

The Style Invitational

Week 556: So Zoo Us



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Warhog x rhino = whino, an animal you don't want to mess with at the watering hole

Bat x lynx = blynx, a creature with erratic eyesight

Cheetah x leopard = cheepard, a cat that travels in packs of 12

This week's contest is based on a clever list of fancifully combined dog breeds that's been bouncing all over the Internet, unfortunately without attribution: e.g., Pekingesex x Lhasa Apso = Pekaso, a dog with both eyes on the left side of its head. You get to combine any two kinds of animals, give its name and describe it. As with a number of recent contests, this is an easy one to do, which means that to get ink, it no doubt will have to have a very funny, original, creative name *and* description. Better than the critters above. First-prize winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational Trophy. First runner-up wins the appropriately zoological Oh Deer! Super Dooper Reindeer Pooper, a little plastic dispenser containing brown jelly beans.

Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week.

Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312 or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. Snail-mail entries are not accepted. Deadline is Monday, May 10. Put the week number in the subject line of your e-mail, or your risk being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your

entry. Contests are 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 May 30. 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 Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

Report from Week 552, our annual contest asking you to name the offspring of any two of the horses on a list of Triple Crown nominees: This year the Empress decided to pare the list to 100 instead of running all 400-plus possibilities, and she still ended up with far too many clever entries to print here. (The list grew to 101 after some alert Losers pointed out that we'd printed "Read the Foot" for a horse actually named Read the Footnotes. The error was fixed on the Web site, and we allowed entries for both names.)

One thing that proved true again was that, clever as the individual entries are, there's something gained when they're presented as variations on a theme—half brothers, if you will—as in the sets at the bottom of the page.

♦ Fifth runner-up: **Imperialism x Coded Warning = imPERIAIsm** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

♦ Fourth runner-up: **Gran Prospect x Jose = Comin' Up Ferrer** (Tom and Lisa Codella, Ashburn)

♦ Third runner-up: **Action This Day x Grand Score = Orgy and Bess** (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

♦ Second runner-up: **Halfbridled x Imperialism = Broken Reigns** (Mary Curran, Hagerstown)

♦ First runner-up, the winner of the 1,000-piece Elvis jigsaw puzzle: **Sinister G x Perfect Moon = Left Behind** (Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

♦ And the winner of the Inker: **Rock Hard Ten x Read the Footnotes = Centimeters** (Kevin Cuddihy, Fairfax)

♦ Honorable Mentions:

Birdstone x Greek Sun = Chickarus (Meg Sullivan)

Blushing Indian x Sinister G = Geronimolester (Ed "Smitty" Smith, Bladensburg)

Blushing Indian x Monocular = Siouxclops (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Boomzeboom x End of an ERA = Steroid Homers (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.; Russell Beland, Springfield)

Friends Lake x Shiloh Bound = Damp Yankees (Meg Sullivan)

Frisky Spider x Fire Slam = Charlotte's Webber (Harold Mantle, Gaithersburg)

Gamblin x Mach Speed = Rushin Roulette (Chris Doyle)

Gran Prospect x Go Now = Bran Prospect (Pam Sweeney, Germantown)

Greek Sun x Perfect Moon = George Michael (E.J. Lloyd, Milford, Del.)

Hippocrates x Undisclosed = Doctor Who (Ron Bottomly, Columbia)

Hippocrates x Smoocher = Oath of Orifice (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)

Immense x Smartly Jones = Immensa (Mike Hammer, Arlington)

Imperialism x Value Plus = Uncle Sam's Club (Aili Contini-Morava, Somerville, Mass.)

Imperialism x Rock Hard Ten = Manifest Density (Russell Beland)

Kaufy Mate x Go Now = Instant Kaufy (Dave Komornik, Danville, Va.)

Keeping Quiet x Decibel = Shhboom (Judith Cottrill, New York)

Lion Heart x Undisclosed = What's My Lion (Paul Styrene, Olney)

Little Matth Man x Grand Score = Matth 800 Vurble 0 (Mike Hammer)

Little Matth Man x Song of the Sword = Stephen Hacking (Maja Keech, New Carrollton)

Lucky Pulpit x Grand Score = Holier Than a Thou (Allan B. Moore, Washington)

Monocular x Tricky Taboo = One Eyed Jacko (Greg McGrew, Leesburg)

New Science x Strong Cat = Double Felix (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

Our Emm x Gamblin = Ante Emm (Tom Witte)

Perfect Moon x Shiloh Bound = Thong of the South (Dan Steinberg, Falls Church)

Perfect Moon x Alpha to Omega = End to End (Mike Connaghan, Alexandria)

Philanthropist x Rush Into Heaven = Dead Giveaway (Mary Baltz Curran, Hagerstown; Mike Hammer)

Philanthropist x Tapit = Armand Hammerer (Russell Beland)

Philanthropist x Relaxed Gesture = Yawn D Rockefeller (Chris Doyle)

Polish Rifle x Coded Warning = H*Id Th*s *nd (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)

Polish Rifle x Send It In = It IS In (Eryk Nice, Ithaca, N.Y.)

