

The Style Invitational

Week CXVII: Blues It or Lose It



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Ooooooh, I ain't got nuthin'
But that ol' steerin' wheeeel
Ooooooh, I ain't got nuthin'
But that ol' steerin' wheeeel
Oh, my Land Cruiser's dyin',
And my limited-edition 2002 Beemer with the custom leather
interior and hand-tinted, gold-leaf-highlighted bodywork
Ain't got the cachet I used to feeeeeeel . . .**

This Week's Contest was suggested by Bill Spencer of Exeter, N.H. Write the first verse of a blues song expressing some Washington area woe. First-prize winner gets a copy of "Nomo in America," the story of the spectacular rookie season of Dodgers pitcher Hideo Nomo, autographed by the author, sportswriter Larry Rocca. The book is in Japanese. 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 or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. U.S. mail entries are no longer accepted due to rabid, spit-flying fanaticism. Deadline is Monday, April 29. 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 Seth Brown of Williamstown, Mass.

Report from Week CXIII:

in which we asked you to write a rhyming poem about some ongoing news event.

◆ Second Runner-Up:

**John Ashcroft felt uneasy, when speaking to the press,
Beneath "Spirit of Justice" with her bronze protruding breast.
He found a simple remedy to deal with his distress,
Eight thousand dollars' worth of drapes, installed at his behest.
The man, he had a problem, and this solved it fine, I guess.
But why not move John Ashcroft's butt a few feet to the west?**

(Donald H. Heitman, Arlington)

◆ First Runner-Up:

**About the Glendenings, here's a short quip
Concerning their perfectly proper courtship.
Oh, wait. Do the math. I guess there was not one:
The nuptials, it's clear, were hastened by shotgun.**

(John Bauer, Gaithersburg)

◆ And the winner of the mariachi band made from taxidermized frogs:

**Mei Xiang, I am so very sorry
My advances to you were too crude.
Though your well-rounded haunches still thrill me
I will try now to act more subdued.
Could we possibly catch us a movie?
And you'll be my sweet, sweet bamboo.
Please forgive me, my dear One and Only—
Or I'll have to go courting a gnu.**

(Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

**Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Peace is coming to the Middle East
And this poem rhymes.**

(Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)

**Johnny A of DOJ
Abhors a naked breast,
And recently he chanced to see
A marble one undressed.
Now thanks to John, the breast is
gone,
He draped that unclothed part.
But slam the door, he's headed for
The gallery of art.**

(Nancy Cahill, Woodbridge)

**If the Expos move this city's way,
the team's name can basically
stay.**

**I'm sure you'll agree—just add
an "e."**

Voilà! The Washington Exposé.

(Grady Norris, New Bern, N.C.)

**So much of our forest primeval
Falls like cotton to the boll weevil.
Though some may blame lumber
For felling their number,
Bush claims it's the Axes of Evil.**

(Edith F. Grant, Bethesda)

**Once upon a March of madness came the news of lack of grad-ness
From the team that loves to rebound, run the court and shoot and score.
Maryland, that team of turtles, trips o'er academic hurdles,
Thinking books and labs and lectures aren't what the U is for.
"Ours is not to cram for finals, just to make the Final Four:
Only this, and nothing more.**

(Dave Zarrow, Herndon)

**Many a case is dropped by even lawyers most intrepid, since
Although suspicion's strong, there's sometimes not a shred of evidence.
The Enron scandal may become the first that's ever dropped because . . .
There was.**

(David Smith, El Cerrito, Calif.)

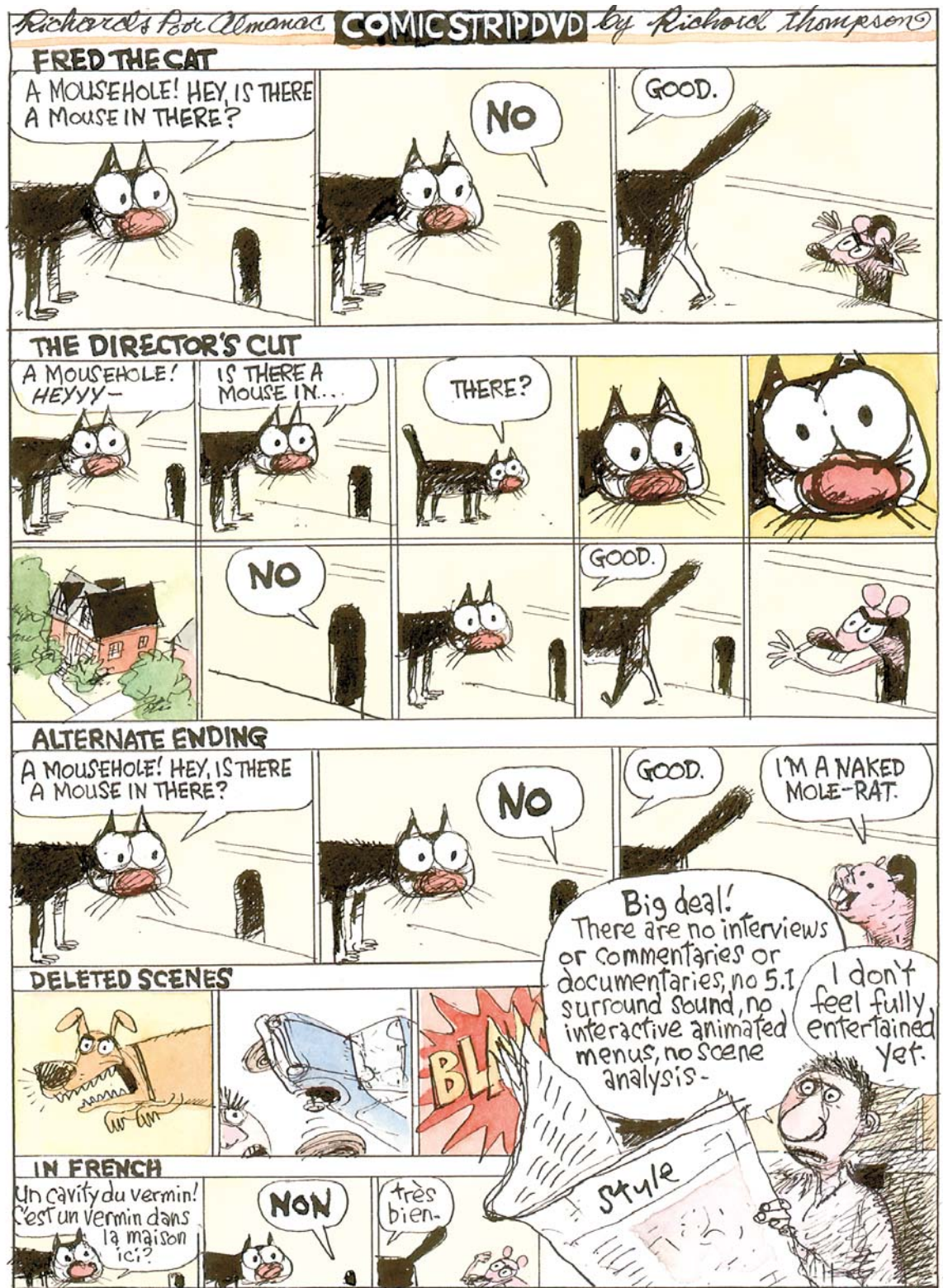
**The busier the better, network management did say,
Let's fill the screen with data so our fans won't go away.
All at once you'll see the weather, stocks and news tidbits galore,
Naked readers, more Geraldo, sports and snippets of the war.
This craft is just a business—if the viewer still just shrugs,
"Fear Factor" in the newsroom, with the anchors eating bugs.**

(Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

**You often hear cynics so loudly complaining
That police just eat doughnuts on the taxpayer's buck.
But they got to use all this specialized training
Chasing the thief of a Krispy Kreme truck.**

(Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)

Next Week: **Laughorisms**



TELL ME ABOUT IT

TELL ME, From F1

sympathetic to the best friend here, because I don't LIKE when people assume they know what they don't know, especially when the assumption is unflattering, and especially when there's an alternative to the unflattering assumption, one that's attached to your FACE—every day, according to you. A telephone can also be used to ask your best friend what's up.

Not in an annoying, wounded, shoulder-chippy why-won't-you-do-this-for-me-me-me way, but in a friendly, are-you-okay way. Explain that this meeting is important to you, and you feel like she's making excuses, and that hurts you, and you hope that you're reading her wrong.

However you phrase it, leave room for her to explain. Even if she's just jealous, it doesn't seem sisterly of you to ask her to "put her feelings aside" before you've made an effort worthy of your 15 years to confirm what those feelings might be. Maybe she's in a bad way right now, and can't understand why you can't put your feelings aside long enough to get the hint and just drop this.

Maybe, too, she's just being a dink. But I can't understand why, after so many years of close friendship, you're seeking the answer through me.

Dear Carolyn:

My mother is a diabetes educator, and recently I introduced her to my best friend, "Jane." In private, my mom confided to me that she thought Jane had a little-known condition known as polycystic ovary syndrome, which is a hormone disorder that causes a woman to carry a lot of weight, particularly around her stomach. My mom said that Jane was pre-diabetic and should go visit an endocrinologist, who could put Jane on medication to help delay the onset of diabetes and help her lose weight. (Jane also has other symptoms that lead me to believe that my mom's diagnosis is correct.)

How do I bring this up to Jane? I don't want to insult her, but I want her to have the best quality of life possible.

—Concerned Friend

With each day, I see new evidence that we have sum-

moned our fullest capacities for cultural weirdness and applied them all to our weight.

Either that, or to game shows. But when I see a black-and-white issue like this become gray under the pressure of a few extra pounds, I have to cast my vote for fat.

I don't say this in judgment of you. I'd get stuck, too, over telling a woman her fat gobs might be symptomatic. (And then there's the, you know, body hair; I just read up on those "other symptoms.") It's just that the hypersensitivity to weight is now hyper beyond all reason, and creating demands for fact that far exceed our already paltry reserves.

Here, at least, your mom's job gives you good cover. Explain to Jane what Mom does, then say she noticed in Jane's . . . *body type* the possibility of this condition. Then the endocrinologist stuff. Have the wisdom and heart to say this much, and on the rest, you're free to play dumb.

Hey Carolyn:

Is it wrong to want all or nothing? I'm 18, in college, and I have a guy friend at the college whom I really like. He says he likes me, too, but that he doesn't want a "relationship" right now. The thing is, we're already so wrapped up in "us," it practically is a relationship. Is it wrong of me to hate the "friend" title when I feel like I'm acting as more to him?

—Mass.

If some of this acting is naked, then, yes. For health reasons, if nothing else.

Even clothed, though, there's no "wrong" when it comes to feelings—only in what you do about them. It's wrong to act on them impulsively, or deny them, or assume they trump someone else's.

As for your relationship, this isn't *practically* one, it is one. It's just not exclusive, and he might be in it for grins. If you don't like that, say no.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style Plus, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com, and join Carolyn's live discussion at noon Fridays at washingtonpost.com/liveonline



YOU'RE A PIG. BUT I MEAN THAT IN THE BEST WAY.

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Are you a Mary Worth-Boondocks-Baldo or a Sally Forth-Zits-Zippy the Pinhead?

Take the comics survey Sunday, April 28!

COMICS SURVEY
Sunday, April 28, in Comics
The Washington Post