Mirthlings: honorable mentions

We would like to know:
Do you guys have candy bars?
Do you call them “Earth”? (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)
Earth teachers are mean.
Please enroll me in Mars school.
Mom says pick me up. (Dave Previc, Annapolis)
This haiku cost us 34.5 million bucks per syllable! (Frank Olsen, Pasadena, Calif.)
When you visit Earth,
Please bring your own shirts if you need three sleeves or more.
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)
We come here in peace.
We want to learn your culture.
Do you have oil? (John Duffy, Manassas, a First Offender)
Can you tell me what you have done with Ray Walton?
He’s my favorite. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)
Loneliness abounds
In the vast heavens we share.
Need mail-order brides? (Mike Gips)
Lonely, spinning orb
Adrift in the vast cosmos . . .
Are you impressed yet? (Neal Starkman, Seattle)
If you come, be sure
To get a flu shot first, ‘cause CVS ran out.
(Larry Neal, McLean, a First Offender)

You look lonely, Mars.
You can have our tired, our poor
And all our old folks, (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)
Our spaceship traveled
To Mars and all you get is
This stupid haiku. (Julia Shawhan, Silver Spring)
You folks like haiku?
We also brought some fruitcake.
Now, where is your gold? (Rob Huffman)
We were not afraid
To boot out Pluto — so you
Just watch your step, pal. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)
Would you like for me
To return that probey-thing.
That you left inside? (Beverley Sharp)
NASA accepts no
Responsibility if
You choke on this disc.
(Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)
We’re no receipt but
We’ll really like to return
Dennis Kucinich, (Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge)
Our Four Horsemen are
War, famine, disease, and death.
What do your guys do? (Jim Blue, Darnestown, a First Offender)
Over the rainbow
We launched without ruby shoes.
Need Wizard of Mars, (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

The Moon shot was faked.
The Mars probes are also.
This didn’t happen. (Art Girinash, Takoma Park)
Arriving Tuesday.
Don’t fuss — will bring everything.
I packed the sand wedge. (Barry Koch, Catskill, Va.)
Earthling can’t find job
Desperately want to work
Willing to commute (Bella Porto, Silver Spring, a First Offender)
Well, hello, Martian!
I see they were wrong about
“Little” green men, ROWR! (Danielle Nowlin)
We hope Amanda
Bynes is one of you. It would
Give us much comfort, (Sneha Kannan, Potomac)
Hello Martian friend.
I was once Nigerian
Finance Minister . . . (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)
We, the Blue Planet,
Unsullied by gaseous clouds,
Unlike Uranus. (John Kupiec, Fairfax)
Expect more of us
When 55-year-olds learn
They’re 29 here. (Kevin Dopart)
Property of Earth
Please drop in any mailbox
Postage guaranteed (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)
Better not attack:
We can drive you raving mad.
We will speak Haiku. (Nan Reiner)

Mars, we brought this flag!
See, it has stars, just like space!
Where should we stick it? (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg)

Lost entry will get NASA ink, but we’d be thrilled to be proved
Wrong. By the way, both we and NASA are using the broadest, most
ignorant definition of haiku: anything with three lines and 5-7-5
syllables. We’ve learned that irreverent 17-syllable poems are
(slightly) more precisely called senryu, but we figured that your
average Martian wouldn’t know that term.

THIS WEEK’S CONTEST
Week 1027: Built for two

Entrance and exit at WSSC headquarters: Inflow and Effluent
Hot and cold faucets at a movie studio: Megan Fox and Danny DeVito
Way back in 1995, one Stephen Dudzik suggested a contest for Week 145: to come up with funny names for the men’s and women’s restrooms in various places. The results were a riot. At the Sigmund Freud Museum: Cigars and Ashtrays (by Jean and Bob Sorensen); at a Catskills resort: Ladies and Germs (Jonathan Paul). (See more of them at bit.ly/invite145.)

Eighteen years later, Steve has just entered the Style Invitational Hall of Fame with his 500th ink, and he’s back with another idea, an expansion of his old one: Give humorous related names for any pair of features in a given building, organization, etc., as in Steve’s own examples above: entrances and exits, up and down escalators, left entrance and right entrance, anything you can creatively pair up for a good joke. You might even offer some more men’s rooms and ladies’ rooms, as long as they’re different from the ones in the Week 145 results. The paired features don’t have to be utter opposites, and if you think of something that might have three elements rather than two, I’m inclined to be flexible.

Winner gets the Inkin’ Memorial, the Lincoln-statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets the weird gadget pictured here, modeled by 32-time Loser Marleen May at last month’s Flushies, the Loser Community’s annual awards lunch, and donated by 122-time Loser Nan Reiner. It’s intended to be a head massager (and we’ll sterilize it before sending it out), but we believe that its springy little prongs are better used for, say, roasting grasshoppers over a campfire. Anything rather than sticking your head with a bunch of pointy wares.

Other runners-up win a choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grosssey Bag. Honorable mentions get a lust-wageted Loser magnet. First Offenders receive a smelly, tree-shaped air “freshener” (HrStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, July 8; results published July 28 (online July 5). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 1027” 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/inviterules. The subhead for this week’s honorable mentions is by Nan Reiner. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/mystinv.


Report from Week 1023

in which we invited you to propose some haiku for NASA to put on the DVD it’s going to send up with the MAVEN craft bound for the Martian atmosphere. The deadline is July 1 for the real NASA contest for Mars-bound haiku (three will be chosen by public vote); feel free to submit your own Invite entries, either inking or non-. We think there’s a snowball’s chance on Venus that an Invite-winning or