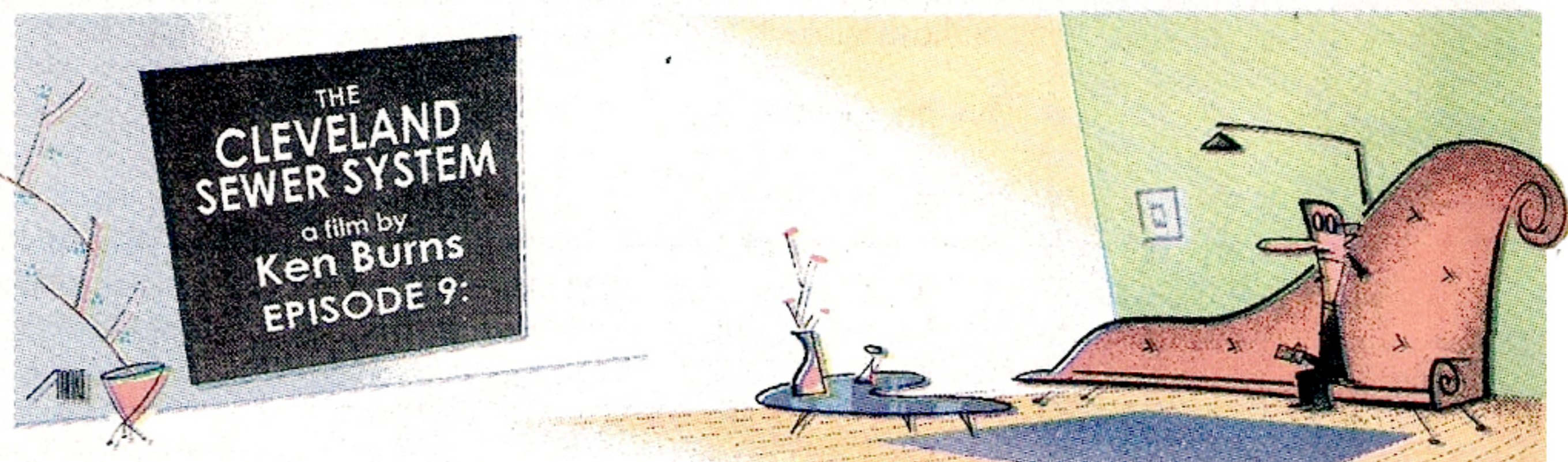


The Style Invitational

Week LXI: Life in the Blurbs



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

"The most realistic passenger's-eye view of a commercial airline disaster ever filmed—I'll relive that 12 minutes of hell every time I hear the words 'Prepare for takeoff!'"

This week's contest, inspired by Matt Grass, Chevy Chase, is to come up with a blurb used to sell a (real or imagined) book or movie that would be likely to have the opposite of the intended effect. First-prize winner gets a slightly used bathroom throw rug with "happy face" motif (bright orange with black accents, hand-stitched). Who can put a value on such an object?

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 shockingly ugly "The Uncle Loves Me" T-shirt. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312; by e-mail to losers@washpost.com; or by U.S. mail to The Style Invitational, Week LXI, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, April 2. 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 subject 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 LVII,

