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Style

Style Invitational Week 1017: Buy a vowel — ONE vowel



It wasn't going to work to set the cartoon in Jefferson City, she commented archly: "MO. POLS GOOF OFF, OPT TO FORGO WORK," a univocalic headline by Elden Carnahan. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**, Style Invitational editor
April 11, 2013

MO. POLS GOOF OFF, OPT TO FORGO WORK

FBI PINCH! MITT IN ILLICIT 'BIG DIG' GRIFT!

Proto-Loser Elden Carnahan — who maintains a Web site, nrars.org, that keeps track of every blot of ink ever scored by any person in the 20-year history of the Style Invitational — is on the cusp of entrance into the Invite Hall of Fame, with 492 entries and other mentions since he debuted in Week 20, in 1993. Elden gets his 493rd ink with his contest idea this week: **Write a "univocalic" newspaper headline — one that uses only one vowel throughout**, as in Elden's examples above. You may use the letter Y as well as your A, E, I, O or U; it would be cooler if you didn't have to, but the Empress is a wee bit apprehensive about how hard this contest is.

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln-statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the droll game Basket Head, in which some schlemiel puts a plastic basketball hoop on his head and other people toss things at the hoop (not actual basketballs, we hope; you can see what happened to Dennis Rodman after he played this game with the real thing). We've given out a similar item before called Basket Case (pictured here because it's a funnier box) and can vouch that it guarantees excellent photo opportunities. Donated by Nan Reiner.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired [Grossery Bag](#).

Basket Case, a Style Invitational second-place prize. (Pat Myers)



Most Read Lifestyle

- Perspective**
The perils of being a woman who's just asking to be left alone
- Perspective**
Carolyn Hax: If you play the coquette, everyone loses
- 'I ain't kill nobody': Sacha Baron Cohen pranks O.J. Simpson on 'Who Is America?' finale**
- Analysis**
HBO's 'Sharp Objects' finale twist was extremely grisly. And confusing. And infuriating.
- How to send your child to school with a tasty lunch without turning your routine upside down**



Honorable mentions get a lusted-after [Loser magnet](#). First Offenders receive a smelly, tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, April 22; results published May 12 (online May 9). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 1017” 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 Tom Witte; the alternative headline in the “next week’s results” line is by Beverley Sharp. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

Still running — deadline Monday night: our famous horse-“breeding” contest: See bit.ly/invite1016.

Report from Week 1013

in which we asked for jokes in riddle form that use puns on people’s names. We warn you now: They are shamelessly groan-inducing. In fact, hearing them read without the groan afterward would be like hearing a comedy album recorded without an audience. So go ahead.

The winner of the Inkin’ Memorial

Q. Is squeaky-voiced smarminess annoying in all adolescent pop stars?

A. No, Justin Bieber. (*Natalie Beary, Great Mills, Md., a First Offender, and the 13-year-old daughter of the fourth-place winner*)

2. Winner of the [Fanny Bank](#), a jeans-shaped bank that emits a gross noise when you put in a coin:

Q. “Hey, Cletus, where can I find out about them Israeli pellet guns?”

A. “BB.net ’n’ Yahoo!” (*Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City*)

3. Q. Why is sitting alone in the cold reading 17th-century diaries a highly social activity?

A. Because I’m chilling with my Pepys! (*Mark Richardson, Washington*)

4. Q. That singer has been a superstar for a long time, but won’t audiences eventually get tired of her?

A. Sure — I can’t imagine them hanging on Beyoncé another 10 years. (*Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.*)

Second riddlers: Honorable mentions

Q. “Señor, how are you voting in the Florida election?”

A. “Yo Marco Rubio.” (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

Q. Why did Dr. Seuss write “The Cat in the Hat”?

A. Some Geisel do anything to amuse children! (*Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.*)

Q. What’s the best way to win a course of lisping therapy on “The King’s Speech Radio Hour”?

A. Colin Firth! (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

Q. On “DWTS,” what did Elton John whisper to the “Who’s the Boss?” star?

A. “Hold me closer, Tony Danza!” (*John McCooey, Rehoboth Beach, Del.*)

Q. What did the oddball judge say while giving Abramoff a reading

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assignment and simultaneously throwing that Boston shortstop out of court?

A. “Hit Thoreau, Jack, and dontcha come back, Nomar!” (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Q. Why did the dishonorable knight use the forbidden strength potion?

