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Style

Style Invitational Week 956: Looking for a few 'bad' scenarios; plus the winning obit poems



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers

January 26, 2012

You know it's going to be a bad cruise when you see that the captain has his own private lifeboat.

You know it's going to be a bad hotel if they ask you if you want to wait for a no-bedbug room.

You know your kid's going to have a bad day at school . . .

You know it's going to be a bad speech . . .

You know it's going to be a bad marriage . . .

Loser bad-boy Larry Yungk suggests this week's contest: **Finish any of the above "You know" phrases**, as Larry does for the first two.





Winner gets [the Inker](#), the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a genuine calf-/goat-/lamb- alterer (not the term used on the box) — a hand tool that snaps a rubber band over a couple of parts of the baby-boy animal, where it's left until said parts eventually fall off. Found in a Vermont flea market by Loser 4 Ever Elden Carnahan, and donated to the Empress in the middle of a restaurant.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational [Loser T-shirt](#) or yearned-for [Loser Mug](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after [Loser magnet](#). First Offenders get a tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Feb. 6; results published Feb. 26 (Feb. 24 online). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 956" in your e-mail subject line or it may be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. The revised title for next week is by Kevin Dopart; the subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Judy Blanchard. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at

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- Why our culture's mild obsession**


Report from Week 952

our annual contest for poems commemorating those who died in the previous year. The many hundreds of entries ranged from the obvious (bin Laden, Kim, Jobs) to the, well, less so (the creator of Doritos; a mummified horror actress).

The winner of the Inker

Kim Jong-Il

Dear Leader, as your spirit flies
Through North Korea's blessed skies,
Your legacy pervades our nation:
Coercion, nukes and mass starvation.
As we, your marshaled millions, sing,
To memories of you we cling,
And cannot help but feel a thrill
That now you're dead, and not just Il.
(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

2. Winner of the *Annoy-a-tron*, a little box you hide that beeps every few minutes:

“Jackass” daredevil Ryan Dunn:

When it came to wild stunts, he was second to none—
So who'd have predicted that Ryan M. Dunn
Would die not by catapult, cannon or cougar,
Or Russian roulette with a dung-coated Luger,
Or by tying himself to a runaway moose,
Or snorting ground glass off a lion's caboose,
But by drinking and driving? How could he succumb
To something so horribly, *commonly* dumb?
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

3. Without any help required,
Jack Kevorkian expired.
(Danny Bravman, Chicago)

4. Atheist essayist

Christopher Hitchens said

Mother Teresa was
Far from a saint.
But now that he's gone,
The believers are smiling,
For God is still with them
And Christopher ain't.
(Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)

Cold comfort: Honorable mentions

Kim Jong-Il

Though your afterlife prospects seem clear as a bell,
Be comforted by this idea:
Dear Leader need never be frightened of Hell,
Having already seen North Korea. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)
See two longer odes to Kim — including a song parody — near the bottom of this week's *Invitational*.

Al Koo doo, Al Koo doo

with Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen
may never end



5 Perspective
Carolyn Hax: A kiss-and-don't-tell
with an ex-boyfriend's buddy



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ሕገ-ኢየሱሳ, ሕገ-ኢየሱሳ,

Osama bin Laden has

Met his demise at the

End of a gun.

So now he resides where it's

Thermodynamically

Quite a bit warmer than

Pakistan's sun. (*Matt Monitto, Elon, N.C.*)

See a four-stanza bin Laden poem at the end of this week's Invite.

Al Facchiano, Miamian mobster,

A fan of fine seafood like scampi and lobster,

Now sleeps with the fishes, aghast that damnation's

Each day getting snacked on by vengeful crustaceans.

(*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

Uncle Milton's Ant Farm creator Milton Levine

Milton Levine has now danced the last dance,

So bid a farewell to both Uncle and ants. (*Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.*)

Moammar Gaddafi's stubborn fight

Came to a bad finish,

He was caught in a drainage pipe;

His end was Mussolinish. (*Fred Dawson, Beltsville, Md.*)

Steve Jobs

Your gadgets made our hearts beat fast,

Despite their lofty prices.

But now that your brief life has passed,

We're left to our own devices. (*Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.*)

Your Apple was a gift to us--you've changed the way we interact;

One click: we look up, chat or hook up, tweet or text, compose, redact.

Because of you, we're all obsessed: an iPhone, iPod, iPad nation;

Ever since the Fall of Man, the apple's been our worst temptation. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

Jack Kevorkian

Higgledy piggledy

Jacob Kevorkian

Fought for his principles,

Reckless and blithe.

Witness the death of the

Octogenarian:

Aided by only the

Man with the scythe. (*David Smith, Santa Cruz, Calif.*)

Elizabeth Taylor

To "rest in peace," said Elizabeth T.,

"Is not my heart's desire.

If Heaven is Heaven, Richard B.

will set my soul on fire."

(*Rick Lempert, Arlington, Va.*)

Scuba inventor Christian J. Lambertson

Diving tanks did you bequeath

So we could see what lies beneath.

With sharks we have a tete-a-tete

(And hope that they've already et).

