The Style Invitational

Week 534: The Feminine Touch



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This Week's Contest: Propose how any male-dominated occupation or institution would change if it suddenly became female-dominated. Examples might be the U.S. presidency, the construction business, the game of professional baseball, the Czardom of The Style Invitational, etc. The Czar urges readers not to be too squeamish about demonstrating a little bit of good-natured sexism: after all, remember who judges this thing. First-prize winner gets Painted Potties, a designer decal set for one's toilet.

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. 8. 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 is by Russell Beland of Springfield

Report from Week 530, in which you were asked to take a word and alter it in three ways—by adding a letter, changing a letter, and deleting a letter—and supplying definitions for the resulting three words. Several people fell two short of a good troika, but had one gem: Examples: "Redskeins: Strings of consecutive losses." "Mountainfop: A hillwilliam." "Mantique: An item a guy keeps from his bachelor days, such as his lucky socks or his Loni Anderson poster." A special Blind T-Shirt Award goes to Russell Beland of Springfield for an entry of three perfectly clever and perfectly disgusting definitions that very well might have won the elephant-poop key chain, in some parallel universe where editors are not fired for committing crimes against humanity.

♦ Second Runner-Up:

Sphincter

Sphinxcter: A figure in Egyptian mythology having the buttocks of a lion and the head of a

Spincter: An unmarried, anal-retentive woman **Sphinctee:** Someone who's always getting dumped on

(Roy Ashley, Washington)

♦ First Runner-Up:

Snowboarding

Snowbearding: Adopting extreme sports as a way of seeming less gay

Snowbarding: Schussing e'er onward t'ward the hillock's scree / Whether mine neck to break, it is to be or not to be

Snowbogarding: Using up the snow so no one else can ski (Dan Steinberg, Falls Church)

♦ And the winner of the key chain carved from the seed of an illala palm tree that has passed through the digestive tract of an elephant:

Colonialism

Colonicalism: A purge of the old regime

Clonialism: Government by genetically engineered pod people, e.g, bureaucrats Cojonialism: Government by reckless displays of machismo

(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

♦ Honorable mentions:

Maohel: A famous Chinese circumciser. discredited for his disastrous Great Lop

Ohel: What you don't want to hear the rabbi say during the procedure

Aohel: An Internet provider notorious for its painful service cutoffs

(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

AOL Time Warner

Ol' Time Warner: Media Giant, circa 2000 AWOL Time Warner: Media Giant, circa

All Time Warner: Media Giant, circa 2004 (Dan Klein, McLean)

Sosa

So sad: The inevitable emotional state of Cubs fans

SOS: The cry of Cubs fans, every year **So-so:** The odds that the Cubs will be above .500 next June

(Joe Cackler, Falls Church)

Pentateuch

Pentatouch: Scripture in which Adam and Eve hold hands

Petateuch: . . . in which Adam and Eve

engage in foreplay **Spentateuch:** . . in which Adam and Eve

have a cigarette (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Pornography

Ornography: *Dirty birds* **Tornography:** Magazines with the

centerfolds ripped out **Pornotgraphy:** A movie that sounds dirty

but isn't (e.g., "Hannah and Her Sisters")

(Bird Waring, New York)

Incognito

Incagnito: Disguised as a Peruvian **Incognitov:** Disguised as a Russian Incogito: Disguised as "The Thinker" (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Charlatan

Charlatag: The "Guchi" label on a street vendor's handbags

Charlatang: Store-brand orange juice Charlatin: Natalie Wood as Maria in "West

Side Story' (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Newspaper

Newsparer: An editor for The Express **Ewspaper:** The National Enquirer Newspamper: A low-cost diaper substitute

(Milo Sauer, Fairfax)

Republican Repubican: Bob Dole

RepubWican: Ann Coulter Republickan: Bob Packwood

(Mark Young, Washington)

Zaftig Aftig: Having a pleasingly plump behind

Zaftpig: Past the point of pleasingly plump **Daftig:** Fat AND stupid

(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Airony: The fact that the Wizards are

better now that Michael Jordan has left **Irany:** The fact that Iran is now our ally against Irag I "R" NY: Slogan for Michael Bloomberg

(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Viagra

Viagray: Combines sexual potency pill with Grecian Formula

Vagra: Restores potency, but makes you more apt to stray

Biagra: Restores potency, but makes you more open to "alternatives"

(Brendan Beary, Great Mills) **Hysterectomy**

Shysterectomy: *Disbarment* Hysterectoy: One of Mattel's biggest flops, the "Post Menopausal Barbie" **Oysterectomy:** How you find a pearl

Writing about what's next. Thursdays in Business.

The Washington Post

(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Next Week: **Treacle Matter**

WHERE | WHEN | WHY WHAT Most profitable dot-coms are still as shaky as Great Grandma on ice skates Humanity could blow the Information Revolution, as we did the Industrial Revolution Now that the pretenders and wannabes are gone, the Internet has a shot at being real again ... \P Leslie Walker | .com Columnist

RICHARD'S POOR PROTESTERS GREET SANTA'S ARRIVAL by Richard An estimated 500 protesters, some throwing tinsel, greeted Santa Claus as he arrived here today to launch the holiday season at a reception for toy company executives sponsored by Jolly Tot Playthings, a subsidiary of Halliburton. Claus was hustled through the angry crowd by bodyguards after emerging from a bright red Humvee.

