

The Style Invitational

Week LXXVII: Ask Backwards



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Wynken, Blynken and God	A micro-softener	A dart, a heart and Jean-Paul Sartre
Zurich, Paris and Dumfries	Shortly after brain death	Ariel Sharon but not Sharon Stone
Anyone but Mike Tyson	Christine Toad Whitman	Anything but bib overalls
A prehensile nose	Fascism, Communism and soft-boiled eggs	Because it's funny

This Week's Contest: You are on "Jeopardy!" These are the answers. What are the questions? Answer one or more. First-prize winner receives a block of suckable hard candy in which there is an embedded grasshopper and what appears to be an insect's egg sac.

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 LXXVII, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, July 23. 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. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Joseph Romm of Washington.

REPORT FROM WEEK LXXIII,

in which we asked you to give spectacularly bad advice to people in one of several categories.

◆ Third Runner-Up:

To a boy going out on his first date: If you don't ogle other girls, your date is going to think you are gay.

(Russell Beland, Springfield)

◆ Second Runner-Up:

To newlyweds after their first fight: Hold her hand gently and tell her that the best way to make up is with a romantic dinner, which, if she gets started right now, she can have finished by the time you get home from bowling.

(Michael W. Oakes, Reston)

◆ First Runner-Up:

To seniors trying to come up with a theme for their dinner dance:

A tribute to Charles M. Schulz. Have Woodstock balloons, Charlie Brown party favors, and music by Snoo Dogg.

(Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

◆ And the winner of the flatulent stuffed dog:

To a kid going off to summer camp:

"Leaves of three, good T.P."

(David Moore, Bowie)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

To a boy heading off on his first date:

Call her up beforehand to ask her what she is wearing, so you'll know if your shoes will match her purse. (Marleen May, Rockville)

Every schmo buys flowers or chocolates. A catfish, now that's something she'll remember. (John Kammer, Herndon)

Let her know you are hip to the latest lingo. Call her "phat." (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

To a kid heading off to summer camp:

If you have trouble passing the beginner swim test, sneak out in the middle of the night and practice when there is no one there to laugh at you. (Phyllis Kepner, Columbia; Judith Cottrill, New York)

Spell out the last word of every sentence, as in "Hey, want to get something to E-A-T?" It will become your trademark. (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

If you go skinny dipping, make sure you tell everyone where you stashed your clothes, just in case you forget. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

If the other kids give you any trouble, tell them to back off because your father is the chief of staff to the deputy undersecretary of transportation. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

A bear cub on its own in the wild is probably lost. If you find one, pick it up and take it to a counselor. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

To newlyweds after their first fight:

Your old girlfriend probably knows you the best, so you should give her a call and ask her to try to explain things to your wife. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

Be sure to write down everything he said so you can throw it back in his face each night just before bed. (Phyllis Kepner, Columbia)

Hold her mother hostage; she'll come around. (Tammy Shulman, Rockville)

Nothing says "I'm sorry" like a bottle of Scotch. (Jonas Tavela, Washington)

Have children right away. It will make things mellow out. (Sue Lin Chong, Washington; Russell Beland, Springfield)

Why not sort it out on Jerry Springer; he seems like a good arbitrator. (Greg Pickens, Washington; Roger and Pam Dalrymple, Potomac Falls)

To George W. Bush about to deal with a Democratic Senate:

Do what you want. Remember that you are in charge. You can always fire them. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

They appreciate genuineness. Write your own speeches without any help from those advisers or writers. Even better, just ad lib it. (Phyllis Kepner, Columbia)

To a guy about to buy his first new car:

Don't just take the undercoating. Insist on double undercoating. (Sam Bruce, Manassas; Lee Mayer and Paul Laporte, Washington; Robin D. Grove, Pasadena, Md.)

You want to make a good impression on the sales staff, so dress as expensively as possible. Look professional. In fact, even if you are not a doctor, wear a stethoscope. (Brian E. Foster, Fairfax)

Salespeople don't want to waste time with people who are not going to buy, so early on you should let them know you are serious by pointing excitedly and saying something like, "I must have that car—no other will do." (Marleen May, Rockville; Russell Beland, Springfield)

D.C. isn't really the South. You don't need A.C. (Jim Senft, Silver Spring)

It's customary to tip the salesman 15 percent. (Jeff Seigle, Vienna; Bob Sorensen, Herndon; Mike Genz, La Plata)

Check the finish by dragging a key across the hood. (Bob Sorensen, Herndon)

Get to know your car before you buy it. When you go for the test drive, make sure you keep it a few days at least; they expect that. (Jeff Seigle, Vienna)

Orange is a chick magnet. (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

To senior citizens trying to come up with a theme for their dance:

Call it "The Last Dance." (Melissa Yorks, Gaithersburg)

"Come Toward the Light" Night. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

"Strangers in the Night—Or Is It Just Cataracts?" (Paul Kocak, Syracuse)