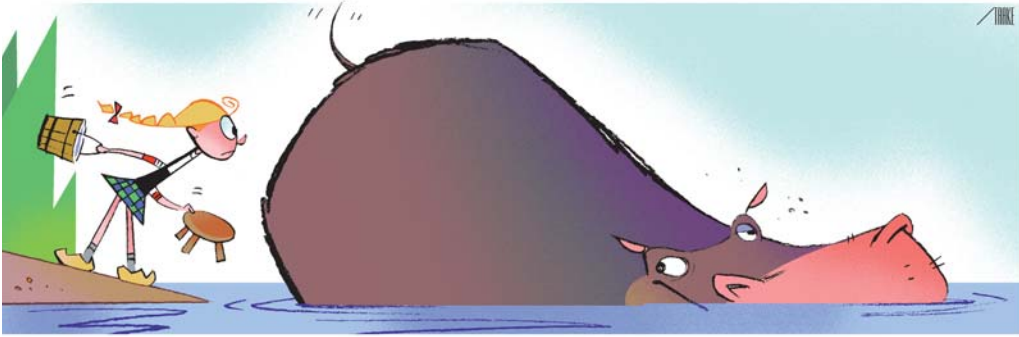


# The Style Invitational

Week 498: Unamazing But True!



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

- 1. The average garbage disposal motor has a service life of 15 hours.
- 2. A glass of hippopotamus milk contains, on average, 80 calories.
- 3. The number of ethnic Bashkirs in Bashkiria is exceeded by the number of Tatars. In neighboring Tataria, the reverse is true.

**This week's contest** was suggested by Michael Rae of Potomac. Readers are invited to submit a true fact that is of absolutely no use, but interesting in a weirdly Invitationalist way. Gotta be verifiably true. First-prize winner gets a T-shirt featuring two really cute teddy bears engaged in what appears to be a procreational act. 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](mailto:losers@washpost.com). U.S. mail entries are no longer accepted. Deadline is Monday, March 31. 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 the same as it was last week, by the same Seth Brown of Williamstown, Mass., because last week we inadvertently advertised the wrong upcoming contest, in addition to having chosen unoriginal entries as winner and first runner-up. We probably also libeled someone, misidentified entire continents, misquoted dignitaries, and showed inappropriate liberal bias. We are dreadfully sorry. It was a bad week.*

**Report from Week CLXI**, in which you were asked to rewrite some banal instructions in the style of some famous writer.

◆ Second Runner-Up: **I'm not at home, or I'm asleep, But do not fret, and do not weep. Just leave a message at the beep, Just leave a message at the beep.** —Robert Frost (Paul Dudley, Ellicott City)

◆ First Runner-Up: **Remove this tag!** —pillow warning, rewritten by Abbie Hoffman (Charles Havekost, Vienna)

◆ And the winner of the shotgun shell salt and pepper shaker: **O proud left foot, that ventures quick within Then soon upon a backward journey lithe. Anon, once more the gesture, then begin: Command sinistral pedestal to writhe. Commence thou then the fervid Hokey-Poke, A mad gyration, hips in wanton swirl. To spin! A wilde release from Heavens yoke. Blessed dervish! Surely canst go, girl.**

**The Hoke, the poke—banish now thy doubt Verily, I say, 'tis what it's all about.** —by William Shakespeare (Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

◆ Honorable Mentions: **"Call me e-mail."** —Herman Melville, re-writing "you've got mail." (Michael Clem, McLean)

**ool (no p) maintain this** —pool warning, by e cummings. (Brad Cooper, St. Augustine, Fla.)

**First you lather. Okay. Then you rinse. Then what do you do? Repeat. So you lather and rinse. And then? Repeat. It says so! So you lather and rinse . . . and when does the madness stop?** —Jerry Seinfeld (Bird Waring, New York)

**Do not put bag over your face. The air shall cease and breathing fade; Do not, do not put bag over your face. Though not a gun, or knife, or mace, Your skin shall look like grape Kool Aid Do not, do not put bag over your face.** —Dylan Thomas (Evan Golub, College Park)

