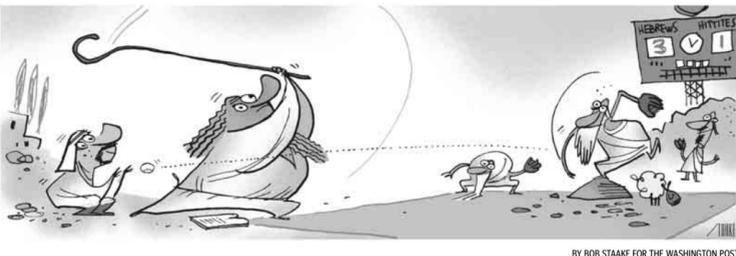


# The Style Invitational

Week 603: Sui Genesis



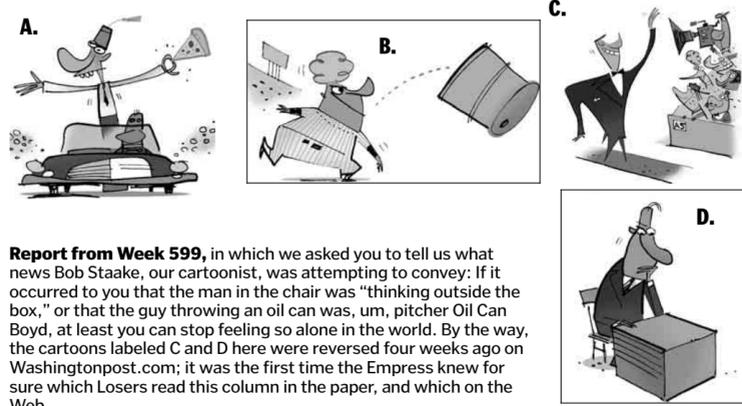
BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Genesis 24: Blessed by good speed, the pitcher drew unto him not a walk, and came forth, made haste, and put down at least ten.**  
**Genesis 1 and 2: Good God — the grass! the herb! It was pleasant. It caused a deep sleep. Man!**

**This week's contest:** On this Easter Sunday it's about time you got the base corruption out of your brain and settled down for a little enriching Bible study. So go ye forth and take one or two of the 50 chapters of the Book of Genesis and draw thou from them, using words in the order in which they appear in the original, your own passage, as in the examples above from the story of Rebecca at the well, and from the Creation. For consistency, everyone must use the good old King James Version, available online in a million places (search "KJV") and quite possibly on paper somewhere. Note: The Empress has no desire to incur anyone's wrath here, divine or otherwise. This is NOT the week for brazen ribaldry and "cometh" jokes. Be sure to cite the chapters of Genesis that you used. If you use two, they must be consecutive. The winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets, courtesy of erstwhile Loser Jan Verrey of Alexandria, "The Art of the Bonsai Potato," a kit containing a little display altar with Japanese characters, and little tweezers, and little bitty scissors (but not the potato). The point is that you can get your inner peace achieved with a bonsai potato a heckuva lot faster than you can with some bonsai pine tree.

Other runners-up win a 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 by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or, if you really have to, by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, April 4. Put the week number in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks 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 property of

The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published April 24 (during Passover). No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. This week's contest has almost no relation to an otherwise useless idea suggested by Russell Beland of Springfield. The revised title for next week's contest is by Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.



**Report from Week 599**, in which we asked you to tell us what news Bob Staake, our cartoonist, was attempting to convey: If it occurred to you that the man in the chair was "thinking outside the box," or that the guy throwing an oil can was, um, pitcher Oil Can Boyd, at least you can stop feeling so alone in the world. By the way, the cartoons labeled C and D here were reversed four weeks ago on [Washingtonpost.com](http://Washingtonpost.com); it was the first time the Empress knew for sure which Losers read this column in the paper, and which on the Web.