Read the Foot x Smoocher = Hoof and Mouth (Jean Tatalias, Vienna)

Read the Footnotes x Gamblin = I Bid (John Conti, Norfolk, Mass.)

Read the Footnotes x Alpha to Omega = Polar Op Cits (Steve Fahey, Kensington)

Rock Hard Ten x Humorously = Funnybone (Ron Bottomly)

Rock Hard Ten x Relaxed Gesture = Viagra Falls (Dave Abraham, Radford, Va.)

Skipaslew x Sinister G = Killer Gilligan (Linda Thompson, Lanham)

Smoocher x Kaufy Mate = Kiss and Make Cup (Mike Hammer)

Smoocher x Perfect Moon = Sycophant (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Tricky Taboo x Keeping Quiet = Bound and Gagged (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

Tricky Taboo x New Science = Nonotechnology (Mark Hagenau, Derry, N.H.)

Under Caution x Sunday Times = Yellow Journalism (Jon Reiser)

Undisclosed x Mr. Mabee = Hidden a Gender (Chris Doyle)

Undisclosed x Keeping Quiet = (John Barkmeyer, Silver Spring)

Value Plus x Smoocher = Good Buy Kiss (Dan Flynn, Germantown)

Shane, Shane, Shane

Call Me Shane x Bride's Best Boy = Alan Lad (Ron Bottomly)

x Little Matth Man = Alan'll Add (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

x Immense = Strapping Ladd (Jeffrey Scharf, Burke)

x Perfect Moon = Cheeky Ladd (Judith Cottrill)

x Coded Warning = Laddmonition (Tom Witte)

x Kilgowan = Alan Plaid (Harold Mantle)

x Bride's Best Boy = Ladd's Lad (Joseph Romm, Washington)

x Go Now = Shane, Leave, Shane (Russell Beland)

The Purge Parade

Purge x Hippocrates = First Doo, No Harm (Chris Doyle)

x Alpha to Omega = LambdaTheSlaughter (Brendan Beary)

x Decibel = Puke It Sound (Russell Beland)

x Gamblin = Royal Flush (Laura Peterson, Washington)

x Preachinatthebar = Holy Crap (Ellen Godfrey, Kensington; Paul Kocak)

x Blushing Indian = TP (Steven D. Price, New York; Paul Kocak)

x Blushing Indian = Sitting Bulemia (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.; Tom Witte)

x Pvt. Lynch = Lower GI Series (Chris Doyle)

Next Week: **Picture This**, or **Gallerhea**

MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

The Enemies of Etiquette

No wonder folks can't get along. Some of them persist, to the annoyance of others, in practicing etiquette.

Not a huge number, as Miss Manners is only too aware. But some who do report being chastised by their friends who don't. Politeness irritates some people.

This leaves Miss Manners bewildered. It is hard enough for her to understand that anyone might want to live in a rude society. But granting that, what more can we do to help achieve this than we already are?

The chastisers can answer that. And do not hesitate to do so.

In an effort to fathom the reasoning, Miss Manners has sorted into three categories the field reports from her Gentle Readers who have been scolded for being too polite.

One comprises critics who really do want to make the world more polite. But never having learned the specific customs of their own society, they are trying to derive etiquette from rudimentary observation, and assign rude meanings to the ordinary ways of being polite.

"I have offended women friends by stating on party invitations what dress is expected (am I suggesting that they don't know how to dress?)," writes a Gentle Reader who identifies herself as being in public life. "Colleagues have thought I was uncaring to not inquire into the marital problems they brought up at the last business meeting," she continues. "A couple was greatly offended because I declined their formal wedding invitation in the proper form (they thought my response lacked warmth—was even dismissive). I could go on and on."

Etiquette does make allowances for understandable ignorance, typically in the cases of strangers and small children. But Miss Manners would have thought that people sending formal invitations did so out of a desire for formality, else why not send out perfectly proper informal letters of invitation? And how could anyone miss the fact that confusion about dress and nosiness are major annoyances that dress codes and minding one's own business are meant to correct?

The most pathetic critics are the ones who are offended by being shown consideration and respect:

"I am a feminist, which means (to me) that women have just as much an obligation to show courtesy to men as vice versa," reports a Gentle Reader who appreciates "men holding a door open for me (especially if I am carrying parcels)" and tries "to return the favor. The first time, I offered it to a blind man who nearly bit my head off saying, 'I'm blind, not crippled,' and the second to a man in his (I would guess) early sixties, who took it, but said something about being old."

