

The Style Invitational

Week 525: It Won't Belong Now



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This Week's Contest: Choose any straight row—vertical, horizontal or diagonal—and tell us which of the three cartoons does not belong, and why. First-prize winner gets one of the latest marketing gimmicks we have ever seen: a board game based upon a new deodorant. Essence the board game promises to help you "discover your essence," which is "the good and the bad in guys that women find irresistible." Essence the *deodorant*, however, "helps guys smell great all over."

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. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 6. 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 Russell Beland of Springfield.

Report from Week 521, in which you were asked to take the first part of a hyphenated word in a newspaper story and combine it with the second half of a different word, and define the new word.

- ◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **Cre-tinguished: Remarkably accomplished, for an idiot.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- ◆ Third Runner-Up: **Piscat-alyst: Beer.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)
- ◆ Second-Runner-Up: **Short-zenegger: A man of small stature who compensates through weightlifting.** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)
- ◆ First Runner-Up: **Mex-ecution: Getting refried in the electric chair.** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)
- ◆ And the winner of the George W. Bush squeak toy: **Up-Johnson: Eponymous new product developed by Pfizer's main competitor, to compete with Viagra.** (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)

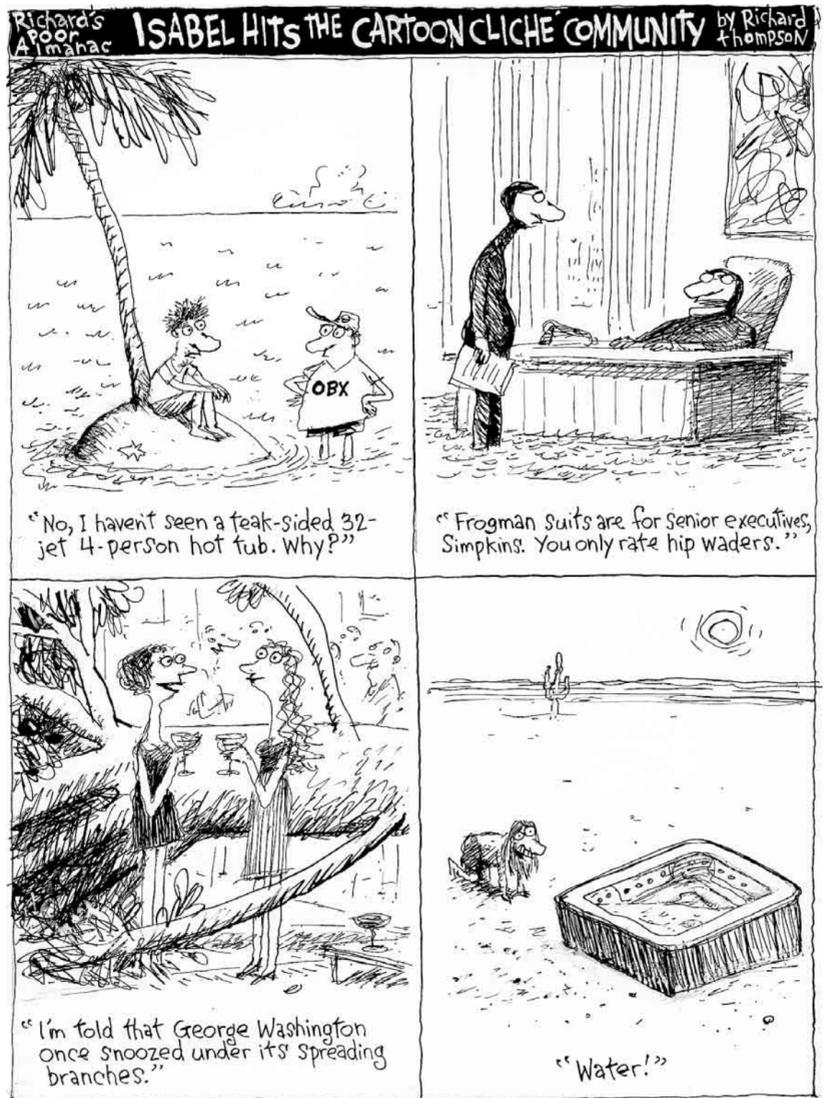
- ◆ Honorable Mentions: **Degen-ifer: To rid oneself of a bimbo one has seduced.** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)
- Pre-ballistic: The period between the admission of marital infidelity and the first mention of her sister.** (Frank Mullen III, Aledo, Ill.)
- Curb-cide: The act of attempting to kill oneself by jumping off sidewalk into gutter; tends not to be greatly effective.** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)
- Dis-sissippi: What Alabamians do because there's no one else to feel better than.** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)
- Grum-pany: Friends who come over just to gripe.** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)
- Pene-signed: Spelled one's name in the snow.** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)
- La-tween: Where Tweety goes after too much coffee.** (Dave Komornik, Danville, Va.)
- Victo-but: The war in Iraq.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)
- Half-aster: A weak Nor'easter.** (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)
- Score-taneous: Very, very friendly.** (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)
- Psychedel-alistic: Really boring hallucinations.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- Eco-lion: King of the jungle, tundra, taiga, savanna, deciduous forest, mangrove, coral reef, riparian zones, littoral zones and xeric shrublands.** (Chris Said, Baltimore)
- Kirk-state: Describing one who . . . speaks . . . in a halting . . . overwrought . . . fashion.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)
- Illegal-and-a-half: Something you can claim is "not 100 percent illegal."** (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- Paprika-strawberry: Only flavor worse than Clamato.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- Absolute-tually: Certain to occur, someday.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

