

The Style Invitational

Week 533: Breed Apart



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The child of Evel Knievel and Mother Teresa would keep making enormous leaps of faith.

The child of Dorothy Parker and Timothy Leary would have a really acid wit.

The child of Miss Manners and The Czar of The Style Invitational would pioneer the development of the lilac-scented whoopee cushion.

This Week's Contest was proposed by Peter Metrinko of Alexandria. On the theory that cloning may someday make it possible to reproduce famous people, living or dead, then it would also be possible for the clones of two famous people to marry and produce children. What would they be like? Mate the clones of any two famous real people, living or dead—a male and a female, please—and hypothesize what traits or skills their offspring might have. First-prize winner gets a Barbie and Ken "Star Trek" watch.

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. Deadline is Monday, Dec. 1. 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 Stephen Dudzik of Olney.

Report from Week 529, in which you were asked to recast a well-known document or principle in a four-line rhyme:

◆ Second Runner-Up:
**Honor the Sabbath, your mom and your dad,
No idols, goddammit, or taking a life.
Adultery, stealing and lying are bad.
Don't covet your neighbor's old goat, or his wife.**
(Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

◆ First Runner-Up:
**Darwin's "Origin of Species"
Bacteria, slime, mold, yeast,
Jellyfish, shark, wildebeest,
Monkey, chimp, ape, man.
Face it, folks, there was no plan.**
(Richard Lempert, Arlington)

◆ And the winner of the stationery made from elephant dung:
**Musket and ball we've got, also disease;
We're accustomed to taking whatever we please.
"Manifest Destiny" can't be denied
(And it sounds so much better than, oh, "genocide.")**
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ Honorable Mentions:
**After fourscore years and just a tad
We have death and gore galore.
It's very sad, 'cause war is bad,
Now go on out and fight some more.**
(Sarah Johnson, Auburn, Ala.)

**Churchill's great speech:
We shall fight in the valleys,
The hills, streets and alleys.
No Nazi punk'll
Make us say uncle.**
(Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

**The Miranda warning:
You don't have to speak, but all that you
say
Will be subject to our legal powers.
If you want an attorney but can't meet
his pay,
We will happily lend one of ours.**
(Scott Campisi, Wake Village, Tex.)

**The 21st Amendment:
We've had enough of Al Capone,
Seems we set the gangsters loose.
So go back to your drunken ways—
We'll just tax the juice.**
(Carl Yaffe, Rockville)

**A bit porno actor is filling the bill,
So they give him a raise, and he's
competent still.
A promotion from there would make him
the lead,
But some principle says that he may not
succeed.**
(Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

**If William of Occam
Were shaving today,
Quadruple-edge razors
Would not be okay.**
(Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

**The Torah:
Think first about doing what's right,
Not just about making a shekel.
Live a good life, and keep to your wife,
And cut off the tip of your schmekl.**
(Scott Campisi, Wake Village, Tex.)

**The Bush Doctrine:
Out in the world is an axis of evil
Who'd give us all their worst.
Because of this it's now okay
For us to do it first.**
(Michael Simon, Gaithersburg)

**President Bush's economic stimulus
package:
Claim your big refund,
And deduct your Hummer.
What's that? You're not rich?
Oh, man, that's a bummer.**
(Mark Briscoe, Arlington)

**The infield fly rule:
The umpire calls the batter out
Though the fielder catches nada.
And there must be runners on first and
second,
And yadda, yadda, yadda.**
(Bruce W. Alter, Fairfax Station)

**Newton's First Law of Motion:
A body that's moving will stay on its
course
Unless acted on by some external force.
A body that's resting continues to rest,
As my brother the moocher exemplifies
best.**
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**The Conservation Law of Mass-Energy:
It's clearly demonstrable: Any closed
system
Exhibits a strict conservation of mass.
That cache of your leftover Halloween
candy?
It's all been transformed to more lard on
my ass.**
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**As a siren approaches, its pitch gets
more high,
But then drops off quickly as it passes
by,
So hats off to me, Christian Doppler, for
showing
A means of distinguishing coming from
going.**
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

