

# The Style Invitational

Week XCII: Hyphen the Terrible



**Christ-loween**—A solemn religious holiday in which people beg for candy while dressed up as their favorite deity.  
**Unfortu-mannered**—Given to high-decibel belching, wiping one's nose on tablecloths, etc.  
**High-panion**—A poor choice for designated driver.

**This Week's Contest** Take the first half of any hyphenated word from any story in today's newspaper and combine it with the second half of any other hyphenated word in the same story, and propose a definition of the new word you've created. Make sure you tell us which story you are using. (The examples above came from today's Miss Manners column.) First-prize winner gets a battery-operated Mr. Potato Head doll, which seems to make as much sense as a battery-operated potato. It's worth \$30.

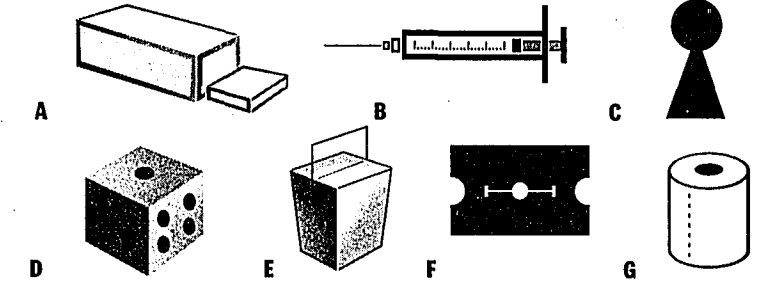
First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. U.S. mail entries have been canceled due to rabid, spit-flying fanaticism. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 5. 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 Chris Doyle of Burke.

## REPORT FROM WEEK LXXXVIII,

in which we asked you to explain the actual unexpected identities of seven deceptively common-looking objects. We wish to extend our thanks to the several readers who, without apparent irony, identified these items as a stick of butter, a hypodermic, a keyhole, a die, Chinese takeout, a razor blade and a roll of toilet paper. The Weekly Reader will be sending you your prizes shortly. Many people wickedly saw Cartoon C as the sign on the ladies' room door at Amputees Anonymous.



- ◆ Third Runner-Up: (Cartoon B) **This magical beast can turn from horse to monkey.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- ◆ Second Runner-Up: (Cartoon F) **Gary Condit's chest X-ray after he swallowed yet another watch.** (Andrea D. Connell, Arlington)
- ◆ First Runner-Up: (Cartoon D) **A prostitute in Lego Land.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- ◆ And the winner of the New Jersey commemorative plate: (Cartoon D) **After the tragic accident with the trash compactor, there were only 100 Dalmatians.** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

## Honorable Mentions:

- Cartoon A  
**Carving the very special Thanksgiving Tofu Turkey.** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- Corporate Headquarters, Land O' Lakes Inc.** (Kelley Hoffman, Fairfax)
- Ford Motor Co. finally complies with rollover standards by designing trucks without wheels.** (Faye Dorsey, Manassas)
- Cartoon B  
**Seeking its own revenge, New York City sends the Empire State Building hurtling toward Kabul.** (Michael Althaus, Silver Spring)
- President Bush agrees to fund a needle exchange program—but only for syringes with the new reduced-size plunger.** (Jeff Greenspan, Annandale)
- Cartoon C  
**It was the last thing Ralph saw after stumbling face-forward onto the ball return.** (James Noble, Lexington Park, Md.; Larry Furst, Woodland Hills, Calif.)
- This image was submitted as a centerfold photo for the Taliban Monthly Review, but was rejected for its prurience.** (Gene Gross, Fairfax)
- What old keys dream of at night.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- Transamerica Pyramid meets Goodyear Blimp. Transamerica Pyramid wins.** (Richard A. Creasy, Winchester, Va.)
- Hitler wearing a clown nose.** (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)
- Frame 2 of the Baskin-Robbins Power Point presentation to new employees, "Ice Cream Do's & Don'ts."** (Cynthia M. Barlow, Manchester, Conn.)
- Cartoon D  
**After hours of persistent twisting, Charlton Heston's Rubik's Cube meets an untimely end.** (David Moore, Bowie)
- HMO medical-option icon, also known as "die."** (Richard A. Creasy, MD, Winchester, Va.)
- Seurat tries his hand at cubism.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- Captain Hook appears to have had trouble getting his ice out of the tray.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- An outhouse that can be adjusted**
- from one hole to six.** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- Cartoon E  
**The Tomb of the Unknown Cat.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- This Halloween, parents are encouraged to search for suspicious candy, such as caramels with huge panes of glass sticking out of them.** (Jessica Henig, Takoma Park)
- A large, covered petri dish for fungal and bacterial experiments. At least that's what this is in MY refrigerator.** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- Purse by Givenchy (shown actual size): \$3,500.** (Leslie Hughes, Dilwyn, Va.; Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- The attache case of Condoleezza Rice.** (Russell Beland, Arlington)
- The Social Security lockbox. Once you dip into it, you want to do it again an hour later.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- Cartoon F  
**Early in her pregnancy, Mrs. Perot captured this ultrasound image.** (James Noble, Lexington Park)
- A one-way ticket to Hell.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)
- The logo for that ill-fated HBO spinoff, "The Castratos."** (Tom Campbell, Chicago)
- Cartoon G  
**An opened can of cartoon eyeballs.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- Christo wraps the Washington Monument.** (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)
- Though it proved quite effective, the new masonry prophylactic never became very popular.** (James Noble, Lexington Park)
- Adding a "chewy-chocolaty center" to rolls of Charmin did little to improve sales.** (James Noble, Lexington Park)
- It would take centuries for early man to realize that it would work much better on the curved side.** (James Noble, Lexington Park)
- A confused marshmallow who is wearing a yarmulke AND holding rosary beads.** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
- Cartoons F and G  
**Despite the infomercials, sales remained flat for the Home Hemorrhoid Remover.** (Samuel F. Heford, Washington)