MONGERING GO BACK HABLER BI FATCAT TO THE CHILD GO CAPITALIST PARED Ho ho ho.

Spokeself Tinky de Frost called the demonstrators "thoroughly naughty and not nice" and warned of lumps of coal for everyone." He was slightly injured when a giant puppet shaped like "Ken" fell on him.

AGH

Several local children expressed the opinion that this Santa was a big fake, pointing out that the real Santa had been at the mall since early November.



MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

Sweet Lessons of 'The Nutcracker'

keptical about those instant remedial etiquette classes being offered for children at fancy venues, Miss Manners now finds that she has something along similar lines to recom-

It is not a class, so you can't drop off your children and expect to get them back that afternoon professionally civilized. Unfortunately, nothing can relieve parents of the 20-year, around-the-clock task of teaching their own children how to behave toward others. That burden is called child-rearing, and there are no quick fixes.

However, she sympathizes with the occasional yearning parents have to inject an unnatural modicum of sophistication into the unsuspecting young. And there is a seasonal opportunity that might appeal to them.

Miss Manners is not referring to the punitive Santa Claus threat. It takes children half a minute to recognize that bluff. And anyone old enough to have lived through one New Year's Eve sees the flaw in the bribe of being allowed to stay up to watch the adults make fools of themselves: People who are making fools of themselves are not vigi-

The instrument in question is the nutcracker. Or, rather, "The Nutcracker." With the proper preparation, it can turn your perfectly healthy modern child into the sort of fetchingly dressed combination of excited enthusiasm and charming nervousness who inspires adults inadvertently thrown in their company to comment, "Awwww" instead of "Ewwww."

The wrong way to go about this is to tell the child who is going to a performance for the first time that he or she has nothing to worry about, it's just like going to the movies only better, it's fine to dress comfortably, just relax and you'll have a great time. The adult equivalent of this misbegotten attempt to entice is the overuse of the word "casual" in invitations. It only advertises that the occasion will be nothing special.

Rather, this is the time to reverse all those lectures against succumbing to peer pressure about appearances and announce that all the other children will be dressed up and yours would be embarrassed not to be. Strangely enough, it is true. "The Nutcracker" is for children what the Academy

Awards is for actresses—the wrong time to go in for understatement.

Teaching children audience manners—to sit still and not talk, what to look for and when to clap—is accomplished by another childish argument, namely that there will be other children who won't know how to behave. Superiority of social knowledge is not a nice incentive but as adults know from own experience, it is a powerful one.

So is the urge to be in show business. By using child dancers—in the first-act party scene and, in some productions, throughout—"The Nutcracker" exerts a powerful hold on its young audience. The thought "I could be up there, with everyone applauding me" is an American article of faith that recognizes no boundaries of talent or willingness to work Should that lead to pleas for ballet lessons, the

parents' job will indeed be made easier. There is nothing like an old-fashioned ballet class run like a Siberian labor camp to give the lie to the notion that children are immune to disciplined formality—and to make even the most exacting parents seem lenient.

Dear Miss Manners:

Is it rude to wear headphones and listen to a baseball game while attending the game with Often it is helpful and informative to hear the

radio announcers describe what I am watching. But my husband feels it is rude to listen and not engage in conversation with him during the game. Spectatorship can properly be an individual or a

team sport, but not both at the same time. If your husband's sociability interferes with your enjoyment of the game, Miss Manners suggests that you attend alone and that he find more compatible companions with whom to attend. 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. © 2003, Judith Martin

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH **♠** 10 9 2 **♥** J 5 4 3 **♦** J852

♣ 72 WEST (D) EAST ♠ KQ875 **♠** J 6 **¥** 10 8 **♥** KQ976 **♦** AK9 **♦** 10 6 4 3 **4** 10 5 3 **4** 96

SOUTH ♠ A 4 3 **♥** A 2 **♦** 07

♣ A K Q J 8 4

The bidding West North East South Pass 3 NT

Opening lead: A J

All Pass

over the South and East cards and test your defense

as West. You lead the jack of

three. What next? Unlucky Louie isn't known for foresight, at or away from the table. (One of these days, I expect Louie will tell me he lent someone money to have facial reconstruction sur-

gery-and now he can't find the

guy and doesn't know what he

spades against 3NT: deuce, eight,

looks like.) Louie was West, and South's leap to 3NT suggested a long, solid suit with a side trick or two. After East encouraged on the first spade, Louie led another spade.

South took the ace and cashed three clubs. He next led the seven of diamonds, knowing from the bidding that Louie had the A-K. (East was marked with the K-Q of spades, so Louie needed every other honor for his opening bid.) Louie took the king but was stuck: If he led the ace and a low diamond, dummy's jack would win South's ninth trick. When instead Louie shifted to the king of hearts, South took the ace and cashed three more clubs.

Louie's last three cards were the queen of hearts and the A-9 of diamonds, so dummy, discarding behind him, bared the jack of hearts and kept the J-8 of diamonds. South then led the queen of diamonds. Louie won and took his high heart but had to give dummy the jack of diamonds at the end.

It takes foresight to beat the contract. After the jack of spades wins, Louie must cash his top diamonds, removing South's exit card. Louie then leads another spade, and South gets only his eight top tricks.

© 2003, Tribune Media Services