**If you a knocked-up ho, dont drink no mo.** —the warning on a liquor bottle, by Eminem (Joseph Romm, Washington)

**This warning issues from a model modern Surgeon-general Who wishes that your stay on Earth might be not so ephemeral As mascot Joe, that smoking hyperactive dromedary who Succumbed to fatal illness, cardiac and pulmonary too . . .** —Gilbert and Sullivan rewrite the tobacco-pack warning (Stephen Fahey, Kensington, and Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

**Well, to wake up this morning, set alarm to on. I said, to wake up this morning, set alarm to on. Then when it rings, press snooze until it's gone.** —B.B. King (Jeff Seigle, Vienna)

**If you notice in this vicinity, Furtive glances, unattended ticking packages, unauthorized entry into limited access areas, or any other suspicious actinnity, Please remember that our alert level is orange, And err on the side of caution, report transgressions to an appropriate authority and help prevent acts of terrorism from an evildoer domestic or foring.**

—Notification of terrorism alert level, by Ogden Nash. (Dan Steinberg, Falls Church)

**Sometimes a cigar is just a carcinogen.** —Sigmund Freud (Joseph Romm, Washington)

**Subtract line 34 from line 22, or, if you are left-handed, line 29, making sure you also multiply the fiduciary rejoinder by the dependent flatus. Finally, divide that by the number of quids in a hectare. This is your adjusted gross income. And I needn't tell you that Adjusted Gross Income would make a fine name for the Arthur Andersen Prison Softball team.** —Dave Barry rewrites the tax return. (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)

**A gauzy Skein of Propylene— That sways with slightest Breath— This bag holds smocks—and Bread and Milk**

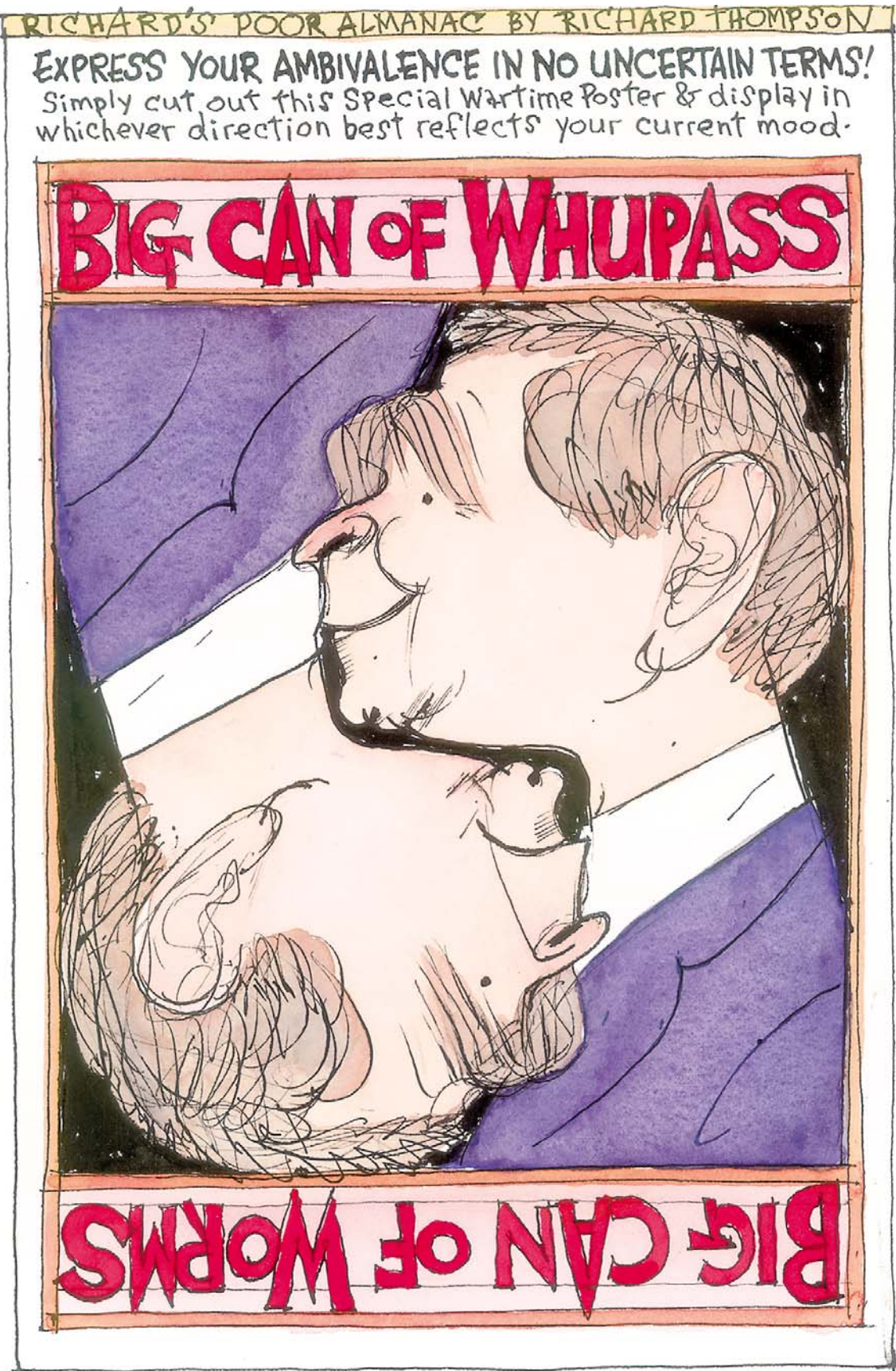
**But—in its folds—lies Death. It sways and puffs—this Thistledown, Balloonlike in its joy— Each tiny mouth a perfect fit—This bag is not a toy.** —Emily Dickinson (Jim Roy Wilson, Washington)

