

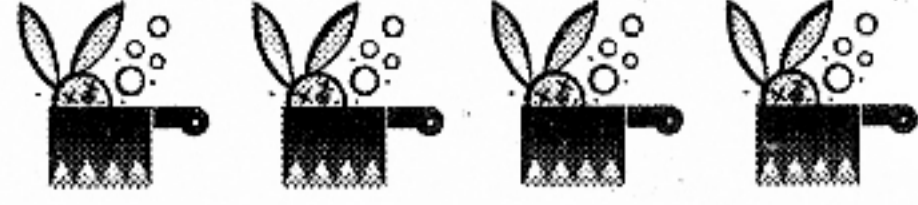
The Style Invitational

WEEK IV: DEGREES OF DIFFICULTY

Boiling Rabbits. Used to estimate a girlfriend's potential "fatal attraction" quotient should you break up.

Zero boiling rabbits: Girlfriend finds an unfamiliar bra under your couch, assumes you have some good reason for it, forgets to ask.

Four boiling rabbits: You laugh at the cute waitress's joke, girlfriend excuses herself to go outside and key your car.



Angle of Fascist Salute. Used to quantify a person's right-wing fanaticism.



20-degree salute: Believes all Americans should have the right to carry a handgun.

80-degree salute: Believes anyone who does not believe the above should be shot.



Blood From Heart. Used to quantify a person's left-wing fanaticism.



One drop: Thinks Elian should live in Cuba.

Full gush: Thinks we all should live in Cuba.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This week's contest: Awarding things one through four stars is just plain boring. Propose an alternative rating system. Take a quality you wish to quantify and devise the perfect icon to measure it. (You don't have to draw your icon—just tell us what it is.) Then

give us an example of the extremes, as in the examples above. Your subject matter can be anything that can be quantified by degree. First prize winner gets a G.I. Joe limited-edition foot-tall Buzz Aldrin action figure, a value of \$50.

First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-Shirt. The Uncle's Pick wins the yet-to-be-designed but soon-to-be-coveted "The Uncle Loves Me" T-shirt. Yes, you pathetic weenies who complained, we are still giving out bumper stickers for honorable mentions. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com, or by U.S. mail to The Style Invitational, Week IV, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and a daytime or evening telephone number. E-mail entries must include the week number in the message field. Contests will be judged on the basis of humor and originality. The newspaper reserves the right to edit entries for taste or content. Results will be published in three weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes.

REPORT FROM WEEK I,

in which you were asked to come up with a replacement for The Czar of The Style Invitational, name him, describe how he or she would change the contest, and give an example of one contest with the selected winner.

- ◆ **Third Runner-Up: The Chief Economist of The Style Invitational**
He is astoundingly cautious.
Sample Contest: Explain funny ways the Louisiana Purchase affected the U.S. economy.
Winner: It's too soon to tell. (David Genser, Arlington) ✓
- ◆ **Second Runner-Up: The Micromanager of The Style Invitational**
I will personally supervise all of you as you write your submissions, hovering over you and correcting all immaterial mistakes while leaving you to create anything of substance. I will then publish your entries under my name.
Sample Contest: Write something. To ask me to elaborate is the sign of a bad employee. An example is out of the question; I simply don't have the time. Now hop to it.
Winner: I'll know it when I see it. (Eliza Wealth, Falls Church) ✓
- ◆ **First Runner-Up: The Miss Manners of The Style Invitational**
Sample Contest: Apres tennis, you are having a light luncheon with friends and suddenly realize that the waiter has served you a large platter of moist, steaming horse manure. How do you handle the situation?
Winner: By using your petite Victorian manure-dipping spoon, traditionally located above your plate next to the toenail fork. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington) ✓
- ◆ **And the winner of the Sea Monkey Circus:**
The Kansas School Board of The Style Invitational
It's a committee of prune-faced elders who would ensure that all contest humor adheres to paleo-orthodox dogma.
Sample Contest: Pre-modernist jokes.
Winner: Charles Darwin walks into a bar. A cathedral falls on him. (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park) ✓

◆ Honorable Mentions:

The New Owner of The Style Invitational
There are going to be some changes around here. First, no more more part-timers. You people are going to have to demonstrate some real commitment if you want to be part of this team. No entering only occasionally. You either play for me every week or you don't play for me at all.

