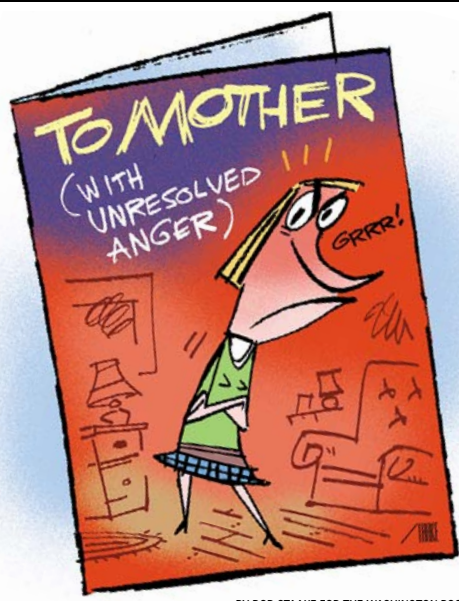


The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 658: Not in the Cards

On an office wall at the headquarters of Hallmark Cards in Kansas City, according to a recent Associated Press article, there's a big bulletin board covered with index cards marked "FBN" — "funny, but no." These contain the funniest ideas that were ruled out the line even for Hallmark's mildly edgy Shoebox division. Like the Christmas card featuring a couple cuddling on the couch with a jolly man in a beard — and a turban. Woman: "Honey, this Afghan your mom gave us is really warm!" This week: Send us ideas for cards that would likely be ruled FBN by Hallmark but F&YYY by the Empress. How far can you go? She wouldn't have had any problem with the Afghan card, for sure. But she's unlikely to run those in the realm of the Truly Sick. Results run May 14 — Mother's Day.

Winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy, and a copy of the winning card as done up by The Inimitable and Too Funny for Hallmark Robert T. Staake. First runner-up gets an "Energy Ball" donated by persistent Loser Dave Prevar of Annapolis; it looks just like a ping-pong ball, except that it produces little flashing red lights and an irritating noise when you touch little metal strips on it. Sometimes.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions (or whatever they're called this week) get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, April 24. Put "Week 658" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are 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. 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 Chris Doyle of Forsyth, Mo. The Honorable Mentions name is by Paul Kocak of Syracuse, N.Y.

REPORT FROM WEEK 654

In which we celebrate Earth Day by suggesting some oh-so-sensible recycling ideas:

4 Some people throw away their shredded financial records, and I've found you can make them into challenging jigsaw puzzles. Plus, once you finish them, you can sell them to this guy I know. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

3 The White House could use the old Iraqi information minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, to reassure us about winning the war. (Yoyo Zhou, Cambridge, Mass.)



BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

2 The winner of the stupid card game "Are You Phrazy": Little paper circles from office hole-punchers could be tossed at newlywed bureaucrats. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

1 Use old prisons as office buildings. It's a nice, secure environment for employees — and they have restrooms right in their cubicles. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

INKLINGS

Fingernail clippings make perfect scimitars for your social studies diorama about the Crusaders' capture of Edessa in 1097. (Things got a little heavier for its recapture in 1147, so you'd want to switch to toenails for that one.) (Russell Beland)

Junked cars could be shipped to Japan so they can be recycled into well-designed, reliable cars for us to buy. (Joel Knanishu, Rock Island, Ill.)

VCRs make great stepstools for getting on and off the potty. (Jeff Covell, Arlington)

I wish I could take credit for this one, but how about that person who thought to paint Styrofoam in pastel colors, mold it into bunnies and chicks, and sell it as Peeps? Man, that's genius. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Paperweights made otherwise obsolete are very handy when you need an object to throw at the computer screen after Windows crashes yet again. (Marc Naimark, Paris)

Ice sculptures can be melted down in the microwave in practically no time and turned into delicious, refreshing water. (Russell Beland)

Used tissues make great substitutes for Handi-Wipes. (Irv Shapiro, Rockville)

When he dies, my uncle wants his body donated to the producers of those "CSI" shows for use in an autopsy scene so his obituary can include a TV appearance. (Bill Moulden, Frederick)

Those magnetic "Support the Troops" ribbons could be reused to decorate our troops' body armor. Come to think of it, they would BE our troops' body armor. (Jay Shuck)

Recycle your chastity ring as an IUD. (Jim Goodyear, Arlington)

Don't let the barbershop keep your trimmed hair. They recycle it for big bucks, you know. Or let them keep it, and just call that the tip. (Russell Beland)

Bleach your old coffee grounds and serve them to your Yankee guests as grits. (Bill Devlin, Front Royal, Va.)

