

The Style Invitational

Week CXXXV: Ism This Stupid?



Semi-Tourism: Taking one's vacation in a Mack truck. Not a popular practice.

Eco-sadism: Environmental protection carried out in such a way as to cause the most pain and suffering: e.g., recycling laws that require separation of pint bottles from quart bottles, domestic beer bottles from imported, tabloid newspapers from broadsheets...

Bi-Darwinism: The belief that some people (e.g., Nelson Mandela) are fully evolved, while others (e.g., Vin Diesel) are not.

This week's contest was suggested by Reene Grossman of Washington. Take any common prefix (mega-, psycho-, proto-, pseudo-, neuro-, techno-, etc.) and attach it to any well-known "ism" and define the new term, as in the examples above. First-prize winner gets a suitcase-size disguise kit distributed to the media by the makers of the film "Master of Disguise," in the hopes of garnering good publicity for a movie that proved so dreadful that Post film critic Stephen Hunter walked out of the screening in mid-movie and refused to review it. 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 Tuesday, Sept. 3. 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 Thos Witte of Gaithersburg.*

Report From Week CXXXI, in which you were asked to invent a modern curse.

◆ **Third Runner-Up: May you be named Ben Ladden, be 6 feet 4 and weigh 145 pounds, and be paged over the PA system at the Army-Navy Game.** (Jonathan Alen Marks, Alexandria)

◆ **Second Runner-Up: May you have seven daughters and may each major in philosophy at a separate Seven Sisters college on no scholarship and each simultaneously discover that God is a womyn and . . .** (Kristina Ogilvie, Alexandria)

◆ **First Runner-Up: May you answer the doorbell and find Ed McMahon on your doorstep—alone, on foot, because his car broke down and he wants to use your phone.** (Jim Cranford, Spokane, Wash.)

And the winner of the vintage 1953 framed copy of "The Eisenhower Prayer": **May you create the perfect lawn, moments before the world mistakenly believes you have created a better mousetrap.** (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

◆ **Honorable Mentions:**

May the bird of paradise fly up your nose, and an elephant caress you with its toes, and it be discovered that your most celebrated work is plagiarized. (Donna Lear, Jefferson, Md.)

May your doctors say, "Well, the good news is that you have a fatal disease . . ." (Dot Yufer, Newton, W.Va.)

May you spend eternity in an elevator with the Wazzup guys. (Brian Barrett, Bethesda)

May you never see your eye doctor again, after your laser surgery. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

May Fox TV devote a half-hour show to you called "When Colonoscopies Go Bad." (Bird Waring, New York)

May you be forced to eat worms, run naked in front of your friends, be humiliated by a stern Englishwoman, and not become famous on a reality TV show. (Joseph Romm, Washington)

May your airline pilots be armed and drunk. (Marc Leibert, New York)

May you die, go to Hell, and find that Howard Cosell's Heaven is having a guy just like you to talk to. (Roger and Pam Dalrymple, Gettysburg, Pa.)

May you be the Secret Service agent in charge of Jenna and Barbara. (Joseph Romm, Washington)

May you have a terrible disease named after you, and you are not a doctor or research scientist. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

May it be that wherever you are, whatever you do, you can't get the song "Seasons in the Sun" out of your head. Not the Jacques Brel original, the one by that idiot Terry Jacks. You know the one. (Rosemary Walsh, Rockville)

May your elderly billionaire father marry a young woman with huge breasts. (Helene Haduch, Washington)

May the first name on your nominating petition be Homer Simpson. (Stephen Dudzik, Silver Spring)

May your therapist name his yacht after you. (Jonathan Alen Marks, Alexandria)

May your mother be the only respondent to your personals ad. (Roy Highberg, Bentonville)

May you die a rock star's death, without a rock star's life. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

May that ridiculous Internet urban legend about the stolen organs actually happen to you in Guatemala. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

May you be Saddam's food taster. (Joseph Romm, Washington)

May you have to eat crow, and it's carrying West Nile. (Fred S. Souk, Reston)

And Last: **May your sole source of income be the Style Invitational.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

Next Week: **Split Happens**

Datebook

See You in September

By ROBIN CROOM
Special to The Washington Post

End-of-summer benefits.

Aug. 30
Salute to Negro Baseball League Legends, a black-tie gala, is at Andrews Air Force Base. Tickets: \$50. Call 301-647-2145.

Sept. 5
The Gala Preview Party of the 42nd Chevy Chase Antiques Show, sponsored by the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, is at the club. Tickets: \$40. Call 301-229-0730. (The show is Sept. 6-8.)

Sept. 10
The 14th annual gala of the Children's Inn at NIH is at the National Building Museum. Tickets: \$1,000. Call 301-229-1314.