But now — it doesn't quite seem fair —
Your tank's the one that's out of air. (*Beverley Sharp*)

Maria Schneider, co-star of “Last Tango in Paris”

Before she passed, they heard her mutter:
“That's why in English it's called ‘butter.’” (*Phil Battey, Alexandria, Va.*)

Amy Winehouse

Amy, in that raspy voice,
Said, “Rehab? No, No, No!”
But sometimes you don't have a choice:
The Big Guy calls, you go.
(*Christopher Lamora*)

Amy Winehouse and Betty Ford

Betty in Heaven is quietly smirking:

“At last there's a rehab for Amy that's working.” (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

Mad Libs inventor Leonard Stern

Leonard Stern passed from here to hereafter;
’Twas his [noun] to amuse, not perturb.
And he left us with [adjective] laughter;
All in all, not a bad way to [verb].
(*Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.*)

Arch West, creator of Doritos

Your chips, though not healthy, can still make me smile,
A full and content caballero.
Here's hoping your next world will be Cool Ranch style,
And not Fiery Habanero. (*Gary Crockett*)

Horror-movie actress Yvette Vickers

We'd long since forgotten her movies so rotten:
(The one with the leeches was especially crummy.)
Her films weren't iconic, but her death was ironic,
For this maven of monsters was [discovered a mummy](#). (*Christopher Lamora*)

Superglue inventor Harry Coover Jr.

In Harry Coover Jr.'s lab
Was synthesized a tiny dab
Of glue (cyanoacrylate)
That could restore a broken plate,
But not his heart, (oh, darn the luck);
So underground, the doc's been stuck. (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

The actress **Jane Russell**, anatomically gifted,
Died and (we hope) was to Heaven uplifted.
She'll perform with the heavenly ladies and guys
If only they have a robe in her size. (*Louise Dodenhoff Hauser, Falls Church, Va., a First Offender*)

For **Whatumoana Paki**, consort of the queen,
The funeral's traditional, a festive tribal scene.
The bier's adorned with wreaths that are beribboned, bright and flow'ry.
Atop his coffin sits a skull — a true memento Maori. (*Chris Doyle*)

Kim Jong-II, the One Dear Leader:

Could he have been of little peter?
Why else sky-high platform shoes?

My case my high profiled shoes.

Bouffant hair, expensive booze?

"Look at me! I'm smarter, stronger!

My missile stands up bigger, longer!

Who cares if I'm 5-foot-2?

I can drop my bomb on you!" (*Jackie Binder, Charlottesville, Va., whose last Invite ink was a poem about Osama bin Laden, shortly after Sept. 11, 2001*)

Three breast-related deaths: Jane Russell; Echo Valley, absurdly buxom porn star; and Elliot Handler, co-creator of the Barbie doll

For lovers of bosoms voluptuously cleft,

This year's been immeasurably sad:

Of Jane and then Echo the world was bereft,

And let's not forget Barbie's dad.

Our cups may have emptied before we had planned,

But it's not our place to complain:

We'll greet this triumvirate, linked hand-in-hand,

While strolling down Mammary Lane. (*Nan Reiner*)

To All North Koreans

(*Sung to Charlie Chaplin's "Smile"*)

Cry, though your heart's not aching;

Cry, even though you're faking;

Make it look real, though you loathed

Kim Jong-Il . . .

Try to cry, or (I say with sorrow)

You'll be in jail tomorrow,

Gagging on kimchi that is not. . . so hot . . .

So cry like you need consoling,

Cry while the camera's rolling;

Dredge up a tear for your Leader so Dear--

Weep and wail! Give your grief expression;

Show how you *love* oppression!

You'll find your life is spared, and why?

Because you cry. (*Beverley Sharp*)

Osama bin Laden

The hiding-and-seeking was put to an end,

Our thirst for revenge had been quenched.

A decade-long run but it would not extend:

Al-Qaeda's star player was benched.

And times would be different for Mr. Obama;

He thrived where George W. failed.

His troops put an end to elusive Osama,

The terrorist forces curtailed.

The relief shared by millions would last through the years;

At his hands no more people would die.

More than Wall Street, Gaddafi, Japan, it appears,

It's the story of MMXI.

Yes, the year's almost over; it's now safe to state

That no other event can exude

Such a genuine interest in worldly aff-- Wait!

Did you hear Lindsay Lohan posed nude?!

(Brian Cohen, Lexington, Va.)

Visit the online discussion group [The Style Conversational](#), where the Empress discusses today's new contest and results along with news about the Loser Community — and you can vote for your favorite among the inking entries, since you no doubt figured the Empress chose the wrong winner. If you'd like an e-mail notification each week when the Invitational and Conversational are posted online, write to the Empress at losers@washpost.com (note that in the subject line) and she'll add you to the mailing list. And on Facebook, join the far more lively group [Style Invitational Devotees](#) and chime in.

Next week: Clue Us In, or Gridiot's Delight



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 **3 Comments**



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](#) 

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She shot him once through the front door as he tried to get inside, police say.

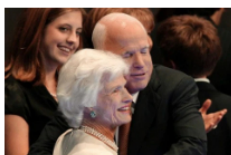
Aug 8



John McCain's remarkable mother: At 106, Roberta McCain has outlived her son

John McCain's father and grandfather made Navy history as admirals. But it was the senator's 'extroverted and irrepressible' mother, Roberta, who is often overlooked.

1 hour ago



White House reporter April Ryan has a bodyguard. Sarah Huckabee Sanders should pay the bill, Ryan says

Ryan, a veteran White House reporter, unloaded on the press secretary and Omarosa Manigault Newman in a new interview with the Hollywood Reporter.

6 days ago

