

The Style Invitational

Takes a Powder



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

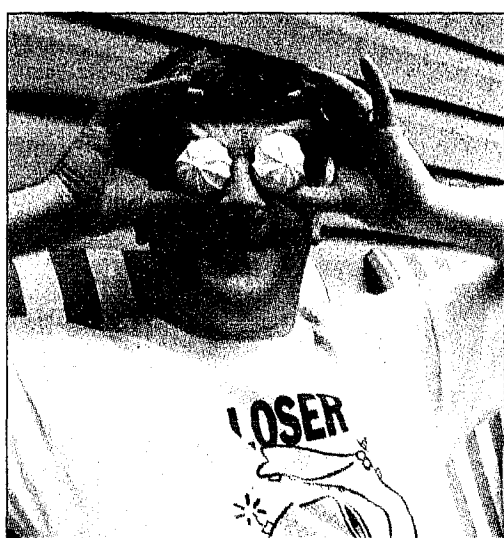
Week CIII: The contest resumes next week. This week, our last installment of Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the All-Time Stars of The Style Invitational in 100-Word Autobiographies That Contain One (and Only One) Falsehood. The revised title for next week's column is by Chris Doyle of Burke.



ELDEN CARNAHAN

I am the son of a preacher man, the brother of two preacher men, and the brother-in-law of another. "I only am escaped alone to tell thee" (Job 1:16). I have degrees in history and linguistics and have yet to use them professionally for a single day. I am married, and we live in a former boardinghouse in which Maj. Dwight Eisenhower got down with Mamie. I also own a half-restored Citroen taxi in which Gen. de Gaulle and the Czech president lunched on oysters and marmalade while fleeing Paris. I now rent out backhoes for a living, so to speak.

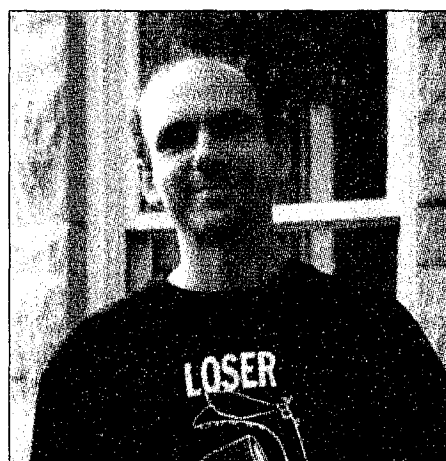
(Elden Carnahan, Laurel)



STEPHEN DUDZIK

I am an engineer originally from the wee state of Rhode Island. My parents' vaudeville act semi-inspired my humorous bent. I am newly married and newly mortgaged and bear a vague resemblance to Anthony Newley. In the grand scheme of things my success in the Invitational and other humor contests doesn't amount to a hill of flatulence-inducing beans but it does keep me sane. Laughter is the best medicine and is much cheaper than Cipro. If I don't have children, then my Invitational entries will have to be my legacy to the world. Sorry, Mom!

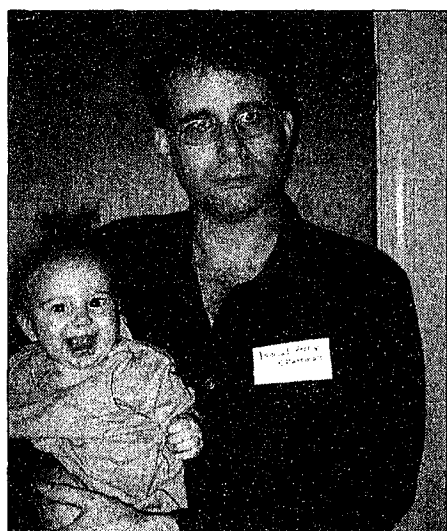
(Stephen Dudzik, Olney)



JOSEPH ROMM

Top Ten Things About Me
I appear regularly in one of D.C.'s two best newspapers.
My wife is a brilliant babe and regular reader of Style.
My house runs on renewable energy, and I don't mean my production of methane.
Two words: Rice cakes.
My mother thinks she'll live forever, and with my luck, she will.
I kick butt on AOL cribbage.
I had an 11-word job title at the Energy Department.
I'm a good loser but a bad winner.
What I lack in originality, I make up in self-referential pithiness.
There are two lies in this list.

