

The Style Invitational

Week XVIII: Employing Irony

Don Rickles: *Grief counselor*
Amish person: *VCR repairman*



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Person with narcolepsy: Air traffic controller

This Week's Contest: Bad career choices. You may include explanations if necessary. This contest was suggested by Russell Beland of Springfield, who says his career has been "a series of bad job choices." Russ works in national security. First-prize winner gets something really special: We came up with this prize after our boss, Deborah the Nice, gently wondered if we might be willing to clean out the overflowing Style Invitational prize locker in the interests of maintaining a tidy office environment, and fostering harmonious relations with our co-workers, and remaining employed past next Thursday. This week's prize is a Giant Sack of Crap. Specifically, it is a lawn-size Hefty garbage bag filled with prizes accumulated over the years that do not quite fit The Invitational's exacting standards for prize quality. We do not wish to spoil the surprise for the lucky winner, but will reveal that this bag includes such must-have items as official NASCAR bath soap, four unused rolls of vintage 1950s-era flypaper, and a prototype two-headed men's safety razor that supposedly can speed-shave a face in 20 seconds, but for some reason appears not to have made it past the prototype stage. This package is priceless.

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. 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 XVIII, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday,

June 5. 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. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Editors reserve the right to edit entries for taste or content. Results will be published in four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes.

REPORT FROM WEEK XIV,

in which you were asked to contrive elaborate scenarios that end in painful puns. As usual for a contest such as this, the Steal Invitationalists were out in force, submitting anciently unoriginal jokes as their own: You can't heat your kayak and have it, too; with fronds like that, who needs anemones; I can see Claire Lee now, Lorraine has gone; transporting gulls over a staid lion for immortal porpoises; only Hugh can prevent florist friars; picking bunions on a Sesame Street bus; repaint and thin no more; making an obscene clone fall; and of course, the creakiest, rheumiest granddaddy of them all: No pun in ten did. We are pretty sure those below are original.

◆ **Second Runner-Up:** Maggie Thatcher went to see the doctor about a painful boil. The doctor told his nurse to administer a local anesthetic and let him know when she was ready for treatment. When the nurse returned, the doctor said: **"Is Thatcher Fine? I'll Lance Her."** (Chris Doyle, Burke)

◆ **First Runner-Up:** Lithuania's King Lothar loved golf. Competing in a tournament at the famed Pair of Dice golf course in Las Vegas, Lothar and his partner finished the 18th hole leading the field at one stroke over par. Waiting nervously in the clubhouse, however, he received bad news about his rivals' results: **"They played Pair of Dice and put up a par, King Lot."** (Sue Lin Chong, Washington)

◆ **And the winner of the huge men's underpants:** Two park rangers are making their rounds in the Rockies when they discover a guy named Nathan erecting an oil rig on the side of a mountain. He explains that he has been inspired by those ads on the radio, and has decided to drill for beer. The rangers are going to issue a citation, but decide to do something crueler: let him try. Winking to his partner, one ranger observes that since the mountain won't really be injured, **"Why don't we just let Nate here take its Coors?"** (Bill Strider, Gaithersburg)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

After a series of box office failures, Arnold Schwarzenegger's career was in trouble. Then he made a comeback with a triumphant performance on Broadway as the lead in a production of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf," with background music based on the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor. When asked the secret of his newfound success, Arnold said: **"Albee-Bach."** (Joseph Romm, Washington)

Intrigued by rumors that a group of Tennessee Jews has been successfully marketing a brand of chewing tobacco, kosher food giant Manischewitz sends someone to investigate. He approaches a group of men loitering outside a Baptist church, spitting into cans, and he asks:

"Pardon me, goys, is that the Chattanooga Jews' chew?" (Charles Frick, Kensington)

Who would have thought that Chris Evert would get caught doing cocaine? No athletes are showing her any public sympathy, except for one ex-Yankee. As might be expected, **"Strawberry feels for Evert."** (Chris Doyle, Burke)

A man is trying to decide between two careers in journalism: He wants either to be an investigative reporter, spending much of his time digging through files like a mole, or to write an advice column. He consults an editor friend, who cautions him against both paths, with the immortal advice: **"Neither a burrower nor Ann Landers be."** (Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

The Enterprise had an important assignment to stop a civil war on a distant planet. On the way it would pass the aptly named planet Allure, inhabited by beautiful, naked, sex-starved women. Capt. Kirk's orders were clear: He was to proceed directly to the war-torn planet. If he visited the women's

planet, he surely couldn't put it on his captain's log. When his communications officer asked him what he was going to do, he said: **"Tour Allure, Uhura. Tour Allure and lie."**

(Scott Owens, Alexandria)

It is a little-known fact that Golda Meir's fierce nationalism was forged when she was a young woman. Golda had a waitressing job on the Haifa ferry, serving smoked-salmon snacks to travelers. She was deeply moved when, one day, the ferry had to transport for burial the bodies of three civilians killed by terrorists. To this day Israeli children are told **"the ferry tale of Golda, lox and the three biers."**

(Chris Doyle, Burke)

Animal activist Bo Derek was horrified to learn that the queen of England wears antique sable coats. When she confronted the queen at a recent London affair, Elizabeth responded haughtily: **"Some wear old fur to reign, Bo."**

(Chris Doyle, Burke)

One day the famous gastronome Oliver Hardy was so hungry he ground his partner to bits, chicken-fried him and sealed him in tins. When confronted by his director, Ollie admitted it but begged forgiveness. Since Hardy was the studio's meal ticket, the director agreed to say nothing. In fact, he was hungry himself, and proposed a banquet: **"If you canned Stan to eat, get out the ketchup."**

(Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

◆ The Uncle's Pick:

I sent in 10 different puns in the hope that at least one would win. Unfortunately, **no pun in ten did.**

(Dave Walcher, Belcamp)

(The Uncle Explains: I happen to think sharing is good.)

Next Week: When We're LXIV