The annual fall reception to benefit the Women's Campaign Fund is at the Zenith Gallery. Charlie Cook, editor-in-chief of the Cook Political Report, is moderator and House Minority Whip Nancy Pelosi will receive the fund's Leadership Award. Tickets: \$40. Call 202-393-8164.

Sister 2 Sister Magazine's fourth annual Intergenerational Celebration, at the National Press Club, honors Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), hip-hop artists Bizzy Bone and Lil' Kim, and BET President Debra Lee. Tickets: \$300, which must be purchased in advance. Call 202-256-6019.

Sept. 11
The Congressional Black Caucus Spouses Celebration of Leadership is at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Tickets start at \$250 (\$50 for the dance only). Call 202-675-6730.

Sept. 13
The Wolf Trap International Children's Festival Gala is at the Sheraton Premiere, Tysons Corner. Tickets: \$175. Call 703-642-0862, Ext. 7. (The 32nd annual International Children's Festival is Sept. 14-15 at Wolf Trap. Tickets: \$8 for children 3-12 and senior citizens 65 and older; \$10 for adults and teens; free for children under 3. Call 703-218-6500.)

The Congressional Black Caucus Spouses Benefit Concert is at the Washington Convention Center. Tickets start at \$55. The Eve-

ning Fashion Show is at the Grand Hyatt Washington. Tickets start at \$85. Call 202-675-6730.

Sept. 14
Board spectator boats in Annapolis to watch the Hospice Cup XXI, a race sanctioned by the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association that is the local qualifying event for the National Hospice Regatta Championship, and then join the Shore Party at Oakland Hall, Phil and Ellie Merrill's waterfront estate. Tickets: \$250-499. (Higher-priced sponsorship categories carry other privileges.) Tickets for the Shore Party only: \$60 (this does not apply to a sponsor or a sponsor's guest); \$15 for children 11 and under; \$30 for race skippers and crews. Call 703-460-9219.

The Washington Opera's Opening Night Gala Dinner at the Kennedy Center follows a performance of Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor." Tickets start at \$1,000 (not including the opera). Call 202-295-2486.

The Congressional Black Caucus Spouses Luncheon Fashion Show is at the Grand Hyatt Washington. Tickets start at \$85.

Former vice president Al Gore is among the speakers at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual awards dinner and after-dinner soiree is at the Washington Convention Center. The evening honors Festus G. Mogae, president of Botswana; Kenneth I. Chenault, chairman and CEO of American Express; Richard Parsons, CEO of AOL Time Warner; Emmitt Smith, Dallas Cowboys running back; H. Carl McCall, New York State comptroller; Rep. Carrie P. Meek (D-Fla.); and Donna Brazile, former campaign director for Al Gore. There is also a posthumous award honoring Julian Dixon. Entertainment: Chaka Khan featuring Rufus. Tickets start at \$750. Call 202-675-6730.

The Red, White and Blue Gala: A Celebration of National Civic Participation, sponsored by the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind and the Participate America Foundation, is at the Capital Hilton. Entertainment by the 82nd Airborne All-American Chorus. Tickets: \$250.

Call 202-454-6409.

Sept. 17
The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's first annual Reyes of Comedy Night, featuring Cheech Marin and Liz Torres, is at the Kennedy Center. Tickets: \$200. Call 202-543-1771.

The USO's annual gala at the Hilton Washington salutes George H.W. Bush. Entertainment by Wayne Newton, Lee Greenwood, Trace Adkins, Ruth Pointer and others. Tickets: \$1,000. Call 202-610-6455.

Noche de Gala, the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts dinner—Jimmy Smits and Esai Morales are the hosts, Sandra Bullock is the honoree, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle is the keynote speaker—is at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel. Tickets: \$1,000. Call 202-293-8330.

Sept. 18
The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's 25th annual gala is at MCI Center. The evening honors Emilio and Gloria Estefan, who will be joining the festivities via satellite. Entertainment: Soluna, Carlos Ponce and Gilbert Santa Rosa. Tickets: \$500. Call 202-543-1771.

Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) is the guest of honor at a gala at the Thurgood Marshall Center to benefit Project 2000, a nonprofit academic support and educational mentoring program in Southeast Washington. Tickets: \$100. Call 202-543-2309.

Sept. 19
The League of Conservation Voters annual dinner is at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel. The event honors Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.). Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle is the featured speaker. Tickets: \$500. Call 202-454-4567.

Equinox restaurant and Poste restaurant at the Hotel Monaco are sponsoring a Sugar & Champagne Affair to benefit the Washington Humane Society's Humane Law Enforcement Programs. The event is at the Hotel Monaco. Tickets: \$75. Call 202-723-5419.