**Your entry must be both humourous and original; but beware, lest the part that is good be not original, and the part that is original be not good.**

—Samuel Johnson (Joseph Romm, Washington)

◆ And Last: **Employees Must Wash Hands After Pooping** —Chuck Smith, Woodbridge (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)

Next Week: Brief Is the Soul of Wit



## TELL ME ABOUT IT

TELL ME, From F1

**like your friends better than you like me," which gets really old really quick. Do you think I should have to give up my alone time with my friends to keep my BF happy? Do you think the fact that I don't want my BF to be with me at every waking moment means he's not the one? I want a romantic relationship; I just want my friendships, too.**

—I Need a Girls' Night Out

No, you need three or more girls' nights out. And you do like your friends better than you like your boyfriends. And you don't want them to be integrated.

Which would all be fine if you were upfront about it. That way, at least, any boyfriends of yours would have enough information to decide whether they wanted to accept this arrangement, instead of being somewhat deceptively held at arm's length.

Actually, at dukes' length: You've got both of yours up full time in defense of your choice. "I really love my friends"; "I just want my friendships"; "it's not like I don't have an equal number of nights free for just him." Oh kayyyy.

And how about those two loaded questions about "keep[ing] my boyfriend happy" or being with him "every waking moment"—when, of course, you know the stock answer will be,

heavens! No! A girl should never drop everything to center her life on a boy!

True. But: A boy deserves a better answer than an eye roll and a here-we-go-again when he notices—rightly—that his girlfriend doesn't want him around. You'd want one if he were with his friends and conspicuously excluding you.

Is this guy the right one for you? Probably not. For what it's worth, I do think you'll feel a little differently about including a boyfriend down the road. At least, I hope that for you. It's great to have The Girls, but it's also pretty amazing to have a mate you just enjoy having around—and who blends with your friends just as readily as he says, "Go, have fun without me."

If that happens, though, it won't be because you found some magical "one"; it'll be because you grew up and, to a lesser extent, the group changed or simply eroded.

Still, this is who you are and what you want, at least right now. Don't change if you don't want to—just be honest about it, and stop punishing guys who care.

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



I JUST WANT YOU AROUND WHEN IT'S CONVENIENT FOR ME. DON'T MY NEEDS ACCOUNT FOR ANYTHING?

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

See HOW YOUR DREAM CAR STACKS UP

On Wheels. Sunday. The Car Pages.

If it's important to you, it's important to us.  
The Washington Post