

The Style Invitational

Week CXXX: Retell Sales



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Ebenezer Scrooge was a hardworking businessman. His clerk, Bob Cratchit, complained constantly. He wanted "more holidays" and "more money." It never occurred to Cratchit to roll up his sleeves and do an honest day's work or go to night school and pull himself up by his bootstraps . . .

This Week's Contest was definitely not inspired by Mad magazine, which, being targeted at 15-year-old boys, is a far less respectable sort of product than the Style Invitational, which is targeted at 15-year-old boys and girls. Many years ago, Mad ran the above example of "A Christmas Carol" as retold by Ronald Reagan. Well, our contest is so different as to be an entire genre altogether: Give us the beginning of any well-known story as retold by any famous person, living or dead, *except for Ronald Reagan*. First-prize winner gets a brassiere-wearing stuffed gorilla doll that sings the macarena song.

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, July 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 CXXVI, in which we invited you to speculate on the nature of businesses based on their abbreviated Nasdaq and NYSE listings.

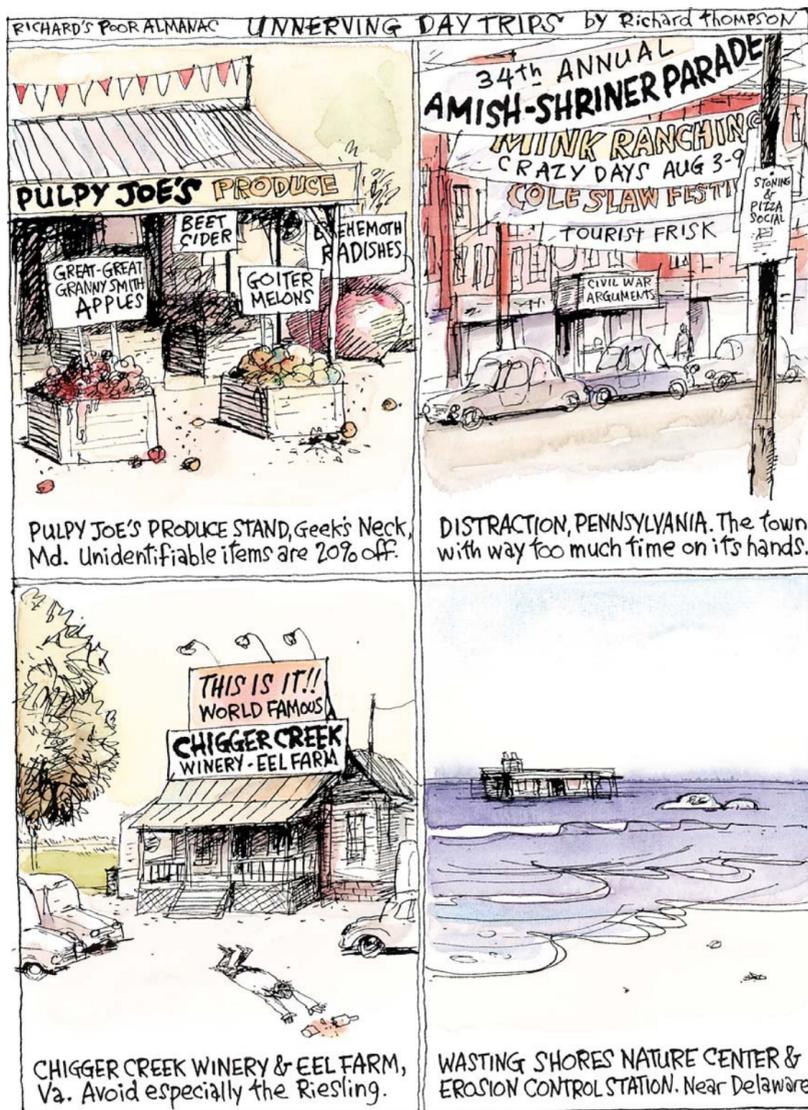
- ◆ Fifth Runner-Up: **QuakCty: A very low-cost HMO.** (Jeff Martin, Gaithersburg)
- ◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **DownJns: Makers of dungarees that keep falling down no matter how much you tighten your belt.** (Frank Mullen III, Heathsville)
- ◆ Third Runner-Up: **RuralCel: The country's leading retailer of string and tin cans.** (Roy Ashley, Washington)
- ◆ Second Runner-Up: **FriedBR: Makers of the perfect snack for guys—slices of fried beer.** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- ◆ First Runner-Up: **DeutTel: Publisher of unauthorized celebrity biographies.** (Ken Advent, Parma, Ohio)
- ◆ And the winner of "How to Win Pageants": **McMoRn: Trainer of all those stupid fast-food servers.** (Mike Hammer, Arlington)

Honorable Mentions:

