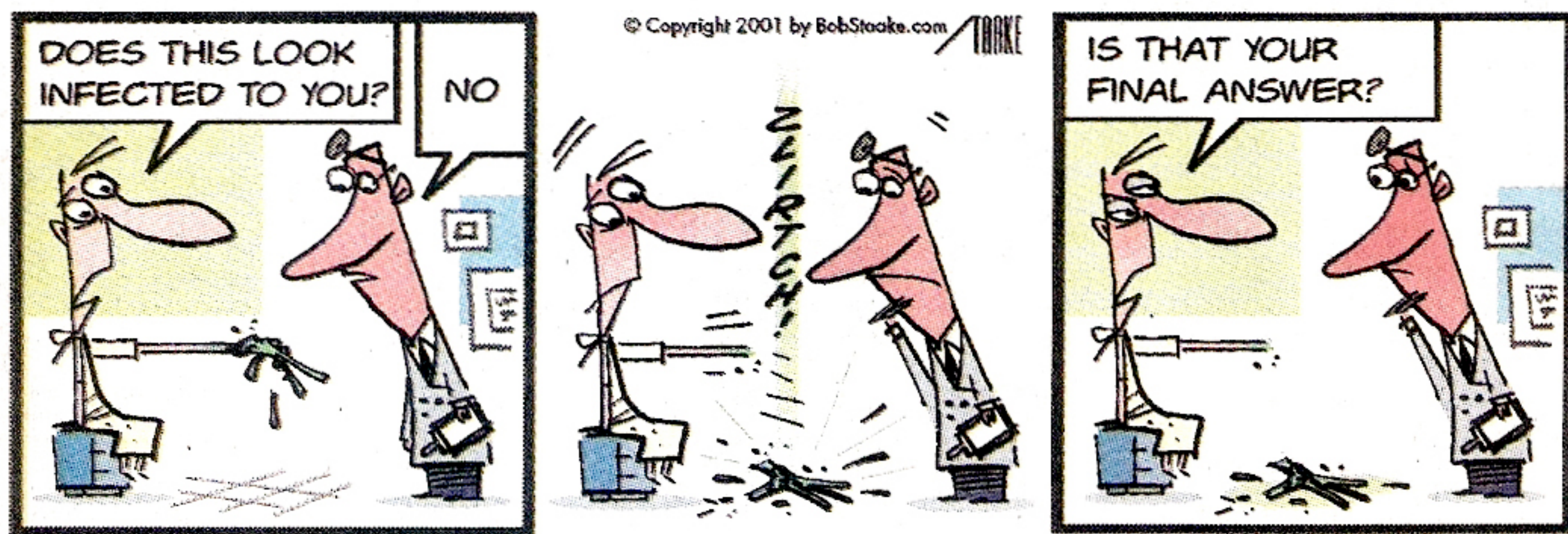


The Style Invitational

Week LXXI: Balloonacy



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Take that, you beast!
Of all the nerve!
Help me!
I love it when you do that!
Grrr!
But first, a little ru-ru!
Oh no!
Ow! That hurts!
Hey, I didn't say it would WORK!
The directions say . . .
Because it feels good, dammit!
Ooooo. REAL Mensa candidate here!
I'll be darned if I'll pay a grand and a half for THAT!
Quit saying that!

Have you considered using a catcher's mitt?
Yeah, but Rudy Giuliani isn't Jewish!
Salve! I need salve!
One tractor or two?
Honey, did we order this?
The kids need to learn about responsibility, that's why!
Look, kids! It's Ol' Mother Nature at work again!
Does anyone here speak German?
We never should have liberated the French!
Huh? What was that?
Is that your final answer?
Yes
No

How come?
Does this look infected to you?
In Arkansas, he's considered a God!
That's nothin'!
A chip off the ol' block, eh?
I'm tellin' you, it's a cow!
Can you say that in Yiddish?
&\$%!
Quick! Get to the bank before anybody notices!
Kerblam!
Ka-runch!
Zlirtch!
Ooof!
Later . . .
Meanwhile, during the Eisenhower administration . . .

This week's contest: Create a comic strip containing one to four panels. For your dialogue or thought balloons, you may choose from the menu above. In addition you may invent one line—but only one line—of your own. You don't have to draw anything, just describe your characters and tell us what they are doing and saying. Bob Staake drew the

example above, and will draw the winning entries. First-prize winner gets a copy of a rare, antique raving-mad 1972 pamphlet: "On The Victory of Socialist Agricultural Co-operativization and the Future Development of Agriculture in Our Country," by the Hon. Kim Il Sung, president of North Korea. It 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. Honorable Mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. 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 LXXI, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, June 11. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and 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. Entries may be edited 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. The revised title for next week's contest is by Russell Beland of Springfield.