(Joseph Romm, Washington)

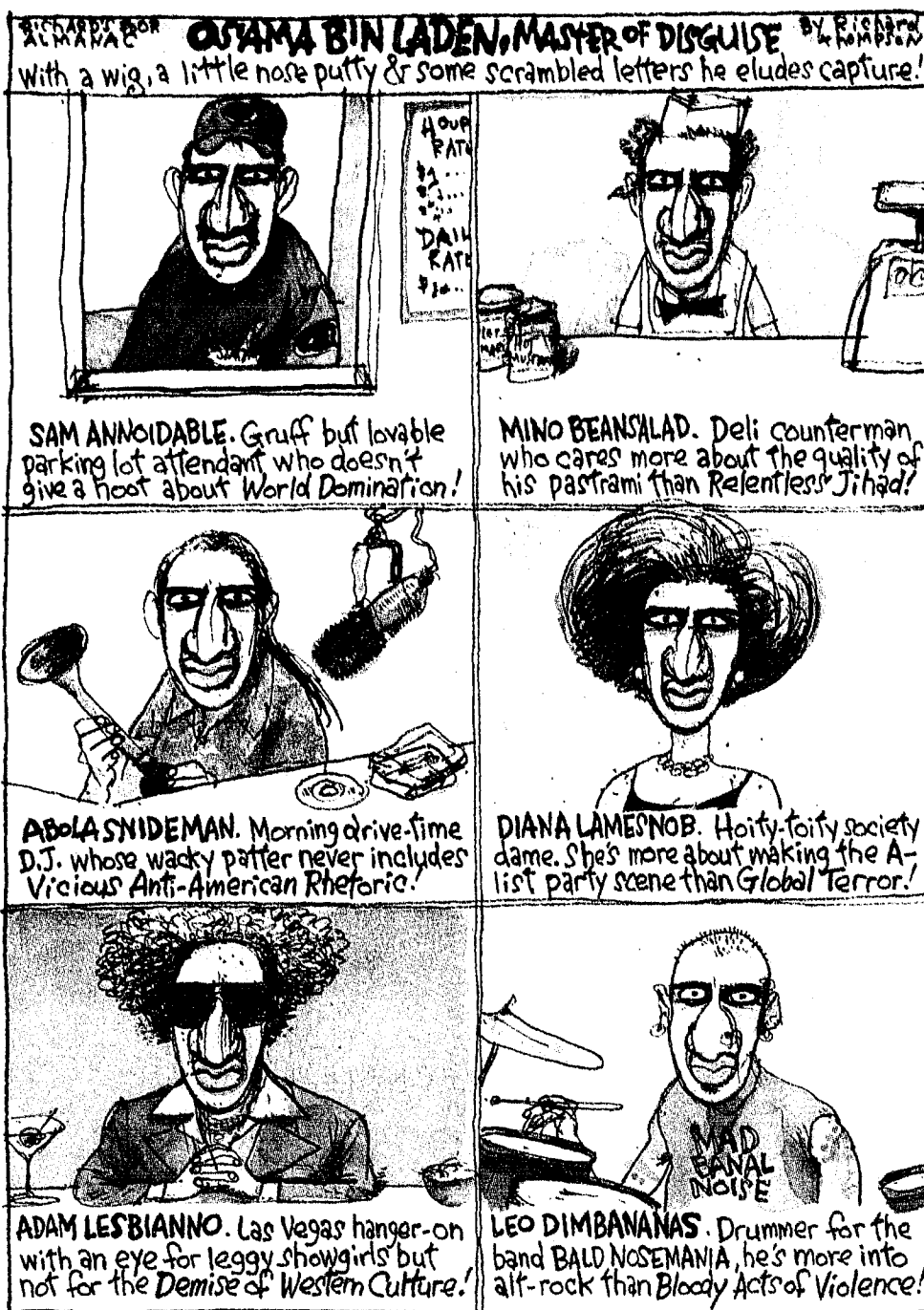


ART GRINATH

I was born in Mississippi in the 1960s, which is the 1920s in rest-of-the-U.S. years. An early distaste for math led inexorably to my getting a PhD in economics. My hobbies are consulting (for MICRA, where intelligent bosses should give employees large raises for plugging the firm in the newspaper) and making movies (the latest, "Revenge of the Dark Chocolate Bunny," is available on VHS for the low price of \$19.99 plus tax). Did I mention I was an economist? Art Grinath is my nom de plume; most people know me as Alan Greenspan. (P.S. I'm the one in red.)

(Art Grinath, Silver Spring)

Next Week: **Wizened Wherefores**



MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

Initial Exuberance

The urge to monogram anything that doesn't move is delightfully genteel, Miss Manners has always thought. What a pretty picture it is to think of all those nice young ladies spending their teenage years flashing their needles as they put their own marks on the linens they will use after they marry.

The process has been somewhat sped up, she has been given to understand. Young ladies who are flashing needles are now clapped into rehab, while others may be flashing something else. She has even heard tell that young ladies do not wait as long as they are supposed to in order to leave marks on linens.

Nevertheless, monogramming is still popular and perhaps even more useful.

For old traditionalists, waking up in monogrammed bed linen provides a clue to their identity. For nontraditionalists, Miss Manners supposes that it provides a clue as to the identity of anyone else in the immediate vicinity. This is not a perfect system, as monograms on sheets and blanket covers on a well-made bed would be upside down from the point of view of the sleeper, but it is better than asking.