- EbrasAero: Online lingerie store specializing in helium-filled support undergarments.** (Karen Gilber, Columbia)
- BurnPP: Manufacturer of home testing kit for bladder infections.** (Stephen Dudzik, Olney; Chris Doyle, Burke; Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- Moodys: Manufactures PMS relief formula.** (Lloyd Duvall, Roslyn, Pa.)
- FEMSA: Organization of female geniuses.** (Mike Hammer, Arlington)
- JohnsOut: Makers of specialty raincoats.** (Bruce Johnson, Annapolis; Mike Hammer, Arlington)
- Converse, NikuCP and Pumatch: Makers of low-cost knockoff sneakers.** (William Zamojcin, Vernon, Conn.)
- IspatIntl: Spittoon manufacturer.** (William Zamojcin, Vernon, Conn.)
- StudLoan: Escort service. Also has a sister company: BJ Svc.** (William Zamojcin, Vernon, Conn.)
- PlumCrk: Makers of low-riding jeans.** (William Zamojcin, Vernon, Conn.)
- ChemFinl: Baffled by the periodic table? Let one of our surrogate test takers handle that end-of-semester exam.** (Frank Mullen III, Heathsville)
- RentActr: Temp agency for those specialized tasks requiring a centaur.** (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)
- CirCCar: Company pioneered the roving Mohelmobile.** (Jerry Pannullo, Kensington)
- PubStrg: Makers of thongs.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)
- Guidant: Trainer of service insects for the blind.** (Greg Pearson, Arlington)
- BorgWarn: Makes satellites to monitor for attacks by alien robots.** (Stephen Dudzik, Olney; Greg Pearson, Arlington)
- BPOP: Sperm bank franchises.** (Robin Diallo, Lilongwe, Malawi)

- Brascan, BroadVisn: Competing makers of X-Ray Specs.** (Jeff Martin, Gaithersburg; Frank Mullen III, Heathsville)
- ConAgra: Makes the opposite of Viagra, for use in prisons.** (Phyllis Kepner, Columbia; Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- Diebold: Makes Viagra for extremely senior citizens.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- Mandalay: Chain of escort services for women.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- PattUTI: Spittoon maker** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- Natuzzi: A venture started by the NRA to help get children interested in guns prior to birth.** (Sugar Strawn and Jack Welsch, Alexandria)
- Ashland: Developer of cremation theme parks.** (Chris Doyle, Burke)
- FriedBR: Company run by former stoners; even they are not quite sure what they do.** (Meg Sullivan, Potomac)
- BackWb: A chain of massage parlors that make you feel vewwy, vewwy nice.** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- Xanser: Supplies recorded dirty messages for phone answering machines.** (Phyllis Kepner, Columbia)
- Loudeye: A very confused company.** (Bruce Johnson, Annapolis)
- DiaOffs: Makers of quick-remove underpants for bathroom emergencies.** (Kathy Couper, Palmyra)
- Novartis: Swedish producer of anti-flatulence potion.** (David McAuley, McLean)
- MBIA40: Maybe I Am 40, a plastic surgery chain.** (Kelli Midgley-Biggs, Columbia)
- ColMu: Colonel Mustard Inc., makers of candlesticks and lead pipes.** (Kelli Midgley-Biggs, Columbia)
- Heclam: Father-of-pearl jewelry.** (Bruce Alter, Fairfax Station)

Next Week: Let the Ego Soar



PULPY JOE'S PRODUCE STAND, Geek's Neck, Md. Unidentifiable items are 20% off.

DISTRACTION, PENNSYLVANIA. The town with way too much time on its hands.

CHIGGER CREEK WINERY & EEL FARM, Va. Avoid especially the Riesling.

WASTING SHORES NATURE CENTER & EROSION CONTROL STATION. Near Delaware.

ANN LANDERS

Editor's Note: Ann Landers died on June 22, but had already written her columns through July 27.

Dear Ann:

I am the mother of four young children. My oldest two are from my first marriage, and my 4- and 6-year-old sons are from my second marriage. Last year, I found out that my husband, "Brett," had been sexually molesting my 12-year-old daughter (his stepdaughter) for several months. I had him arrested, and he is currently in jail serving a 10-year term.

The problem is, I still love him. This molestation was completely out of character, and I know he would never do it again. I am in counseling, and so is my daughter, but my family refuses to forgive Brett. I want to maintain contact with Brett, especially for the sake of our two small sons. My marriage vows say "in sickness and in health," and I intend to see him through this awful time. I want my parents to be more supportive, but they despise Brett and think I should, too. Is there any help for me?

In Love in Virginia

Yes.

Please contact Parents United International, 615 15th St., Modesto, Calif. 95354 (http://members.tripod.com/~Parents_United).

This organization is for families in which one of the partners has sexually abused a child. Please understand that there may not be a "cure" for Brett. When he gets out of prison, there is no guarantee that he won't molest another child. You must put your children's safety first.

