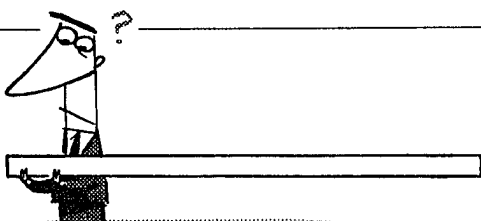


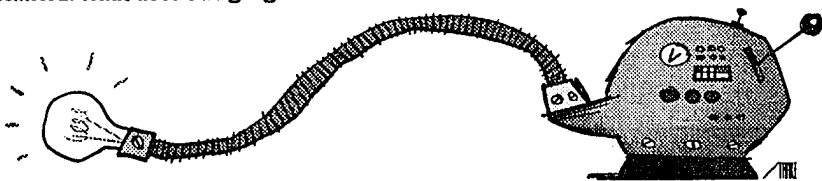
# The Style Invitational

## WEEK 253: IT'S A PITY

**Contest 1:**  
What is happening  
in this cartoon?



**Contest 2:** What does this gadget do?



BY BOB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Contest 3:** Complete this sentence: "What this world really needs is a cheap ..."

**Contest 4:** Write a four-line poem about the federal budget deficit.

**This week's contest** was suggested by Stephen Dudzik of Silver Spring, who wins a "Shootins Toilet Seat," which is a fine novelty item manufactured in Taiwan, featuring an explosive charge. ("Place on Toilet Seat for Aloud Bang Noise.") Entering the contest below, Stephen asked: "Wouldn't it be great if the Style Invitational awarded prizes based not on merit but on pity?"

This really appealed to us. Therefore, this week you can enter any or all of the above contests. Winners will be judged entirely on the basis of how pitiful an attempt at humor the entry is. First-prize winner gets a box of Piddlers Toilet Targets, a fabulous new product "designed to improve the urination accuracy of men and boys." It is little floating foam rubber fish. It is worth \$10.

First runner-up gets the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up receive the coveted Style Invitational LoserT-shirt. Honorable Mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to The Style Invitational, Week 253, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071; fax them to 202-334-4312; or submit them via Internet to this address: losers@access.digex.net. Internet users: Please indicate the week number in the "subject" field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, Jan. 26. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced three weeks from today. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, humor or appropriateness. No purchase necessary. Kudos to Twilte@houdini.tc.army.mil who posted today's ear. Next week: Orwell ear credit. Employees of The Washington Post, and members of their immediate families, are not eligible for prizes.

### REPORT FROM WEEK 250,

in which you were asked to complete the sentence "Wouldn't it be great if ..." But first, a message to the half-dozen cynics who asked if we were playing favorites with (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge), whose winning entry last week made reference to the death of Sonny Bono, even though Sonny died after the deadline for entries to that contest. Chuck's entry, which mentioned only Chris Farley's death, was updated by editors to reflect the news. We are nothing if not current. Actually, we are also tasteless. Tasteless *and* current.

- ◆ Third Runner-Up: **Wouldn't it be great if the "close door" button in an elevator actually had some connection to the operation of the elevator door?** (Stephen A. Simon, Arlington)
- ◆ Second Runner-Up: **Wouldn't it be great if smoking were good for you, yet still annoyed others?** (Beth Larson and Jennings Decker, Harrisonburg)
- ◆ First Runner-Up: **Wouldn't it be great if His Holiness put some of those gigantic monster truck tires on the Popemobile and bounced his way through crowds, noisily revving the engines and bouncing over obstacles, hand jauntily raised in a blessing?** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- ◆ **And the winner of the smiley-face cookie jar:**  
**Wouldn't it be great if 15 years from now Woody Allen's new wife took his son as her lover?** (Barry Blyveis, Columbia)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

**Wouldn't it be great if ...**

- ... Michael Jackson's kid grew up to look exactly like he used to look? (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)
- ... they played Hillary Clinton's Grammy-winning tape backward and found that she said, "I buried Paula"? (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- ... instead of running out of gas all the time, there were some way to tell when your car was low on fuel? Maybe they could install some sort of beeper. There's plenty of room for it in the dashboard where all those needles and lights and things are. (Russ Beland, Springfield)
- ... each of the McCaughey septuplets developed multiple personalities? (Robin D. Grove, Arlington)
- ... the next Miss America actually *did* figure out a way to stop war, famine and prejudice and bring peace to the universe? (Paul A. Alter, Hyattsville)
- ... D.B. Cooper turned out to be Donald Trump? (Sandra Hull, Arlington)
- ... you could train your dog to run the vacuum cleaner and cook dinner? Or if you could train your husband and kids to do it? (Susan Reese, Arlington)
- ... the FDA's new truth-in-advertising regulations required a vegetarian sub to be actually made from a vegetarian? (Niels Hoven, Silver Spring)
- ... unruly athletes were permitted to endorse only Kmart brand sneakers? (Stephen Dudzik, Silver Spring)
- ... when Geraldo Rivera does his first broadcast on NBC, if Tom Brokaw came onto the set and hit him in the face with a chair? (Jan Verrey, Alexandria)
- ... when the Super Bowl ends, and all the players are kneeling and praying in a circle at the 50-yard line, God appears and sends the losing team and all its fans to Hell? (Mike Geary, Arlington)
- ... there were a Fountain of Middle Age? (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

... Alan Greenspan had to declare personal bankruptcy because he exercised "irrational exuberance" at the racetrack? (Lee Mayer and Paul Laporte, Washington)

... when you come up with a withering retort several days after an insult you could travel back in time to deliver it? Oh, sure, it would also be great if you could have thought of it on the spot, but this way you can also play the winning lottery number when you go back. (Sandra Hull, Arlington)

... Pamela Lee had breast reduction to prove she was a serious actress and then no one hired her? (Joseph Romm, Washington)

... Steve Case's only link to the outside world were through AOL e-mail via a 9600-baud modem? (Stephen Dudzik, Silver Spring)

... instead of jumping under the train, Anna Karenina rigged it to explode if it dipped under 50 mph? (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

... the remnant subjunctive were to die out, once and for all? (Tom Witte, Galthersburg)

... we could get the lyrics "ox and ass before him bow" out of that Christmas carol? (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

... every Japanese Tamagotchi virtual-pet chicken in the United States developed the Hong Kong chicken virus? (Robin D. Grove, Arlington)

... my wife ran off with Bill Gates? (Charlie Myers, Laurel)

... on any given week, the longest-distance entry was automatically awarded a T-shirt? (Lt. John Choi, McMurdo Station, Antarctica)

... bumper stickers were legal tender in some faraway country with nice beaches? (Kevin Cuddihy, Fairfax)

◆ And Last:

... instead of writing smartass doggerel and competing for ink, all the Style Invitational contestants worked together for society to produce the best gosh darn ... naaah. (Russ Beland, Springfield)

Next Week: Quoth The Maven