A mother who has trained her children to be polite asks, "Can you believe that their politeness actually

gets them into trouble sometimes? I introduce my children to adults as 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.,' then the person's last name. Frequently, the adult takes offense at that title, and will even berate my children (not me!) saying, 'You'd better not call me (Mr., Mrs.). That is my mother/father!' Worse yet, some adults (even one who raised me to do this) will tease my children for using the terms 'ma'am' and 'sir!'"

Thus, the futile attempt to arrest aging seeks to deprive age of its dignity.

Worst of all are those whose desire to stamp out courtesy is based on the hope that this will make their own lack of it less conspicuous. Some sad cases:

"When I visit my old college roommate, I take a hostess present, and send a thank-you note. Before her last visit to me, she said, in a snappish, aggressive way, 'Do you expect a hostess present?' During the final day of the visit she said in the same tone, 'Do you expect a thank-you note?'"

And: "I have a managerial job in an office and usually wear a coat and tie to work, in keeping with the responsibilities of my position. I am very frequently met with remarks like, 'Well, why are you so dressed up?' or, 'You didn't have to get all dressed up on my account.' I suppose I could 'dress down,' but I would feel I was showing a lack of respect for my job and my employers, as well as for myself."

Finally: "We learned that a few of our guests thought our menu was too fancy, and the entertainment too organized. The quote I overheard referred to us as trying to 'put on a show.' It never occurred to us that we could be viewed that way, and now we are embarrassed. Our inclination is not to have parties anymore."

Dear Miss Manners:

A friend of my wife's borrowed one of her formal dresses for a party last weekend. The day after, her friend called my wife and explained that she had been careful to keep it clean and was very grateful for her lending the dress. She would be by to return the dress later that day.

Shouldn't my wife's friend have had the dress cleaned prior to returning? At a minimum, shouldn't she have offered to get the dress cleaned? My wife is too kind to say anything to her friend, but I can tell it is eating her up. What should my wife have done?

Resolved never to lend this lady her handkerchief.

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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DEAR ABBY

Dear Abby:

My name is "Sunny," but I don't feel very sunny. I'm 13 and have many problems. I'm afraid I'm on a wrong track and won't be able to do what I know I should with my life. My grades aren't good, and I keep getting myself into hot water. My mother has a lot of health problems, so she doesn't need my problems on top of hers. I keep asking myself why this is happening to us. Mother told me she wants me to live a life that will make me happy, and not let her poor health ruin my teen years. Is it wrong for me to enjoy these years and plan what I want to do with my future even though my mother is very sick? What can I do to get my life back on the right track?

Sunny in Northern California

The most important thing you can do is stop feeling guilty for enjoying yourself. I can think of nothing that would make your mother happier than to know you are living your life to the fullest and exercising your potential.

Talk to a counselor at school about how to get your grade level back where it should be. If you are in with the wrong crowd, involve yourself in activities where you will make constructive and rewarding friendships. And most of all, share your victories with your mother. Share your concerns with her as well. It will make her—and you—feel better. Trust me on that.

Dear Abby:

My 15-year-old daughter was hired to baby-sit our friend's year-old infant. When she arrived, she was told she would also be watching the next-door neighbor's two small children, both under 3. The parents were going out together, the babies next door were put to bed, the house was locked, and my daughter was given a baby monitor so she could hear if there was a problem.

When I heard this, I was furious that they'd put a 15-year-old in that position and leave small children locked in a house alone. I said as much.

Now my daughter, husband and our friends are all mad at me for making them uncomfortable about their "arrangement." Apparently, they do it all the time—both couples hire one sitter and leave one house unattended. These people are young, educated, drive expensive cars and can afford a sitter.

I told them I would call Social Services if they continue to leave the babies unattended.

My family thinks I owe them an apology. Do I?

Furious in California

No, you do not. What these "friends" are doing is illegal, as well

as unconscionable. If something should go wrong—like a fire—your daughter could be left with lifelong guilt and trauma. Please continue to look out for your daughter's interests. Being a conscientious parent means not always being popular.

Dear Abby:

My mother wants me to go by my stepfather's name. My birth father also wants me to use his name. I want to use his name, not my stepfather's, but Mother disagrees. How do I tell her how I feel about this?

Doe or Daley

Tell your mother again how you feel about the name change. You are your father's child, and it is wrong for your mother to try to obscure that fact. Since you are a minor, the decision may be hers, but perhaps she would compromise and allow you to hyphenate your father's name with your stepfather's. It's worth a try.

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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Light buffet will be served.