- Empower-ball: Special feminist Lotto.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)
- Hip-fiving: Doing the bump.** (Paul Hayes, Sydney, Australia)
- Don't-not: Do.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)
- Wee-quarters: The men's room.** (Marc Leibert, New York)
- En-dustry: The mortuary business.** (Tom Kreitzberg, Silver Spring)
- 48-year-hour: The hour it takes to get your results from a pregnancy test.** (Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)
- Burp-proach: A very ineffective strategy for picking up women in bars.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- Burp-mas: Thanksgiving.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- Fig-body: One who would look great dressed in a leaf.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- Quarter-quarterback: A sixteenthback, e.g., Danny Wuerffel.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- Bar-skrit: An indecipherable message written on a cocktail napkin.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- Perspira-entele: Customers at a spa.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- Okla-homer: A proud Sooner alumnus.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- Sis-lywed: A West Virginia bride.** (Drew Knoblauch, Falls Church)
- Smack-dolezza: Trash talk done in the name of national security.** (Drew Knoblauch, Falls Church)
- Be-lemmas: Existential questions.** (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)
- Refus-sylvania: State of denial.** (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)
- Har-bombs: Exploding cigars.** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)
- Illi-tio: Oral sex, performed in Georgia.** (Jackie Blandford, Rockville)

Next Week: **A Meeting of the Mindless**

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The Washington Post



MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

This Is a Test

Just when everything looked black, the emergency etiquette system kicked in. Miss Manners never ceases to be amazed at its power.

Campfire stories of the massive electric failure last month sparkled with illuminating examples. Consideration and camaraderie were being shown by people who would certainly not be chummy if they had anything better to do.

Those whose normal means of perambulation is to elbow one another off the sidewalk were stopping to lend a hand instead. Drivers who might have been running down pedestrians were offering them lifts. Neighbors whose only previous form of communication had been the complaint sat around chatting in the dark.

Some of the businesspeople who could have profited from the situation chose not to. There were more than a few vendors who lowered prices they might have raised and opportunists who decided not to go looting.

Miss Manners has noticed such outbursts of courtesy under stress occurring under many tragic circumstances. For the New Yorkers who were hit by the power outage, it was a small reprise of the spirit shown following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks; elsewhere, many found it reminiscent of the atmosphere during floods, tornadoes or other natural disasters.

As Miss Manners understands it, the formula is: The worse conditions get, the better people behave. Good times, bad behavior; bad times, good behavior.

This ensures that we always have troubles, if not from without, then from within.

