**STYLE INVITATIONAL**

**BY PAT MYERS**

**Report from Week 1044**

In which we asked for comical safety rules:

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2 Winner of the custom-made Loser Dreidels with L-O-S-R and the Hebrew equivalent: “Staring daggers” is no longer allowed in the workplace, but “staring butter knives” will be permitted. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

3 In the restroom: During hand-washing, the alphabet song must be sung once for Number 1, and twice for Number 2. A monitor will record compliance. (Heather Space, New York)

4 School toilet rims must be padded to prevent injury during swirlies. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

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**Safety nyets:**

**HONORABLE MENTIONS**

All restaurants must be located at least an hour’s drive from any beach or swimming pool. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

To prevent accidental shootings, hunters must carry a device that emits a beep audible at 250 yards, along with a flashing beacon. (Irene G. Plotzker, Bethesda, whose received his only other blot of invite ink in 2005)

Children wearing zombie Halloween costumes must have a fluorescent colorless gas that does not support combustion. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

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Coming soon: our newest Loser magnets for honorable mentions. Don’t think of them as 20-cent strips the size of a business card; think of them as limited-edition (500 each) Bob Staake prints. The slogans got ink (but not iron) in earlier contests: “Po’ Wit Laureate” is by Roger Hammons of Ashburn, and “Puns of Steel,” by Invite Hall of Famer Jennifer Hart, was an honorable mention back in 1994 for a T-shirt slogan contest. (But it works for magnets, too, no?)

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**THIS WEEK’S CONTEST**

**Week 1048: Ask backwards**

*Men at Twerk* • the Toronto mayor’s latest revelation • the Two and a Half Wise Men • the Wicked Witch of the Waist • 140 characters on baloney • foie gras ice cream • RGX • a panini, and a pincushion • 4 miles, 27 pounds • Osama bin Laden • the Empress’s birthday • an answer for the next Ask Backwards

Once again, our beloved (or not too often belated) perennial contest: Above are the 12 answers. You supply the questions to as many of the answers as you like, up to the usual 25 entries total. The answers were offered up by various sources who won’t be entering the contest, including the deposed Czar of the Style Invitational and the still-current Imperial Scion No. 1.

Winner gets the Inkin’ Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, actually in time for the holiday, a Christmas ornament two-pack: a ceramic T-shirt-shaped “Biggest Loser,” presumably promoting the TV show; and, discovered by the Empress in the dollar store, “The Christmas Pickle.” A card explains the “time honored, German tradition”: “Following an Old World custom, parents waited until Christmas Eve to hide a small pickle ornament on the Christmas tree, tucking it out of sight among the branches. On Christmas morning, the first family member to spot the pickle was rewarded with a special blessing for the coming year and received the first present from under the tree.” This turns out to be totally bogus; evidently some American ornament-maker came up with this “tradition” about the “Weihnachtsgurke,” and no actual Germans have heard of it. Also, the German tradition is to open presents on Christmas Eve.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, probably one of those pictured today. First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener.” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4512. Deadline is Monday, Dec. 2; results published Dec. 22 (online Dec. 19). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 1048” 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 Jeff Contompasis. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, or click “like” on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday.

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**NO MARS FOR YOU!**

Remember our contest this year for haiku to send on the Maven spacecraft to Mars? We didn’t think it was likely, but we did encourage y’all to send your inking entries to NASA’s own contest. Well, the voters picked a bunch of winners, and they weren’t the Losers. But they might have been.

In the results published by the University of Colorado, which was in charge of the contest, there’s this at the bottom: “On May 23, 2013, the Washington Post acknowledged our haiku contest and ran their own contest in response (The Style Invitational Week 1023). . . . Alas, none of The Style’s winning entries were submitted to our contest! Dear Empress: In vain we searched for shared haiku; yours must be from Venus.”

See the results at bit.ly/marshaiku.

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