

The Style Invitational

WEEK 31: INVITATION TO A DUAL

There are two kinds of people in the world. . .

People who talk about their colleagues and people who talk about people who talk about their colleagues.

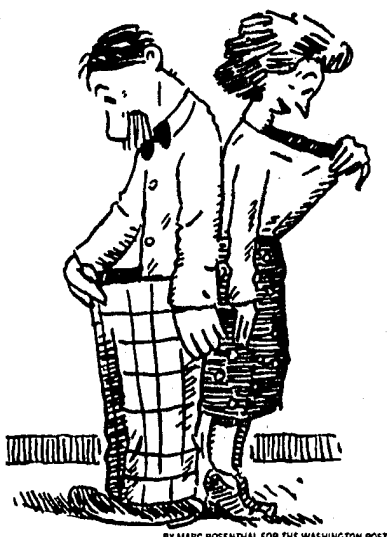
People without dentures and people who find Andy Rooney a hoot.

People who are good with numbers, people who are bad with numbers and people who are very, very bad with numbers.

Carbon-based and Michael Jackson.

People who think they are God's gift to women, and women.

Raw and cooked.



BY MARC ROSENTHAL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This week's contest: Translate "Beowulf" from the original Olde English. No, obviously, this week's contest is to divide the world into two types of people. To the best of our knowledge, this conceit was first used in 1962 by some shmendrick comedian who said there were two types of people in the world, people who have the toilet paper spool out from above and people who have it spool out from below. Much has occurred since 1962 to help us further oversimplify the world, so have at it lustily. If you do not get the concept here, do not be upset. There are two kinds of people in the world: Those who get it and those who do not.

First-prize winner receives one of those official American flags that have been flown over the U.S. Capitol for a few seconds, plus a certificate of its authenticity, a total value of about \$50. Runners-up, as always, get the coveted Style Invitational losers' T-shirts. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to the Style Invitational, Week 31, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or fax them to 202-334-4312. Entries must be received on or before Monday, Oct. 11. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. No purchase necessary. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

Report from Week 28

In which you were asked to come up with ways to reinvent government in order to save money or improve the quality of life in America. First, we'd like to say that you are all geniuses. We'd like to say that, but we cannot. We must report, with avuncular disapproval, that your entries this week were every bit as original and creative as a Bazooka Joe comic. As your thousands of doltish, pedestrian responses flooded our mail and fax machines, we panicked. Needing desperately to fill this space (we will not print unfunny things; this is just the way we are), deep in the fine print of the next contest, we inserted a pathetic plea for filler material. Two weeks ago we solicited bad photos from your driver's licenses, and the best we got was from Linda K. Malcolm of Silver Spring, who apologized for how awful she looked, but it was a bad hair day, too early in the morning, she was feeling cranky etc. The photo was of Raymond Burr. Linda wins a plastic booger. The only other notable response came from the redoubtable Chuck Smith of Woodbridge, who appears, from his photograph, to be a woman. So last week, now wretchedly desperate, we again violated our fine print with requests for jokes, and of the dozens of jokes we received, this was the best: **Q:** "Why did the monkey fall out of the tree?" **A:** "It was dead." All in all, not a good week.

Anyway, back to reinventing government.

◆ **Third Runner-Up:** To make Americans more secure abroad, create a small, mobile strike force of disgruntled postal workers. (Tom Gearty, Arlington)

◆ **Second Runner-Up:** Vanity postage stamps. (Nora Corrigan, Reston; also, Dave Ferry, Potomac)

◆ **First Runner-Up:** To balance the budget, make the new tax law retroactive to April 1925. (Douglas H. Ricker, Beltsville)

◆ And the winner of the exploding-pigeon T-shirt, the plastic dog poop and the humane mouse-trap: To raise money and solve the problem of unwanted animals, follow the example of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, which runs ordinary flags up the national flagpole for a few seconds and then sells them: Take dogs and cats from the local shelters, stampede them through the White House and then market them as prestige pets. (E. Gaston, Alexandria)

Honorable Mentions:

To reduce frivolous lawmaking, require members of Congress to wear lederhosen and yodel their bills on national television. (Hugh McAloon, Frederick)

To save money, change the signs in the National Zoo to read, "Please Feed the Animals." (Paul Styrene, Olney)

Stop paying for Secret Service agents; let Clinton pack heat. (Chase Squires, Arlington)

To confirm Cabinet-level appointees, add a swimsuit competition. (Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

To raise the national grade point average, drop geography from the curriculum. (Mike Thring, Leesburg)

To camouflage and protect tourists, require all rental cars to have religious bumper stickers, mirror danglies, Garfield window dolls etc. (Peyton Coyner, Afton, Va.)

To save gas, require that only clown cars can use the HOV lanes. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

NEXT WEEK: Your Triumphant Recovery. Ad Nauseam.