Next Week: Learning the Tropes



## BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

Both sides vulnerable

<b>NORTH</b>		<b>EAST</b>	
♠ K J 7 6		♥ A 5	
♥ J 4		♦ Q 10 9	
♠ K 7 3		♦ Q 8 6 5 2	
♣ K Q 5 3		♣ A 10 9 7	
<b>SOUTH</b>			
♠ A Q 10 9 8 3			
♥ K 5 3 2			
♦ 4			
♣ J 4			

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All Pass			

Opening lead: ♦ A

**"Y**ou never cease to amaze me, Holmes," Dr. Watson marveled.

"I don't see how you knew which defender had the ace of clubs," "Nor do I," Professor Moriarty grumbled. "I didn't, Watson," Sherlock Holmes said dryly. "I knew only that I wished to make the contract." Moriarty had led the jack of diamonds at Trick Two, and Holmes played low from dummy and ruffed in his hand. The sleuth next led a trump to dummy and returned a low club.

If East ducked, Holmes would take the jack, lead a trump to dummy, pitch his last club on the king of diamonds and lose in all two hearts and a diamond. When instead East took the ace of clubs, he had to lead a heart next since declarer had 10 winners available. Holmes played low, and when Moriarty won with the ace, the contract was safe.

"Good guessing, Holmes," Watson observed. "If instead you start the clubs by leading low from your hand, playing West for the ace, East captures one of dummy's honors and exits safely with a club. You pitch two hearts on the king of diamonds and a high club, but you still lose two hearts."

"You should know my methods by now, Watson: I do not guess."

Why did Holmes play East for the ace of clubs? The contract was at risk only if West had the ace of hearts, but he'd passed as dealer and had played the A-J of diamonds. If a club to the jack lost to West's ace, Holmes could be sure East had the ace of hearts, but if Holmes led a club from his hand and found East with the ace, he might fail.

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## MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

### Halloween's Scary New Spectres

**"W**ho, it's a ghost!" well-mannered adults would say when a small thing in bedraggled white appeared on the doorstep at Halloween, with a smaller, shyer companion hanging behind. "Oh, and a witch, too. I'm so frightened. What can I do?"

Hand it over, of course, but sometimes the apparitions' own manners kicked in, in spite of themselves, and a scary thing would reply, "It's okay, Mrs. Saddlebag, it's really me, Gary, see? I was only fooling."

It was an innocent routine, highly gratifying to both parties. It still occurs, festooned with security measures on both sides, but is no longer commonplace. Halloween, Miss Manners has observed, has rapidly grown older and more immature.

First the big kids took over, playing at what they considered scary, which was not ghosts but street gangs. Good kids (a term that now refers to children who live in well-to-do neighborhoods and don't have long police records) began to see it as a safe day to dabble in vandalism. Sometimes they were joined by the real thing. Sometimes what they did became the real thing.

Householders began to meet them at their own level. Unfortunately, one response was to slip tricks into treats. The possibility of razor blades nestled in apples ensured a balance of fright on both sides of the ghost costume.

Then the bigger kids—bigger by a decade or

more—took over Halloween. Adults, with their larger allowances, went in for elaborate costumes and decorations in a big way, making Halloween into a major holiday on the scale of Christmas and Thanksgiving.

Why they bother, Miss Manners can't imagine, considering that funny T-shirts, casual Friday and the absence of dress codes have made every day dress-up day. This thought brings her back to the little children whose holiday has been co-opted. They still like to play dress-up and to fool people with their outfits.

The children's clothing industry has come to their rescue. They have produced the clothing that makes it possible for little girls to dress up as sluts and little boys to dress up as thugs. Furthermore, small children won't have to wait for a holiday to do so, because these are appearing in the form of school clothes.

Some adults are objecting. For that matter, Miss Manners also sees a reason to object. As children have been passionately opposing the institution of dress codes at school on the grounds that they need to express their true selves in their clothing, would it not be reasonable to take them at face value and believe that they are sluts and thugs (which Miss Manners is given to understand are the fashionable terms)?

She certainly hopes not. Surely the kind thing to do is merely to pretend to go along, being careful to give them a chance to reveal the truth. As in:

"Oh, no, a streetwalker! In my neighborhood!"

"No, no, it's okay, Mrs. Middleforth (or, more likely, "Ginny"), it's me, Emmeline. I was just fooling. I'm not really a streetwalker."

## Dear Miss Manners:

My daughter and I always seem to be attending a funeral service. Sometimes this takes time and effort to do. This is a large city, and we sometimes drive 10 miles to the mortuary. We do not expect a thank you note for our efforts, but my sister-in-law doesn't want to bother, so she picks up the phone and orders flowers, and she gets the thank you note. In other words, thoughtfulness and effort doesn't count.

Of course they do. It just so happens that your thoughtfulness and efforts are directed at the only people who are excused—even by Miss Manners—from writing thank you letters. Your sister-in-law has directed hers at people who, like the rest of us, are not excused, even though it is a difficult time for them.

To attend a funeral is to pay your respects to the person who died. This may also be a comfort to the bereaved, but that is an extra benefit. You also owe a duty to them, which could be either writing a letter of sympathy or paying a condolence visit, sending flowers or bringing food. Miss Manners is glad to hear that as a family, you are both paying respect and offering comfort, but she would prefer to hear that each of you is doing both.

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