REPORT FROM WEEK LXVII

You were asked to come up with celebrity entries for Style's "Life Is Short" feature, in which people describe their lives in 100 words or fewer. But first, T.J. Murphy of Arlington complains that in his published entry last week about "Gone With the Wind," we inserted a reference to Rhett's forcible sexual conquest of Scarlett that T.J. found distasteful. He is right: We did so insert. He wishes it emphasized that he, T.J. Murphy of Arlington, does not condone, countenance or otherwise advocate the forcible sexual conquest of anybody by anybody, nohow, and not in jest or in the movies or in any venue, medium or context that smacks in any such way of any such act. Whatsoever. And we do so attest. Back to "Life Is Short":

◆ Third runner-up: **Life? Short? You bet it's short. It's so short, they should call it Lif. It's so short, my grandmother died before she could have any children. It's so short, my life insurance policy already paid me. It's so short, I died twice doing this bit.** —Henny Youngman (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

◆ Second runner-up: **We are all grouped together. It is very warm, and sticky, and wet. Thousands of us have survived the invasion and we are now in a kind of limbo. We can say nothing, hear nothing, see nothing. It is, in any case, far too dark here for anyone, anything, to see. After a few days the enemy will attack with chemical weapons. Hundreds of our brothers will die all around us, but some of us will survive, and adapt, and become more resistant. The Resistance will persevere. We will win.** —A Pneumonia Bacterium (Russell Beland, Springfield)

◆ First runner-up: **Next time I make a pact with the Devil, I have to nail this down in advance. It's supposed to be the PORTRAIT that ages, dammit.** —Keith Richards (Alexandra Schexnayder, Richmond)

◆ And the winner of the musical ice cream scoop: **Maybe life is short. However, it is much too long for 97 words, or 98, or even 99. But everything is open to interpretation. What does "in" 100 words truly mean? Does it mean that the entirety of one's life must be summarized within that stricture? Arguably, since life itself is episodic, it may also be expressed in an episodic fashion. To wit, that one would not violate the "100 word" ruling if . . .**

—William J. Clinton, Chappaqua, N.Y.

. . . one submitted multiple entries in series, much as life itself is presented seriatum, so long as each entry were held to 100 words or fewer. What would the judges say about that? It's open to debate and maybe appeal, a long, costly appeal that would do no one any good, and would wisely be avoided. Now, the fact is, my life story begins in a small town called Hope, Arkansas, where . . .

—William J. Clinton, Chappaqua, N.Y. (Don Burdett, Arlington)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

Life is a lot like a toolbox. Sometimes you reach in and get screwed. By a Craftsman All-Purpose Power Screwdriver with variable clutch, available at Sears. And sometimes you get nailed. By a Craftsman Turbo-Powered Nail Gun, sold only at Sears. But you always have to level with yourself. Using a Craftsman Deluxe 12-Inch Magic-Bubble Level with . . . —Bob Vila (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

I am not lonely. And I'd rather you didn't call. I just hate fixing stuff, which is why I took this job. —The Maytag Repairman (Carl Bixel, Cincinnati)

Playing the buffoon isn't as easy as an occasional pratfall or witless blunder. There is timing. There is phrasing. And there is acting, the most difficult form of acting in which one must capture, with deftly simple dialogue and body language, the hypocrisies of everyday Americans who sense their spiritual emptiness in a sense of plenty. Comedy is the cruelest mistress. —Homer Simpson (Alexandra Schexnayder, Richmond)

Let me say it now, just once. Throw it out. No, it doesn't look better with glitter on it. Store-bought cakes are better. Sorry, but it isn't as good as new. Homemade gifts look cheap. No one cares about finding new uses for old crap. The Depression is over. Get a life. Thank you. —Heloise (Bob Sorensen, Herndon)

I DON'T NEED A MICROPHONE. MY LUNGS ARE STRONGER THAN DEAN MARTIN'S BREATH. —Kate Smith (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

Don't need a hundred words. —Calvin Coolidge (Ben Aronin, White Plains, N.Y.)

They used to say I was postmodern. No point, floating across the cultural landscape, touching down to make wry observations in archetypal settings. Then for a while I was fixated on architectural icons. Lately I don't even appear, replaced by the rambling recollections of my Creator. To hell with this. I want out. Give me a strip with some knock-knock jokes, Bazooka Joe gags, anything. I'm dying here. —Zippy the Pinhead (Jim Pond, Holliston, Mass.)

Modest lives such as mine are lived uneventfully and unpretentiously, for I, Elizabeth Taylor Hilton Wilding Todd Fisher Burton Warner Fortensky . . . (Sue Lin Chong, Washington)

Go ask your father. Go ask your father. Go ask your father. Go ask your father. Go ask your father. Go ask your father. Go ask your father. —Bobbi McCaughey (Bruce W. Alter, Fairfax Station)

to washington i went when i was a boy; and the beautiful chalky buildings stood like hungry teeth along the avenues. one stuck out like a jagged fang among them: the capitol. how I hated it. —e e cummings (James Pierce, Charlottesville)

In the city of Schmink / In building 3-B / I wrote some good books, / I'm sure you'll agree. / I wrote dozens of books / Bound in blue, pink and red. / It sure was fun / But now I am dead. —Dr. Seuss (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

Next Week: A Harsh Dose of Really