humor. But mostly we got unfunny, painfully old observational humor: toilet seat position, number off items in the express lane, raining after you wash the car. And, as always, alas, a joke about global warming being caused by politicians’ hot air. We did, however, find a few imaginative proposals to fund with our shamefully generous prizes.

2 Winner of the Rednek Wine Glass, made from a Mason jar. Proposal: To examine the link between the obesity epidemic and global warming. Hypothesis: Since the Earth must work harder to spin with all those overweight people on it, the planet is overheating from all the exertion. (Martin Bancroft, Rochester, NY.)

3 Ice cream is stored optimally at minus-25 degrees Celsius, while human body temperature is a far higher 37 degrees Celsius. Since the body must burn calories to raise the temperature of the ice cream to body temperature, it stands to reason that consuming ice cream leads to weight loss. Perhaps such a diet will help combat our nation’s obesity epidemic. (Luke Currano, Columbia)

4 In light of the difficulty in shuttling down the Fukushima reactors, we seek a Nuclear Regulatory Commission grant to examine whether the on-off-switches on the nation’s nuclear power plants should be changed to the sound-activated variety, such as The ClapperTM. (David Genser, Poway, Calif.)

Proposal: A study to determine whether Murphy’s Law is true. Hypothesis: Although Murphy Law teaches that “if anything can go wrong, it will,” the successful completion of this study, fraught with potential pitfalls, will expose that “law” as a fallacy. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

This is your contest: We’ve done lots of times: Choose any two items on the list above and explain how they are alike or different. But the twist this week, suggested by Loser Christopher Lamora, is that the items on the list were all listed as “trending” or “hot” topics last Sunday on washingtonpost.com, Twitter, Google News, etc. Given the brief-er-than-a-thong half-lives of some trending topics, the Empress did choose the ones that at least would be recognizable four weeks from now, when we run the results.

Winner gets the Inkin’ Memorial, the Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins this fine foot-tall papier-mache sculpture of a screaming human skeleton riding a surfboard. Donated by big-deal Washington Post editors and honorary Losers Lynn Medford and Jeff Leen.

Other runners-up win choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, a yearned-for Loser Mug or the new, ardently desired Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get a last-a-ter Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air “freshener” (Fir Stink for their Fir First). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-234-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 28; results published June 17 (online June 15). No more than 2 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 972” 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/styleinv.

The subhead for this week’s honorable mentions is by Dave Prevar.

Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at aton.fb.me/invdev

Trends and neighbors

A jellyfish is like John Edwards: Even when it’s washed up and dead in the water, people don’t want to get anywhere near it.

Howard Stern
Bristol Palin
Michael Phelps
Beethoven
Yemen
JJP Morgan Chase
Robert Pattinson
John Edwards
Same-sex marriage
Serena Williams

Here’s a type of contest we’ve done lots of times: Choose any two items on the list above and explain how they are alike or different. But the twist this week, suggested by Loser Christopher Lamora, is that the items on the list were all listed as “trending” or “hot” topics last Sunday on washingtonpost.com, Twitter, Google News, etc. Given the brief-er-than-a-thong half-lives of some trending topics, the Empress did choose the ones that at least would be recognizable four weeks from now, when we run the results.

Winner gets the Inkin’ Memorial, the Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins this fine foot-tall papier-mache sculpture of a screaming human skeleton riding a surfboard. Donated by big-deal Washington Post editors and honorary Losers Lynn Medford and Jeff Leen.

Other runners-up win choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, a yearned-for Loser Mug or the new, ardently desired Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get a last-a-ter Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air “freshener” (Fir Stink for their Fir First). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-234-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 28; results published June 17 (online June 15). No more than 2 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 972” 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/styleinv.

The subhead for this week’s honorable mentions is by Dave Prevar.

Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at aton.fb.me/invdev

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

SILENT MAN: Singer-songwriter

Tank wishes to let you, the listener, know that he feels feelings.