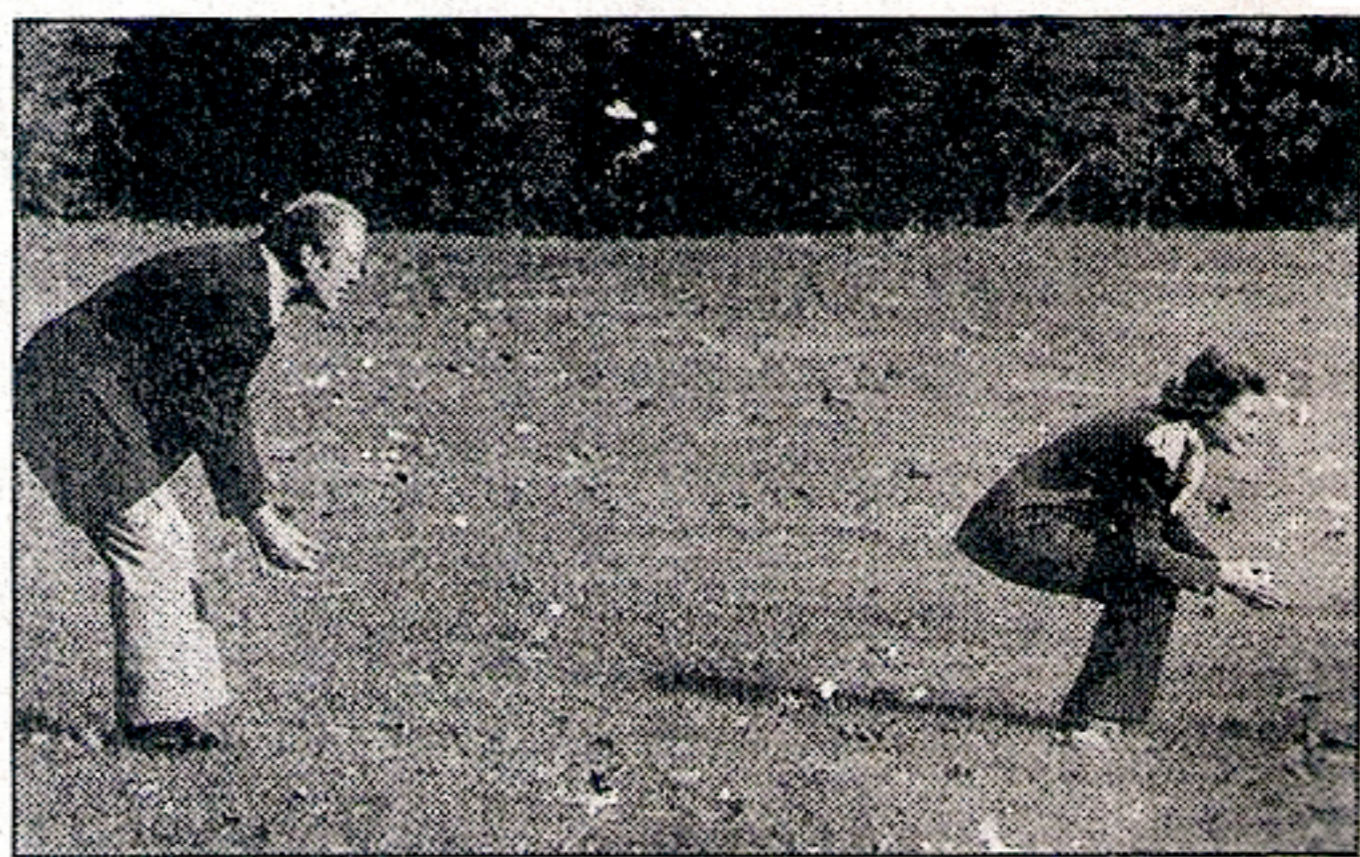
in which we asked for (a) a caption for the picture; (b) an explanation of why it is art; and (c) the elements missing from the picture. As an added challenge, or because the Uberczar was intoxicated with power, entries containing sex or potty humor were forbidden. Which left, what? Jokes involving the word "squat," references to missing skis or a game of leapfrog. Lots of references to leapfrog. In fact, hardly any submission was completely and totally, like, unique. So if something very much resembling your idea appears below without your personal moniker appended, we are terribly, terribly sorry. In fact, we do not know if we will be able to look you in the eye again. Oh wait, we don't have to, do we?

◆ Third runner-up: **As Richard Milhous Nixon boards the helicopter on Aug. 9, 1974, he receives a squatting ovation from the newest residents of the White House.** (Frank Calogero, Jefferson, Ga.)

◆ Second runner-up: **Remember the days when Catch the First Lady was a lawn game, not a political vendetta?** (Cindi Rae Caron, Lenoir, N.C.)

◆ First runner-up: **Betty hates it when Jerry tests out his "nobody's head may be higher than the president's" decree.** (Marc Hirsh, Somerville, Mass.)