A. He wanted to keep his Lance Armstrong! (*Pie Snelson, Silver Spring, Md.*)

Q. Did you hear that the “30 Rock” cast was really sad about ending the series?

A. Yeah, even Alec Baldwin it was over! (*Danielle Nowlin, Woodbridge, Va.*)

Q. How did the football fan ask her idol to perform her wedding?

A. “Johnny Unitas!” (*Mary E. Moore, Gladwyne, Pa.*)

Q. How do you make a critical success of a 21 / 2-hour movie musical starring actors not known for their singing?

A. I couldn’t, but Anne Hathaway! (*Danielle Nowlin*)

Q. Does Middle Eastern food give you indigestion?

A. Yes, I feel some serious Tutankhamen! (*Trevor Kerr, Chesapeake, Va.*)

Q. Why did the A-Team women’s football squad cut its place kicker after just one game?

A. Mr. T. (*Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.*)

Q. How can you tell an American snowman from a German snowman?

A. American: Top hat / Carrot. German: Helmet / Coal. (*Christopher Lamora*)

Q. Why does the founder of Pennsylvania get a bigger encyclopedia entry than the purchaser of Alaska?

A. Because Penn is mightier than Seward! (*Mae Scanlan, Washington*)

Q. “Mr. Afghan President, will you thoroughly investigate your inner circle for graft and corruption right after we give you another \$10 billion to prop up your failed government?”

A. “Of Karzai will.” (*Ray Lum, Arlington, Va., a First Offender*)

Q. What happened to your car?

A. I was driving in Santa Monica, stopped at a red light, when Lohan behold, this [Porsche just crashed into me!](#) (*Roy Ashley, Washington*)

Q. Why do people forget that Matt Dillon was in “There’s Something About Mary”?

A. The director kept the Cameron Diaz! (*Robert Schechter*)

Q. What did the “Gangnam Style” singer say when you asked, “Who’s there?”

A. “Psy!” (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

Q. What did the matador say when he received a pair of perfect silk pants from his Chinese tailor?

A. “That’s some Ernest Hemingway over there!” (*Neal Starkman, Seattle*)

Q. What did each of the former mayor’s three ex-wives regard as her biggest mistake?

A. Marion Barry! (*Robert Schechter*)

Q. Is the Duchess of Cambridge having an obesity problem?

Q. Is the Duchess of Cambridge having an obesity problem?

A. Nah, the Kate Middleton is just baby fat! (*Pie Snelson*)

Q. There's an official in Pakistan whose job is to control cow noise? What's he called?

A. He's the Musharraf! (*Kevin Dopart*)

Q. What reason did Germans give for electing their chancellor?

A. "It's gonna take a Merkel!" (*John O'Byrne, Dublin*)

Q. "I say, E.M., how did you get your wife leave your British estate and book a passage to India with you?

A. "Forster!" (*Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.*)

Q. Who disrupted the "M*A*S*H" reunion here at TCM headquarters?

A. Jamie Farr, Ted! (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Q. Why did the Argentine dictator think he needed so many shoes?

A. I can't imagine — last time I saw him, he only had Juan Peron!
(*Beverly Sharp*)

Q. What do many of the male cast members of "Girls" have in common?

A. Lena Dunham on-screen! (*Danielle Nowlin*)

Q. What Boston Celtics coach was famous for asking the refs to put more time on the clock?

A. Auerbach! (*Seth Tucker, Washington*)

Q. What did the Pearl Jam fan say at the concert, even though she was suffering from a head cold?

A. "It doesn't get Eddie Vedder than this!" (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

Q. Remember when the government discovered secret documents had been stolen from Los Alamos?

A. That was Wen Ho Lee hell broke loose! (*Chris Doyle*)

And last:

Q. When it comes to absolutely terrible puns, how should one predict a winning Loser?

A. With a Chris Doyle ball! (*John O'Byrne*)

Visit the online discussion group [The Style Conversational](#), in which 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's results: Join Now, or Try Our Combos!, our [Week 1014](#) contest to combine parts of two words in a single Washington Post story into a new term.



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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](#)

The Post Recommends

Dershowitz says federal probe in New York, not Mueller, is 'greatest threat' to Trump

"There are no constitutional defenses to what the Southern District is investigating," Dershowitz, an informal Trump adviser, said Sunday.

22 hours ago



Opinion

Distinguished persons of the week: Breaking into Trump's inner circle

Who stood tall?

1 day ago



Trump recently sought his lawyers' advice on possibility of pardoning Manafort, Giuliani says

Trump attorney Rudolph Giuliani said Trump was seeking advice on pardons generally, and was upset that Manafort faced criminal exposure on charges unrelated to his work on Trump's campaign.