After the 2001 tragedy, people were saying that life had changed forever, and now they were going to count their blessings and concentrate on what was important and never again grumble and fret over petty daily grievances.

"This is a wake-up call" is what people always declare each time things go wrong. That is when they promise to beef up security, lay in supplies, crack down on crime, fix the equipment or whatever else might offer retroactive reassurance.

Then comes the all-clear sign, signaling that the immediate threat is past and everyone can go back to being careless and snippy. It's impressive how resilient we are when it comes to reconstructing our shattered sense that life is irritatingly bad but not dangerous.

Miss Manners finds this understandable. How do you ordinarily react to a wake-up call, even one that you set yourself the night before? Don't you roll over and try to get back to sleep, trusting that the annoyance will go away if you ignore it?

However, the etiquette alert is different. The standard of behavior we exhibit during emergencies is not scary; on the contrary. It is a demonstration of how pleasant life can be when people treat one another courteously.

Furthermore, it is easily attainable. We may not be able to prevent natural disasters or eradicate crime, but we can create an amiable living environment by behaving ourselves. One might be forgiven for thinking "No, we can't" after observing people in their undisturbed habitat, but the examples when things go wrong prove otherwise. They also give the lie to the usual modern excuse of rudeness being the inevitable result of stress.

We needn't maintain the full heroic stance. Just the resolve to refrain from being annoying and aggressive would help. No need to go around handing strangers free bottles of water.

Dear Miss Manners:

Like many office buildings, the one in which I work uses an access-card entry system. I keep my card in my wallet. Often, instead of taking out the wallet to run it by the sensor, I merely swivel my hip slightly to allow the card to be "read."

Is this move considered rude if (1) no one is in the vicinity? (2) I believe no one is seeing this? and (3) I'm only with close colleagues?

Rude? Actually, it sounds exciting. Miss Manners lives in a city with hardly a building standing that doesn't require an access pass or at least a show of identification, and none of them features a folk dance. Would you care to come to Washington, D.C., and teach it to us?

Feeling incorrect? E-mail your etiquette questions to Miss Manners (who is distraught that she cannot reply personally) at MissManners@unitedmedia.com—if you promise to use the black or blue-black ink you'll save by writing those thank you, condolence and congratulations letters you owe.

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BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH			
♠	6 2		
♥	A Q 8 4		
♦	K J 5 2		
♣	10 8 7		
WEST			
♠	A 10 5		
♥	6 3		
♦	Q 9 8		
♣	K 9 6 5 2		
EAST			
♠	Q 9 7 4		
♥	J 10 9 7		
♦	7 4		
♣	J 4 3		
SOUTH (D)			
♠	K J 8 3		
♥	K 5 2		
♦	A 10 6 3		
♣	A Q		

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: ♣ 5

The basic skill of counting is being undertaught, I fear—and not only at bridge. Nowadays you can ask a kid what are 2, 7 and 11—and he'll say CNN, MTV and the Cartoon Network.

A West who couldn't, or wouldn't, count might not beat today's contract. (To test yourself, cover the East and South cards.) South plays low from dummy on the first club, takes East's jack with the queen, and cashes the king, queen and ace of hearts. South follows suit, and you discard a spade. South then takes dummy's king of diamonds and leads the deuce to his ten.

You gather in your queen. What do you do next? To lead another club may cost a trick.

Count South's points. He has shown 13: A-Q of clubs, ace of diamonds, king of hearts. Since

South's 1NT bid promised 16 to 18 points, he has at least three more. If he has the Q-J of spades, you can lead a low spade to East's king and get a club return, setting up your clubs, but that line of defense is speculative: South may have the king of spades.

Try counting South's distribution. He had three hearts and showed four spades in the bidding. How many diamonds did he have?

If South had A-10-3, he has cut himself off from the good jack. Dummy has no more entries. So South must have had four diamonds, giving him two clubs. You can safely lead a second low club.

South takes the ace but has only eight tricks. He can cash two diamonds and lead a spade to his jack, but you take the ace and three good clubs. Down one.

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