— Allison Stewart

There has been an R. Kelly-size hole in R&B since the great man went off the rails sometime in the mid-2000s. Singer-songwriter Tank, born Durrell Babbs and raised in Clinton, has long been positioned as a replacement, and he’s a worthy, if slightly flavorless, heir, one of the genre’s better belters but one oft least distinctive personalities. He attempts to rectify this on his new disc, “This Is How I Feel,” a collection of modulated jams and bedroom ballads with superfluous outer space noises. Tank spends most of the disc convincing the listener that he feels feelings. Most of these feelings involve how much he misses you, the listener, and is sorry about that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, he poses shirtless (Tank, that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, “Sex Music,” isn’t here to waste time) and somber, like he’s feeling. Most of these feelings involve how much he misses you, the listener, and is sorry about that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, he poses shirtless (Tank, that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, “Sex Music,” isn’t here to waste time) and somber, like he’s feeling. Most of these feelings involve how much he misses you, the listener, and is sorry about that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, he poses shirtless (Tank, that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, “Sex Music,” isn’t here to waste time) and somber, like he’s feeling. Most of these feelings involve how much he misses you, the listener, and is sorry about that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, he poses shirtless (Tank, that thing he did. On the disc’s cover, “Sex Music,” isn’t here to waste time) and somber, like he’s feeling.

— Allison Stewart

WONDER WOMAN:

This is How I Feel.

3 Prop: A study to determine whether Murphy’s Law is true. Hypothesis: Although Murphy Law teaches that “if anything can go wrong, it will,” the successful completion of this study, fraught with potential pitfalls, will expose that “law” as a fallacy. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Report from Style Invitational Week 968

Proposal: A study to determine the gregariousness of roaches. Hypothesis: Since the species Blattella germanica well known to emerge from hiding shortly after a home is visited by dinner guests (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

BJORN LUNDGREN/REUTERS

ike Stankoff Smoking a cigarette will expose your heart’s secrets, but it’s not the only way to strike a spark. This past weekend at the Durfee High School Prom, a new cup-shaped object took over the dance floor. The 'secret admirer' device, which costs $20, allows the wearer to send short messages to their special someone, while the wearer remains anonymous.

A.J. Fenn/Providence Journal

KELLY WEAVER PHOTO

Dance the Night Away

6 3 Prop: A study to determine the exothermic properties of U.S. currency. Hypothesis: It has been observed that the application of dollar bills to the thighs of professional ecologists causes the subjects to shed excess clothing. Further study suggests that higher-denomination bills increase this effect. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

With their scented candles and fancy pillows, some inns around the world have come to compete with the boudoir for the most romantic sleepover spot. But in Cucamonga, Calif., this inn is marketing itself on a more manly twist.

The Star/Scott Varley

The Star/Scott Varley

While we’d love to fill pages with the secrets these devices might be holding, the inn’s innkeeper would only allow us to speak about them in the most general terms. But she did say that the house, called Motel Oui, was packed for Easter weekend.

When researchers measured the exothermic properties of U.S. currency, they found that the hotness of a dollar bill increases with its denomination. And the larger the bill, the hotter it gets...

In 2012, people paid more than $1 billion for wedding dresses online. But the most expensive dress sold through online wedding-gown retailer DressLily was a $30,000 gown worn by celebrity Blake Lively. That’s a pricey wedding dress...

Aravind Venkatesh

DressLily

As Stranger Things continues to sweep the nation, a new trend has emerged on social media: the “Stranger Things” face swap. Fans are taking pictures of themselves doing popular“Stranger Things” faces and posting them to Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.

Dina Shuler

In an attempt to get us all to talk about the biggest show on Netflix, “Stranger Things” creator and executive producer Shawn Levy encourages fans to share their “Stranger Things” face swaps...

J Rljove

16

As the prime minister of the world’s largest democracy prepares to return to India, we recall the promises and achievements of his previous term. In a speech to the United Nations, Narendra Modi pledged to India’s role as a responsible power in the world. He also vowed to continue working towards a stronger, better, and more prosperous India...