

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Snow White and the Eight Dwarfs: The eighth dwarf, Sleazy, plants cameras in the drugged White's room with plans to sell video of Charming's kiss.

Week 651: Show Us Some Character

The example from inveterate contest-suggester Russell Beland of Springfield says it all: **Add a character to a book or movie and tell us what happens in it.** You can supply a title if you like, and casting suggestions are welcome.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives the children's book "The Adventures of Peter Pangler Puncker 'Discovering the Pumping Heart,'" by Walter A. Krymski, who according to the book is an adult. This blessedly thin work is written entirely in rhyming couplets, if by rhyming couplets you count "Peter Pangler Puncker wondered if cars have hearts like humans. / He said to himself, 'Ooh, I'm being silly, these cars are soon to be ruins.'"

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions 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, March 6. Include "Week 651" 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 humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published March 26. 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 Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

Note: Five-time Loser Stephen Litterst of Ithaca, N.Y., complained to the Empress that "Honorable Mentions" is a far too polite term to categorize losing ink. What would be a better name? E-mail suggestions with the subject line "Week 651: Honorable Mentions." The winner, if there is one, gets something dishonorable to be announced later.

REPORT FROM WEEK 647

In which you were asked to either delete text from a sentence in that week's Post for humorous effect, or insert text from elsewhere in the same article or ad. Some people sent entries in which they did both; the Empress was going to toss these imperiously, as is her wont, but then decided to run a few anyway, especially at the ends of sentences. As is also her wont. Deletions are in brackets; insertions from another point in the article or ad are in italics.

4 Publish a LoveNote in The Washington Post on Tuesday, February 14, and let them know you're [think]ing of them. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

3 The morning after his debut as leading man, Gore pronounces this whole Sundance thing as his baby, and he felt proprietary about it. (Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia)

2 The winner of the 1958 edition of "Amy Vanderbilt's Complete Book of Etiquette": Joint Chiefs Fire [at Toles Cartoon] on Strained Army (John Doucette, New York)



AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

1 "March of the Penguins" was joined by "Darwin's Nightmare" [about environmental collapse; "Murderball,"] a Sundance Film Festival favorite last year about quadriplegic rugby players . . . (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

HONORABLE MENTIONS (FOR NOW)

University of D.C. Raises Tuition, Stud[ent] Fees (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Live in CT, NJ and NY. Void in one of Loudoun County's Finest Communities! (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Someone doctored Sen. Robert C. Byrd's (D-W.Va.) profile on the site to list his age as 180 (He is 188.) (Russell Beland, Springfield)

No one may be more loyal to President Bush than his press secretary, Scott "Baby Boy" McClellan. (Fil Feit, Annandale)

Residents are accustomed to big booms and bad busts next door to the Lusty Lady. (Deborah Guy, Columbus)

Voters are serious about wanting to make sure that their legislators show up waving money in their faces. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Andrea Bocelli's new CD "Amore" constitutes fraud. Cash value .01c. (Brendan Beary)

Scratch That: An Examination of Sexual Strategies used by Urban Southern and Rural Midwestern University Women (Kevin Dopart)

"We were basically meeting a student demand," said Garry Cestaro, program director of the new phone sex minor. (Russell Beland)

Group Offers \$300,000 For Preschool Education of the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce (Cecil J. Clark, Asheville, N.C.)

"I have to do something — wiggle — to make Hasselbeck feel not so comfortable in the pocket," Porter said. (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)

All of which can mean only one thing: It is time for the Democrats to eat their own liberal activists including Cindy Sheehan. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

In a heavy pot over medium heat, melt 4 tablespoons of the [butter. Add the onion and]



No matter what this category's called, Losers will still get the Style Invitational magnets.

cook until it is translucent but not brown, about 15 minutes. (Brendan Beary)

Republican leaders said passage was a critical step toward containing the runaway growth of the poor and the disabled. (Peter Metrinko)

As you make a tricky 2-rail shot it hits you — This is no ordinary condom[inium]. (Kevin Dopart)

James Bassil, Editor-in-Chief of AskMen.com, Tops Among Guys, AskMen.com Reports (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Don't try to oil [it] yourself -- chances are you won't use the right kind, and even sprayed-on oil will cause belts to slip. (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)

In his State of the Union speech last night, President Bush single-handedly revived the spirit of special interests that have seized control of the political process. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

No [Bank Offers You] More Convenience (Brendan Beary)

D.C. Chief Financial Officer Natwar M. Gandhi said yesterday that Mayor Anthony A. "Cost Overrun" Williams has agreed to alter a new baseball stadium lease agreement . . . (Russell Beland)

There's a lot of room down there, and there seems to be enough room for the President's Cup. (Peter Metrinko)

State Department Responds After U.S. Naval Attache Adolf Hitler Is Ordered Out of Caracas (Drew Bennett, Alexandria)

Friedan pushed for equal pay, sex-neutral help-wanted ads, maternity leave, child-care centers for working parents, legal abortion, congestive heart failure and many other topics considered radical in the 1960s and 1970s. (Russell Beland)

The hurricane scattered chops, cabbage, neck bones, turnips and New Orleans jazz musicians across the country; two-thirds have still not returned. (Brendan Beary)

What's it like watching a game at the Playboy Mansion? You're screwed for the rest of the game. (Kevin Dopart)

Once, he hauled a portable toilet into the county board's chambers to illustrate — but only so far — a point about sewage treatment. (Brendan Beary)

NASA's Inspector General Probed by Cobb (Cecil J. Clark)

Rice Rules [Out Aiding] Hamas Government (Louis B. Raffel, Northbrook, Ill.)