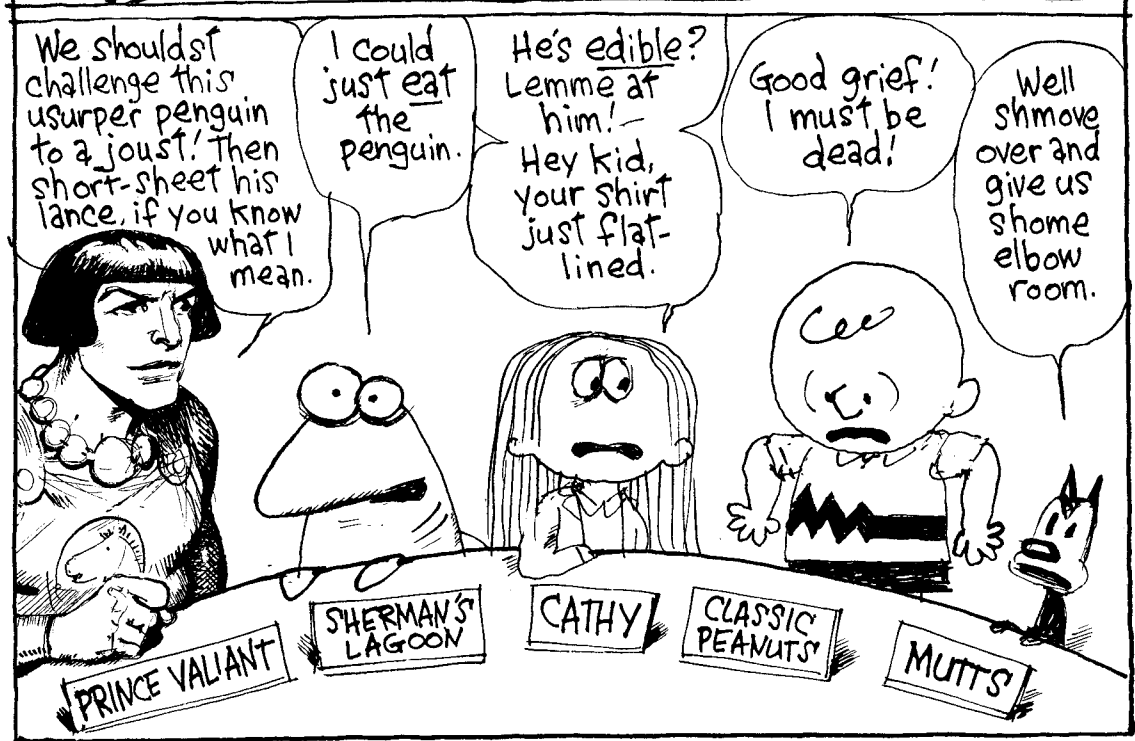
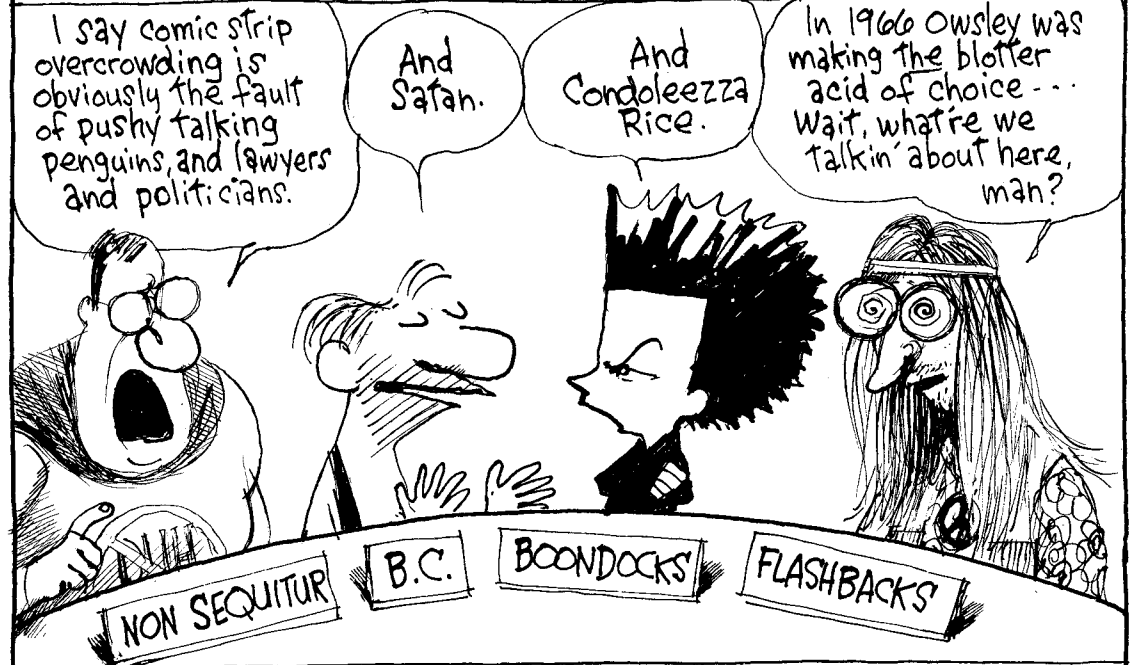
**The Pythagorean Theorem:
The square of A plus the square of B
Equals the square of hypotenuse C.
Aside from this, hypotenuses
Have few if any practical uses.**
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**Archimedes' principle:
"Eureka," says I: An object more dense
Displaces less water—it makes perfect
sense!
This discovery has so greatly brightened
my mood,
I shall run through the Syracuse streets
in the nude.**
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**The big-bang theory:
Just 15 billion years ago there was a
giant clatter
When a single point erupted, throwing
out a lot of matter.
From this Hubble start not long ago, the
Universe begins—
Which explains a lot, except perhaps
why Beary always wins.**
(Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

Richard's Poor Almanac CARBON ROUNDTABLE by Richard Thompson

The return of beloved 1980s icon Opus the Talking Penguin has caused severe overcrowding in the Sunday Comics Section. We've invited characters from several affected strips to address this important issue.



MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

Being Thankful, With Target Practice

We should all be grateful that Thanksgiving is no longer celebrated as in the olden days, in the traditional American ways. People who are stuck in gridlock this week, on highways, in airports or within their own intestines, may grumble, but Miss Manners can assure them that things used to be worse.

She realizes how disorienting this is to those given to deploring our cultural and moral deterioration, as evidenced by the debased celebrations of patriotic and religious holidays as occasions for self-indulgence. Didn't Thanksgiving used to be a day in which pious folk celebrated peace with wholesome food?

Would our kindergarten teachers have lied to us? Let us say, rather, that they put a kindly and valiant spin on customs that would now come under their own zero-tolerance policies.

Fortunately, there is enough doubt about which was the first real Thanksgiving to allow for the development of those comprehensible narratives we call history. The Pilgrims have captured the role in popular entertainment, with the Puritans as their understudies, especially after the population could no longer tell them apart. But in anticipation of the modern custom of extolling diversity by having each segment of the population vie for credit, serious claims were also made by the French Huguenots in Florida, the Spanish in Texas, the English in Virginia and the folks (excluding the summer people) in Maine.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, life was rough enough in all those places to inspire settlers to proclaim days of thanks to God whenever the routine torments of nature gave them a respite, which was not often. Thanksgiving for having vanquished enemies was also common—as common, that is, as the thankers' victories—and anticipatory thanks were offered on credit for help with future vanquishing.

That last custom, along with its milder but also historic application to team sports, we have more or less maintained. Others we have let lapse.

While we prate of good fellowship as a defining element of Thanksgiving, we overlook a stunning feature of the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving, which was a show of arms. The three-day Plymouth version of the first Thanksgiving featured hunting and target practice as a way of demonstrating their prowess in case their native guests had ideas about displacing them. Turkeys and targets continued to be shot at Thanks-

giving celebrations up until the mid-19th century, when Americans were busy giving thanks for shooting one another.

True, the modern Thanksgiving features family bickering, from which full-fledged feuds sometimes emerge. But that is hardly the same thing.

Overeating is another comparatively tepid custom of ours. Early settlers were rarely lucky enough to have the chance, which is why they were truly thankful for a good harvest, while we are more likely to complain about being stuffed. Public carousing and drunkenness, such as we have relegated to Spring Break week, routinely characterized their celebrations. Begging is another traditional American Thanksgiving custom, lasting until the 1930s, when it was replaced—by presidential proclamation, in the interest of the economy—by shopping. We have now pushed both begging and Christmas shopping back to Halloween. Having thus thrown off the shackles of the past, we are left with a charming holiday of feasts and families. And for that, Miss Manners is thankful.

Dear Miss Manners:

My daughter and I host a Christmas tea every year—usually a couple of weeks before Christmas (around the 15th or so). This year, because of the busy schedules of many of our 200 guests, the tea will be in early December. Since there aren't too many days between Thanksgiving Day and the day of the tea this year, would it be appropriate to mail the invitations before Thanksgiving? I usually send them out the day after Thanksgiving.

Miss Manners appreciates your reluctance to start in on Christmas before Thanksgiving, but your busy friends need at least two weeks' advance notice if they are to schedule your party before filling up their calendars. Having been bombarded with Christmas-related advertising since Halloween, they are unlikely to accuse you of rushing things.

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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BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH
♠ Q 9 8
♥ Q 10 6 5 2
♦ J 6 3
♣ 8 5

WEST (D)
♠ 4
♥ A K 8 4
♦ 7 2
♣ A 10 9 7 6 3

EAST
♠ 7 6 3
♥ J 9 3
♦ A 10 9 8
♣ Q J 4

SOUTH
♠ A K J 10 5 2
♥ 7
♦ K Q 5 4
♣ K 2

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Pass	1 NT	Dbl
2 ♣	2 ♥	3 ♣	3 ♠
All Pass			

Opening lead: ♦ 7

You don't need a search warrant to find out how the missing cards lie. A listening device is usually enough.

East played the eight on the first diamond, and South took the king and saw eight easy tricks. For one more, South planned to ruff a diamond in dummy, but if he took two trumps next, the defense might lead a third trump, stopping the ruff.

To find the winning play, South used a listening device: his ears. He'd heard West open and rebid in clubs, showing a six-card suit, and since East hadn't responded one heart, West had four cards there. Moreover, if East had five diamonds, he'd have responded one diamond and could have won the first diamond to give West a ruff.

So South placed West with 1-4-2-6 pattern. South therefore

cached ONE trump and then led a diamond to the jack. East won, and the defense took two clubs. East then led a second trump, but South won, cashed the queen of diamonds and ruffed his last diamond in dummy, assuring his contract.

As the cards lay, other lines of play would work. After South won the first diamond, he could lead a trump to the nine and return a low diamond. East would have to play low, and when South's queen won, he could lead a heart. West would take the king, but whatever he led next would concede the ninth trick.

The deal arose in a major team event. South, Tom Sanders of Nashville, is every bit as good as his play suggests. In 2002, he and his wife Carol were inducted into the Bridge Hall of Fame.

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Next Week: **Trey, Trey Again**