After dredging your chicken pieces or liver in flour for frying, pour the remaining flour into a plastic bag. Before you know it, you'll have enough for a yummy batch of cookies. (Jeanie Kunkel, Fairfax)



Lusted-after magnets go to Honorable Mentions, or whatever they're called.

Gather leather-bound editions of classic Russian novels: "War and Peace," "Crime and Punishment," "The Brothers Karamazov." Stack them and drill a thick hole straight through them to turn the stack into a lamp stand. Then your eyes won't be so strained when you're watching the reruns on TV Land. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

That sticky stuff they use on envelopes makes great fake snot. It did at my last staff meeting, anyway. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village; Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Send a copy of your new book to Dan Brown. Wait 20 years and . . . (Michele Puzanchera, Pittsburgh)

A second baseman can be recycled to any position on the team. I mean, what's he going to do? — F. Robinson, Washington (Kuohsien Huang, Ichikawa, Japan)

Surely those elementary school long-division problems have all been done many times before, so why continue to create reams of waste paper? Put them all in a database so kids can just look them up. (Dave Prevar)

The shed skin from molted cicadas would make great wonton crackers. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Hoop earrings could be recycled into hula hoops for mice. They'd have to appreciate the change of pace from running on that wheel all night. (Lucy Brennan-Levine, Potomac)

Use airplane barf bags to take your lunch to work. It really cuts down on intra-office pilferage. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Shoot, I don't see a need to recycle anything. The Earth does that for us naturally. Leave a 1928 Ford in a bog and in just a few centuries you got mineral deposits. I got three of them on my place. I also buried a bunch of old charcoal briquettes and someday I'm going have me a diamond mine. (Russell Beland)

And Last: Loser magnets work great to cover the holes on a metal colander. Not the one for your pasta, of course — I mean the one you wear as a helmet to shield you from gamma rays from the black helicopters. (Brendan Beary)

And Also Last: Years ago I could use these nasty photos of the Czar and some woman to secure some ink in this contest. Now, I find those same photos are just as useful as nasty pictures of the Empress with some guy. (Russell Beland)

Next Week: Laughing Inside, or Designed, Concealed and Delivered

Newark Eagles Owner Effa Manley, Rounding Third and

MANLEY, From D1

moved to Los Angeles. She watched with pride the battles for equal rights during the '60s.

As the years passed — the '50s, '60s, '70s — many of the Negro league owners died. They passed away before the Negro leagues became an object of nostalgia, with collectors gathering memorabilia and old players waving from modern ballparks.

Manley corresponded with some of her former ballplayers, and heard the rap of their knuckles every now and then at her door when they came to visit. When she died, in 1981 — baseball historians believe she was the last of the Negro leagues owners to pass away — there were no lavish tributes.

But, 25 years after her death, Manley has connected with the longest of the long balls: On July 30, she will be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, the first woman to be so honored. "Using her position with Newark to crusade for civil rights, Manley made the Eagles a social force off the field and a baseball force on it," the citation says.

And yet, when the news popped about her induction weeks ago, even baseball historians could be forgiven for asking the question:

Effa who?

Game of a Lifetime

The early life of Effa Manley was full of racial double takes, wide-eyed stares and melodrama fit for the big screen.

She was born in Philadelphia. Varying dates have been given for her birth, but it is widely accepted as March 27, 1900.

Effa's mother, Bertha Brooks, was white, of German descent. Bertha's first husband was a black man, Benjamin Brooks, with whom she had children. During the marriage, Bertha had an affair with a white man, John Bishop, a liaison that produced Effa, who now joined her biracial stepbrothers and stepsisters.

"I was always this little blond, hazel-eyed white girl, always with Negro children," Manley says in a little-known biography, "Effa Manley and the Newark Eagles," by Jim Overmyer.

Effa grew up caught in the mystifying web of being white in a biracial family. It had been passed through both history and lore that one drop of Negro blood and you were forevermore, inescapably black. Family composition seemed to matter, as

well. Effa chose not to argue about her white parentage and proudly chose to live in a black world.

She moved to New York City after high school, found a job in a hat shop and became interested in social causes. She marched in picket lines protesting the plight of blacks who could not get jobs in department stores. She followed the preaching of Marcus Garvey. She befriended black musicians and artists.

In 1932, Effa moseyed over to Yankee Stadium to catch Babe Ruth and the Yankees. It was there that she met Abraham Lincoln Manley, a quiet and mysterious North Carolina-born man whom Effa discreetly called a "gaming speculator and real estate dealer." He was 15 years older than Effa.

Abe Manley knew the best dining spots in Harlem. He treated Effa right and, a year after meeting, they married. (It was Effa's second marriage. There is little information about her first marriage, except that it took place in Atlantic City.)