Sample Contest: Think of other ways to milk revenue out of this feature.

Winner: "The FedEx Invitational."

(Don Cooper, Burke) ✓

The Insufferable Wit of The Style Invitational
He rewards only appalling displays of pretension.

Sample Contest: Tell a joke beginning with "Did you hear about ..."

Winner: Did you hear about the two philosophers who lived next door to each other but couldn't get along? They were arguing from different premises!

(John O'Byrne, Dublin, Ireland) ✓

The Hound of The Style Invitational
A ferocious nocturnal howling beast from Hell. The only thing that makes him different from The Czar is his disciplined system of rewards and punishments. Winners get to go for a walk. Runners-up get their throats torn out.

Sample Contest: Canine Hygiene Products.

Winner: Gee Your Butt Smells Terrific!

(Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park) ✓

The Grand Regis of the Who Wants to Win The Style Invitational

He is very enthusiastic. His contests are all multiple-choice, and not very difficult.

Sample Contest: Name a children's book you will never see.

(a.) "The Cat in the Hat." (b.) "Mother Goose." (c.) "Goodnight Moon." (d.) "Adultery Is Not Just for Adults."

(Howard Walderman, Columbia) ✓

The President of The Style Invitational.

This Week's Contest: I think you know what you have to do to win.

(Kevin Cuddihy, Fairfax) ✓

The International Olympic Committee of The Style Invitational

We are humor experts from all over the world who will work in harmony to judge this contest. Extra credit will be given for funny entries that celebrate and cherish the ethnic

diversity of our vast global community.

Sample Contest: "Committee members need college tuition for their kids, lavish trips, fast cars, and big honkin' diamonds and rubies. Can you help us out?"

Winner: "Yes, I can."

(Jennifer Hart, Arlington) ✓

The Grandmother of The Style Invitational
All entries will be judged winners and each winner will receive a nickel. There will only be one nickel awarded per contestant regardless of the number of entries submitted or printed, as 5 cents is a lot of money and you should probably think about saving it for college one day.

This Week's Contest: Give Grandma a kiss.

(John Kammer, Herndon) ✓

THE GEEZER OF THE STYLE INVITATIONAL—MY CONTEST WILL APPEAR IN LARGE, EASY-TO-READ TYPE, AND IT WILL MINE THE "GOOD OLD DAYS" OF VAUDEVILLE FOR CLASSIC HUMOR. SUBMIT ALL YOUR ENTRIES BY 6 P.M., BECAUSE I GO TO BED AT 7 AND RISE WITH THE CHICKENS, BY CRACKY. SAMPLE CONTEST: COME UP WITH A JOKE THAT A WHIPPERSNAPPER WOULDN'T GET. WINNER: WHY WAS RUFUS AFRAID TO USE THE OUTHOUSE? BECAUSE HE WAS TOO MUCH OF A PUSHOVER. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRIES BY TELEGRAM.

(Jennifer Hart, Arlington) ✓

(Niels Hoven, Houston) ✓

The Pope of The Style Invitational.

What elevates him above The Czar is that he infallibly picks the funniest entries. Also, he substitutes the papal "we" for that pretentious editorial "we."

Sample Contest: Bad product endorsements.

Winner: Saint Augustine of Hippo for Weight Watchers.

(Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park) ✓

◆ The Uncle's Pick:

(This week The Uncle selects an entry from his own Week I contest, which was to come up with a pet peeve.)

My computer is always saying "You've got mail," but when I go outside to check, the mailbox is empty.

(Bob Sorensen, Herndon)

The Uncle explains: This is not "funny," but it is "interesting." Fact is, this happens to me as well! Sounds like some neighborhood hooligans are stealing your mail. Please contact your postmaster immediately.

Next Week: Not-So-Sweet Nothings

DEAD PRESIDENTS

by Tom Shroder, Vienna



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Don't let Dead Presidents die! Send your ideas (describe, don't draw) to: Dead Presidents, Style, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com.