To be continued next week.

TELL ME ABOUT IT

TELL ME, From F1

gies and two heart-stoppings, but I see otherwise: one strategy failure—Girl 2—and one relationship—Girl 1—simply running its course.

Because that course happened to be straight into a brick wall, you automatically assumed you did something terribly wrong and so worked hard to be different, even though it might have been nobody's fault. Maybe Girl 1 wasn't right.

That's the only mistake I can see here, in fact—that you overcorrected. You replaced your big blind whirlwind heart with one that tried to peer between lines and respond according to the latest polls and Great Girl 2 research. You can't plan your way out of a breakup.

Right. You know this. Better to accept upfront that at least some pain is a likely outcome, then feel whatever Girl N makes you feel—passionate, cautious, best-friend, over the moon. Then just see where your little bus goes.

Carolyn:

My girlfriend broke up with me just after July 4. We ended on decent terms. We also work together in a fairly small office. Our boss has invited the staff and "significant others" to a get-together at her house this weekend. My ex told me she plans to bring her new guy (I didn't know she had a new guy until today). Many in the office don't know we have broken up or only just found out. I told her I thought it was rude and unprofessional. If this were an after-work happy hour where I could easily opt out, I wouldn't mind. She told me I was being immature. Am I being unreasonable? Should I even go?

—Ex



... AND IF YOU'RE NOT SATISFIED AFTER SIX MONTHS, JUST DUMP ME. EVERYONE ELSE DOES.

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Unreasonable only in your choice of words—though immaturity could explain that. You called her rude and unprofessional when she had the manners to warn you whom she was bringing, and when her professionalism is beside the point.

What she's doing is hurting and embarrassing you, and being wildly insensitive. A hard thing to say because admitting vulnerability always is, but that's what you meant.

Face it, say it.

And yes, go, of course, regardless of what she decides. You'll feel better for having the guts.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style Plus, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071 or tellme@washpost.com, and join Carolyn's live discussion at noon Fridays at washingtonpost.com/liveonline

Richard Thompson is away. "Richard's Poor Almanac" will resume when he returns.

DEAR ABBY

Dear Abby:

I am a forty-something female personnel recruiter. I have worked for the same company for many years. Once or twice a year, our employers host a party for all employees and their spouses. I love going because it gives me a chance to get to know the wives of the men I work with.

The problem is, my husband, "Brad," hates going to these events. Brad claims he has nothing in common with my fellow employees—or their spouses—and doesn't feel comfortable mingling. I say he should be able to find something to talk about with

someone. He has accompanied me for umpteen years and happens to be in the same profession as a number of the spouses. And then there's always sports—that's a subject he could talk about in his sleep.

This year, he's insisting I go alone, and I'm very disappointed. I would hate to have to lie to co-workers as to why I'm there solo, but I could never tell them the truth about why Brad didn't want to come.

What irks me is that I'm willing to go with him to his work parties, even if I feel uncomfortable and just stand around with a frozen smile on my face. At least I'm there for my

husband. So why can't Brad do the same for me, Abby? Am I wrong to push this issue—or should I throw in the towel and go without him?

Troubled Wife in Riverhead, N.Y.

Your husband has "done the same for you" and it hasn't worked out. He's miserable. Out of the kindness of your heart, go solo this year. I'm sure he'll be grateful. If you are asked about his absence, tell your co-workers that "Brad has other plans." You don't have to say his plans include watching TV in his pajamas. And if anyone asks to be remembered to your husband—relay the message.

Perhaps if he knows someone missed him, he'll feel more comfortable attending next year.

Dear Abby:

I have been dating "Tony," my 36-year-old never-married boyfriend, for two years. I am divorced with a teenage daughter, "Skylar."

Every summer Tony's entire family gets together at his parents' lakeshore home. Last year I went with him for a long weekend, but didn't take my daughter. This year, however, I've been invited for a week, and I'd like to bring Skylar along.

The problem is Tony's mother

doesn't want my daughter to come. She says her three granddaughters need to bond with one another, and if Skylar were included in the visit, the "mix" wouldn't work.

Abby, those girls are the same age as Skylar. They have all met previously and they like each other. Naturally, I'm not going now. Tony will be leaving soon for the week-long stay, and he doesn't understand why I'm upset over this. Do you think my feelings are justified?

Mad in Massachusetts

Absolutely. The refusal of Tony's mother to accept your daughter is a

veiled rejection of you. Even if you and Tony were to marry, his mother would still try to create a wedge between the girls, because she views Skylar as an outsider. Until Tony finds the backbone to stand up to his mother, you'd be wise to rethink the relationship.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

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