"Abe and I went right to Tiffany's for the ring, and I picked out a five-carat ring," Effa Manley recalls in the Overmyer chronicle. "When we went back to pick it up, every salesgirl in the store was there to take a peep at us. They had heard this old Negro man had bought a five-carat ring for this pretty young white woman. I got a kick out of that."

Chroniclers of the Negro leagues have contended that Abe Manley purchased the baseball team in 1935 as a mere hobby and was hardly dreaming of championships. The Manleys moved the team from Brooklyn to Newark, where the couple purchased a large home. (Abe had largely given up his gambling pursuits to become a legitimate baseball team owner.)

Abe allowed Effa to assert herself as team owner and business manager, and she relished the challenge, shrewdly making decisions about players and contracts.

Leslie Heaphy, an assistant professor of history at Kent State University, has pored over the Manley papers, now stored at the Newark Public Library. "I was surprised to see her name so prominently," Heaphy says. "It's her name on almost everything — not his. Abe was treasurer of the Negro leagues for a while, but she was really doing the book work. But the [male] owners would have never elected her to that position."

It was, at times, a barnstorming league. Some teams traveled in beat-down buses (the driver for the



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eagles was a man named Edison Thomas). Scores didn't always get called in on time to the Negro press — which drove Manley nuts — and so stats sometimes got lost. The players hungered for higher salaries and many of them just knew they had skills for the big leagues, where the white players played. Kids would point out players — Josh Gibson, Satchel Paige, James "Cool Papa" Bell, Monte Irvin — as if they were gods. Never mind DiMaggio. Never mind Ruth.

Children crowded into the Negro league stadiums, clutching the hands of mothers and fathers to see players in sharp uniforms, to tear at balls of cotton candy, to hear the sounds of booming loudspeakers. Newark native and writer Amiri Baraka would recall, in his father's eulogy, being taken regularly to Ruppert Stadium by his dad: "We were present that last year, when the Eagles won the world championship of black baseball. I even inherited a baseball [from] Larry Doby, the second Afro American in the so-called 'Big Leagues,' [who] fouled off in 1947. It is still labeled — the date, the place, the player and the father

who grabbed it and the awed son who witnessed this grand event."

In the '30s, the Eagles once hosted an "Anti-Lynching Day" at Ruppert Stadium to encourage people to write to Washington in the hopes of passing anti-lynching legislation.

Inside those stadiums, the world was free. Only the ball was white, went the line.

Effa loved every minute of it, the travel and the games, the seriousness and the gossip.

She recognized her history-making role with the team, and reflected on it in "Negro Baseball: Before Integration," her forgotten memoir. "Were the other club owners prejudiced against a woman in their midst? Not really, although I recall for that the first couple of meetings an undercurrent of uneasiness was evident. It seems that gentlemen weren't quite sure just how freely to act with a female sitting in on their business confabs."

There were rumors of affairs with this or that player. "Beautiful owner, young handsome players," Heaphy explains.

Manley herself never responded to the rumors. Abraham Lincoln,

however, did. He was known to quickly trade a player whom he suspected of flirting with his Effa.

Other stories flew — that Effa crossed and uncrossed her legs to signal a player when to steal or when to take a pitch.

She was a shouter, an arm waver who often sat in the press box and was known to explode when her team lost. "Effa Manley has long been a sore sport in the Negro National League," reported the New York Star-News in 1942.

Players who tried to wheel and deal during contract negotiations were met with an unbending resolve.

"When I first joined the team," recalls Monte Irvin, "I was making \$125 a month. In 1942 I told Mrs. Manley I wanted to get married and wanted a \$25 a month raise. She said she couldn't do it."

Manley's players dressed nicely off the field: fedoras and long coats and silk ties.

Manley herself turned heads effortlessly. "She was such a fine-looking lady," says Buck O'Neil, a legendary Negro leaguer who played for and later managed the

Kansas City Monarchs. "She bought her clothes downtown, New York City. Of course she had to have style to keep up with us Negro league ballplayers. This was a dress-up era."

Box seats inside Newark's Ruppert Stadium went for \$1.25; for 75 cents, there you were, take a seat anywhere, at the old ballpark.

With the beginning of World War II, however, the Negro leagues suffered. Star players were off to the war. Stadium attendance dropped. The Manleys wondered whether they'd be able to keep the team going. Effa's idea for solvency lay in hitting the road.

"Washington, D.C., always was our best out-of-town stop," during the war, Manley wrote in her memoir. "Griffith Stadium played host to 27,000 paid admissions for the opening game in '42 . . . During the first year of the War, our home attendance in Newark was low. . . but we finished the season with a nifty profit thanks to a rather brisk road business."

When the war ended and ballplayers began trooping back into her office to sign new contracts, Effa was more determined than ever to