Monograms on silver have the advantages of enabling the owners to identify any wandering forks they might re-encounter at the police station or on the dinner table of a former guest. These should also happily remind one of the ancestor who bequeathed them, either to oneself or to the intermediary owner who turned them in for cash via the antiques market.

Kindly souls who wipe away the tears of others, and unkindly souls who cause tears in others, should have monogrammed handkerchiefs to hand over. This brings some dash to a situation otherwise lacking it. It also creates an emotional sequel, as the easily identifiable handkerchief remains with the sufferer. Should it be returned (duly laundered) with apologies and gratitude, a lachrymose combination that could start the cycle again? Or should it be kept as a souvenir?

Other good candidates for monogramming are paper, shirts, luggage, towels, the linings of coats and apparently just about anything else that will hold still long enough. Miss Manners has seen catalogues offering monogrammed chewing gum containers.

Perhaps she should set some limits.

Shall we say that there should be no more than one set of monograms visible at a time? So if you monogram the towels, you don't monogram the bath mat and the shower curtain and trace your initials on the steamed-up bathroom mirror. And if you monogram your shirt cuffs, you can't also have monograms on the cuff links.

Household linens may be monogrammed with the maiden initials of the lady of the house, a custom dating from premarital monogramming that serves equally well for serial marriages. Couples who are tempted to entwine their initials should try to get it out of their system by carving their names together on a tree.

The standard style has the initial of the surname in the middle and the given names on either side, but this should not be attempted by those who have four or more initials. It is equally correct to put the surname larger on the right with preceding initials in a tower to the left, or to crowd them all into a little block, or to pile them on top of one another as if you were typing them and the keys had jammed.

They don't even have to be easily decipherable. However, the look of long hairs disappearing down the drain is not a happy one.

Dear Miss Manners:

My older brother does not leave the house. He sleeps on the couch until after 2 in the afternoon. When he is awake, he finds it necessary to dominate anything that is going on. I find it impossible to find peace at home under these circumstances. I love my brother and do not want to be rude. What must I do?

Two things:

1. Refrain from saying, "Get a life!"
2. Help him get a life.

Miss Manners does not normally sully herself by digging around for root causes of rudeness. It would be pointless, as she doesn't accept them as excuses anyway. But even she recognizes that a young man who does nothing but stay home and nap is not a likely candidate for etiquette improvement.

Feeling incorrect? Address your etiquette questions (in black or blue-black ink on white writing paper) to Miss Manners, in care of The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071

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TODAY'S HOROSCOPE | Sydney Omarr

ARIES
(March 21-April 19): New Moon is in your Tenth House; you will have fresh start and will be "promoted." A "different" kind of romance is on horizon. You'll awake to a new life.

TAURUS
(April 20-May 20): Focus on participation in international humane activities. You will be concerned with home, security and marriage. Capricorn, Cancer natives will play outstanding roles.

GEMINI
(May 21-June 20): New Moon relates to areas previously unknown. Give full play to intellectual curiosity; overcome fear of "mystery." Sagittarius, another Gemini figure prominently.

CANCER
(June 21-July 22): Lie low, play waiting game. Repair

work at home must be completed. Spotlight will be on legal affairs, partnership and marital status. Have luck with number 4.

LEO
(July 23-Aug. 22): Employment picture changes in your favor. On personal level, flirtation becomes serious. Be sure you know when to say, "Enough!" Virgo, Sagittarius will highlight scenario.

VIRGO
(Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Attention resolves around home, marriage and children. Key is to be diplomatic; if you force issues, loss will result. Taurus, Libra will play fascinating roles.

LIBRA
(Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Define terms; you could participate in sale or purchase of land. Gain additional knowledge. Take nothing for granted. Deal

gingerly with temperamental Scorpio. Avoid self-deception.

SCORPIO
(Oct. 23-Nov. 21): This is your power-play day! Relative interferes with plans; say, "Thank you, but no thanks!" Focus on organization; become familiar with priorities. Capricorn involved.

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You could be talk of the town! Reach beyond the immediate. Give aid and comfort to those who request help. Aries, Libra individuals will play memorable roles.

CAPRICORN
(Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Lunar cycle high; make fresh start in new direction. You will be at right place at crucial moment almost effortlessly. Imprint style; don't wait for others. Leo represented.

AQUARIUS
(Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Answers are found behind scenes and as result of meditation. Focus on direction, motivation and marital status. You will learn that you are not alone. Cancer native involved.

PISCES
(Feb. 19-March 20): Your dreams could become realities. You get what you wish for—don't wish for more than you can handle. Gemini, Sagittarius will play mysterious roles.

IF JAN. 13 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: You were separated psychologically or otherwise from parents at relatively early age. Your interests are unorthodox and could include the mantic arts. You are unromantic and passionate, and are always willing to take yet another chance on romance. Taurus, Leo and Scorpio persons play roles in your life.

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