Dear Ann:

You have said in your column that age is only a number, and it's no reason to avoid a relationship with someone much younger or older. I am in one of those May-December marriages. My husband is 25 years older than I am. I would like to mention something for your readers to think about before jumping into these relationships.

Women considering marriage to an older man should keep in mind that while Hubby may be younger than springtime and ready to boogie all night, his friends are not. I spend a lot of time with people who listen to old Benny Goodman records and fall asleep at the drop of a hat. We rarely socialize with other couples. He doesn't care for my friends' taste in entertainment, and his friends have to be in bed by 9 p.m. My husband is wonderful, but sometimes I think being single isn't all that bad.

Love the Beatles in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for pointing out one of the pitfalls of marrying someone who belongs to a different

generation. For the most part, these relationships work out nicely, but people should be aware of the drawbacks. P.S.—I think Benny Goodman is the cat's pajamas.

Dear Ann:

I have been dating "Barry" for two years, and we live together. Next week we are planning to visit my father. Dad says Barry and I are not permitted to sleep in the same room until we are married. Barry thinks this is ridiculous, and he has no intention of sleeping down the hall from me. He says my father is well aware that we are living together and it makes no sense to pretend otherwise.

I want to respect my father's wishes, but Barry refuses to go to Dad's house if we cannot share a bedroom. What should I do?

Wide Awake in Dallas

Your father has the right to set the rules in his own house. If Barry refuses to sleep in a room by himself, I suggest you make a reservation at a nearby motel. If that is not possible, put up with Dad's arrangements, and convince Barry that separate bedrooms will make him desire you even more. How romantic.

Dear Ann:

My husband works with "Josh," and we have become casual friends with Josh and his wife, "Barb." Last weekend, we invited Josh and Barb to a barbecue at our home. We planned it a week in advance, and Barb even asked if she could bring a friend. I spent hours preparing for the dinner, setting the table with my best china, grilling steaks and chicken, and making sure the ambience was just right. As soon as they arrived, Barb said they had stopped at a fast-food place on the way and weren't very hungry. They barely touched the food I cooked, but rummaged through my refrigerator and cabinets looking for snacks. Then they sat down on my sofa while my husband and I cleared the dishes.

I have never been treated so rudely in my life. I want to get revenge on them, but I don't want to jeopardize my husband's job. Any ideas?

Trampled in Arkansas

Don't bother coming up with an appropriate act of revenge for these clods. It would take too much of your time and energy, and they aren't worth it. Chalk this one up to experience, and don't invite them again.

To find out more about Ann Landers and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com

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TODAY'S HOROSCOPE | Sydney Omarr

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Family discussion will revolve around possible journey to another nation. Focus on philosophy, interpretation of last night's dream. A foreign language was involved.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) See situations, relationships as they are and not merely as you want them to be. Spotlight on mystery, intrigue and necessity for being discreet. Pisces figures prominently.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Play waiting game; check for legal rights and

permissions. Relationship is serious, could conclude in legal partnership or marriage. Capricorn, Cancer natives play roles.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Keep resolutions concerning health, including exercise and diet. Finish one phase of work. Apply innovative methods. Look beyond the immediate, take charge of your destiny.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Make fresh start, accent independence of thought, action. You exude vibrations of sex appeal; maintain high standards.

Former lover makes surprise appearance. Another Leo involved.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Attention revolves around home, family's necessity for remaining on familiar ground. Question of marriage looms large. You will "discover" direction of your life. Capricorn in picture.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Take special care in traffic; avoid trying to do too much simultaneously. You will exhibit humor and be popular. Don't attempt to please everyone! Sagittarius plays major role.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You beat the odds! Some will declare you the "upset kid." At the track: Choose fourth post position in fourth race. Taurus, another Scorpio will play mysterious roles.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Lunar cycle high; events transpire to bring you closer to goal. Circumstances take dramatic turn in your favor. You will be in the news and could win a contest! Virgo featured.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Help family face the unknown. You will be relied

upon to elevate morale and to replace gloom with optimism. You receive gift; it is a token of affection. Libra represented.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You win friends and influence people; popularity on the rise. Wish comes true. You need something "practical." Pisces, Virgo natives figure in fascinating scenario.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Sudden surprise: You receive promotion, acknowledgment of your value. Pressure is on due to added responsibility. Broken love

relationship will be mended. Capricorn represented.

IF JULY 21 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: You are versatile, often try to do the impossible, which is to please everyone. You are perceptive and capable of laughing at your own foibles. You also are attractive and enjoy flirting. Gemini, Sagittarius persons play active roles in your life, could have these letters in names: C, L, U. During this cycle, there will be many changes in your life, a variety of experiences and questions concerning marriage loom large.

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