Eighty-two-year-old Abe Pollin just plain stunk up the gym. (Peter Metrinko)

Eager beaver Loser Kevin Dopart, Russell Beland, employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

Next Week: Caller IDiot, or Hotline and Sink



PHOTOS BY LIBBY COPELAND — THE WASHINGTON POST

No truffling matter: At the chocolate store Gertosio, there are enough forms of indulgence to satisfy a mouthful of sweet teeth.

In Turin, the Grueling Chocolate Decathlon

CHOCOLATE, From D1

mom, which has a nutty depth. There is chocolate flavored with limoncello, the sweet lemon liqueur that local restaurants sometimes serve gratis. (Limoncello is great after a meal, but mixed with chocolate, it is cloying, like the U.S. speedskater Chad Hedrick, who boasts to reporters about the bigness of his heart.) There is a truffle made with grappa, an abrasive digestif, which tastes like a hang-over. (We think of Bode Miller.)

And there is a truffle made with hot peppers, which tastes like any other chocolate at first, and then it surprises you, exploding on your tongue with come-from-behind power, rather like Shizuka Arakawa, who won the gold in women's figure skating. (American silver medalist Sasha Cohen is the dark and complicated chocolate made with an herb-steeped wine called barolo chinato. What angst lies behind that delicate visage? What makes her fall down?)

The chocolate-hazelnut combination this area is known for — familiar to those who have eaten Nutella — was invented as a means of stretching dwindling chocolate supplies in the 1800s. Lots of



Maria Rivelli prepares a sabauo, a thick chocolate-hazelnut treat infused with espresso, cream and crushed hazelnuts.

stores have their own variation on *giandua*, often wrapped in gold foil. Some are too sweet, some not creamy enough. Done right, *giandua* is as delicate and ethereal as the feeling of waking up from a great dream you can't remember.

There is toffee chocolate. There is hot chocolate, which at a store called Cioccolato Peyrano is made from a melted bar of chocolate mixed with milk. It is as thick as honey. There is something called a sabauo, combining the chocolate-hazelnut paste with espresso, cream and crushed hazelnuts. This is served in a glass with a spoon and is so rich that even the memory of it could make you feel full.

At the famous Bicerin, there is a cake made of chocolate and coffee, inspired by the cafe's signature drink. There's a slow-moving line of tourists outside and a frazzled hostess who at one point takes to screaming in frustration. Perhaps she has had enough of this Choco-Pass thing; we certainly have. Chocolate-eating is not meant to be some sort of cross-country endurance race.

It is better experienced as an aerialist's jump, bold and brief, twirling across your tongue.

MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

Family Matters Most at Mealtime

For a variety of reasons, none of them apparently being to promote the happiness of those immediately concerned, numerous organizations have put out definitions of the family. Governmental, religious and social institutions keep proposing criteria having to do with marriage and blood ties, both of which require definitions of their own. In regard to marriage, it becomes necessary to deal with those who can't get married but want to, those who can't but don't want to, and common law or civil marriages that are legally recognized in some places but not others. In regard to blood, the issue comes up of how closely the people are related.

All this has naturally led to speculation about ugly subtexts. As the definitions are usually tied in with the application of benefits, taxes and zoning, suspicions arise that the real purpose is to target such groups as immigrants, gays or sweet little old widows and widowers who want a second chance at happiness without endangering their pensions.

Meanwhile, Miss Manners has come up with her own rigid definition of family, one that ought to offend nearly everyone. Hers is so strict that it excludes many married couples living with their own minor children.

She got the idea from reading about an insidious zoning ordinance restricting the definition of family to "two or more persons related to the second degree of collateral consanguinity by blood, marriage, adoption or guardianship, or otherwise duly authorized custodial relationship . . . living and cooking together in a single house-keeping unit, exclusive of not more than one additional unrelated person."

It has been noticed that this is particularly hard on recent immigrants who have welcomed relatives, including cousins, nieces and nephews, while keeping within the limits of the number of people who are legally allowed to occupy the dwelling — only to be told that these people are not closely enough related to meet the definition of family.

But what grabbed Miss Manners' attention is the part about cooking. The same ordinance also uses the requirement of cooking together as a requirement for unrelated roommates in groups of three or fewer, and for unrelated adults and their children.

Miss Manners isn't so sure about that. Cooking together can have a dam-

aging effect on family life if two people are trying to use the stove at the same time for different purposes, or one person fails to clean up his or her particular mess, or one person is in the habit of adding spices to the other person's pot.

But eating together, night after night, no matter who does the cooking or the carrying-in — that is a good definition of what makes a family. A family, by Miss Manners's standards, is a group of people that takes nightly and weekend meals together. It is then and there, asking one another to pass the beans, arbitrating who gets the drumstick and pretending to be interested in each one's adventures of the day, that families are forged.

Yes, softie that she is, Miss Manners would allow some leniency to hard cases, and the occasional pass to go out. Nightshift workers would have to find another common mealtime, and a reasonable number of dinner dates with others must be permitted, especially for the young, if the family is to survive.

But allowing sports, hobbies and entertainment regularly to preempt family dinner would only show this unit is basically unrelated, blood and marriage qualifications notwithstanding.

Dear Miss Manners:

My fiancée and I are both formerly divorced and each lives alone. We are both in our mid-fifties. My fiancée's parents feel slighted because I did not ask their permission to marry their daughter. Since my intended is both divorced and a grandmother, I did not consider it an obligation to ask her parents for her hand in marriage. Did I commit a faux pas?

Did you ever. You brought to these people's attention the harsh fact that their little girl is no longer subject to their rules and protection. Miss Manners advises apologizing for your oversight and presenting yourself as a suitor for the lady's hand. You might also want to check with her grandchildren, since this is apparently a touchy family.

Feeling incorrect? E-mail your etiquette questions to Miss Manners (who is distraught that she cannot reply personally) at MissManners@unitedmedia.com or mail to United Media, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

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