◆ And the winner of the official White House photo above: **President Ford was such a nice husband. When Betty asked if her pantsuit made her butt look big, he actually took the time to examine the fit.** (Kelli Midgley-Biggs, Columbia)



FILE PHOTO

◆ Honorable Mentions:

A long, long time ago, there was a limit to how low a president and first lady would stoop . . . (Ed Mickolus, Dunn Loring)

Noting the salaries that the Redskins are paying over-the-hill players, a former Big Ten star practices for a comeback. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

President Ford demonstrates his hands-off policy regarding White House interns. (Chris Ubik, Germantown)

The Fords loved to play charades. Here the president is trying to guess which Utah senator the first lady is depicting. (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

During a game of charades, Gerald and Betty act out part of their phrase: "Earl Butz" (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

Behind every good woman, there's a man too far behind to catch her if she falls. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

After telling his city to drop dead, the Fords try to make amends by extending a White House welcome to then-Mayor Abe Beame. (J. Larry Schott, Gainesville, Fla.)

"Sesame Street" tryouts: While the first lady successfully depicts the number 4, the president needs work on his F. (Earl Gilbert, La Plata; Len Boswell, Columbia)

The first couple introduces Liberty to Poland. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Though Mrs. Ford looked great in a cone girdle, the undergarment never gained the popularity of the cone bra. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

"See, honey? You can play football just fine without a helmet! Wonder what Lyndon was getting at?" (Bryan Fortson, Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland)

President Ford tests his wife's effectiveness as a sundial. (Brian P. Thurber, Princeton, N.J.; Judith Cottrill, New York)

In one of history's ironies, the Fords duck during a 21-gun salute after a supposedly errant shot by Pfc. "Squeegie" Fromme. His sister reportedly never forgave the president for her brother's subsequent court-martial. (John "Rooster" Cogburn, Southlake, Tex.)

The first known photo of "Betty Ford, center." (Tom Smith, Fairfield, Calif.)

On Jan. 21, 2001, the Fords fell to their knees in gratitude as it became clear that finally—finally!—people would stop whining about the Nixon pardon. (Ervin Stembol, Alexandria)

There should be the word "Wrong!" above the photo of the president, and "Right" over that of Mrs. Ford. Underneath should be the caption "A lesson in lifting from OSHA." (John Muehl, Springfield)

If he picks up this difficult 1-7 split for a spare, President Nixon will win the White House Staff Lawn Bowling Tournament. (Ken Page, Sterling)

Betty Ford leads her husband through his walking-and-chewing-gum-at-the-same-time exercises. (Mike Genz, La Plata)

Where do you think the eggs for the Easter Egg Roll come from? (Paul Winner, Columbia)

It's art because:

The photograph deftly symbolizes the relationship of the president to the first lady: He may hold a higher position, but she is clearly leading. (Colette Zanin, Greenbelt)

It must be art. It's in black and white. (Cindi Rae Caron, Lenoir, N.C.)

Nobody is naked. (R. Giuliani, New York; Tom Gabriel, Silver Spring)

The missing elements:

Missing from this photo of an informal receiving line is the delegation of Oompa-Loompas. (Sandra Hull, Arlington)

The middle stages of evolution. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg; Robin D. Grove, Pasadena, Md.)

A football, a hand-held TV camera, Gov. Jesse Ventura and the XFL record crowd of 278 fans. (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

Madox. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg; Chris Doyle, Burke)

The Lincoln Bedroom bed, which the president is holding by one end and the first lady carries on her back. (Warren Schlechte, Kerrville, Tex.)

Hanging in its unadulterated state in the West Virginia Museum of Art, the picture includes "Saturday Night Live" Gerald Ford impersonator Chevy Chase. It is titled "Two Fords and a Chevy on the Front Lawn." (Jim W. Pond, Holliston, Mass.)

◆ The Uncle's Pick: **It is art because it is a classic example of queue-bism.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

The Uncle Explains: *Who says puns can't be witty and tasteful? The fun comes from combining a style of art (overrated, in this humble observer's opinion) and the Briticism "queue up," which means to form a line in a polite and orderly manner. We have so much to learn from the English.*

Next Week: Spinning Out of Control