◆ **Third runner-up:** (Cartoon C) Though he enjoyed getting as enthusiastic a reception as Condoleezza Rice did, Donald Rumsfeld pondered whether he really needed to wear the same stiletto boots. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

◆ **Second runner-up:** (Cartoon B) In a tribute to the Senators, the Nationals' opening day was celebrated with the throwing of the first pork barrel. (Mark Cogen, Bethesda)

◆ **First runner-up, winner of the orange belt emblazoned with misspelled titles of Rolling Stones songs:** (Cartoon A) John Kerry kicks off his 2008 campaign by wearing a fez and eating a pizza while riding in a German automobile through a Hispanic neighborhood on a Jewish holiday. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

◆ **And the winner of the Inker:** (Cartoon D) Post music critic Tim Page was unimpressed with a recent NSO performance of Box Mass in B Minor. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ **Honorable Mentions: CARTOON A**  
 During his victory parade, Viktor Yushchenko suddenly reveals that his "skin lesions" were just a sympathy-grabbing slice of pizza glued onto his face. (Steve Fahey, Kensington)

With a picture of his beloved Camilla clipped to his polo stick strap, Prince Charles embarks on a goodwill tour through Iraq. (Michelle Stupak, Ellicott City)

Fearing lawsuits charging it with causing customers' obesity, Pizza Hut institutes its new portion-control delivery. (James Noble, Lexington Park)

Gene Frenkle, grand marshal of the Cherry Blossom Festival parade, adds more cowbell as he leads the crowd in "Don't Fear the Reaper." (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Influenced by Joseph Romm's book "The Hyde About Hydrogen," GM executives are rethinking their strategy for alternative-fuel cars, and have partnered with Domino's to develop a car that runs on methane. (Brendan Beary)

**CARTOON B**  
 The International Olympic Committee this week entertained a request to include Women's Heavyweight Yo-Yo at the 2008 Games. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Barbara Bush tosses out the first oil barrel at the Texas Rangers season opener. (Gary Patishnock, Laurel; Russell Beland, Springfield)

Nationals third-base coach Dave Huppert faces a suspension and fine after yesterday's game, in which he made a crude gesture to the fans. (Brendan Beary)

In his latest drug test, Jason Giambi not only supplied a urine specimen — he threw in a stool sample as well. (Judith Cottrill, New York)

Septuagenarian Ruth Olson, a Naval Reserve officer whose tour of duty has been extended 23 years, tosses a depth charge at a Syrian submarine. (Jeff Brechlin)

**CARTOON C**  
 The fashion crowd gave rave reviews to the new tuxedo line by Giorgio Footmani. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge; Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

To avoid the red-carpet interview, the Olsen

Twins sneak into the awards show disguised as their manager's right arm. (Russell Beland)

Clipper the Fly, attending his first Oscar ceremony, vows that next time he will hire a less flamboyant bodyguard. (Tom Kreitzberg, Silver Spring)

The media mobbed the captain of the victorious Chernobyl Water Polo Team (Chuck Smith).

Curt Schilling receives a red-carpet welcome as he arrives in Boston for Opening Day. (Curiously, the carpet was white when he arrived.) (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

**CARTOON D**  
 When the president doesn't behave, Karl Rove sometimes makes him sit at the "yucky" desk. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

Redskins owner Daniel Snyder admires the workmanship of a humidifier made from trees he had cut down on national parkland along the Potomac River. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

President Bush sat down for a meeting with major coalition partners today. (James Noble)

The NASA cafeteria manager realized too late that he forgot to convert to metric when he ordered the toothpicks. (Elden Carnahan)

Hours after resigning to Kasparov at Linares, Spain, Kasimdzhanov is still mulling over Rxg1+Kf7. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Ever the hands-on dad, Art thought he was helping his daughter's lemonade stand, but outsourcing the production to Belize and laying off his sales staff detracted from the fun. (Brendan Beary)

**CARTOONS D and B:**  
 In the early years, Ira was the public face — doing the PR promos at local events — while Ed stayed in the shop fussing over production details. But somehow they made a go of it, so that today, Crate & Barrel celebrates its 25th anniversary! (Brendan Beary; Mary Ann Henningsen, Washington)

## MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

### The Colors of Mourning

**D**espite vehement efforts to kill them off, rituals connected with death keep coming back. They may not look as good, but they are recognizable.

Long ago, Miss Manners noticed that sunglasses had replaced black veils for the job of protecting grieving widows from scrutiny. Then mounds of teddy bears and balloons became permanent substitutes for mausoleums and shrines. Sympathy cards had already overwhelmed personally written condolence letters, but handwritten notes reappeared on those mounds, addressed to the deceased.

And now mourning clothes and souvenirs are back. Sort of.

The idea of wearing one's bereavement on one's sleeve was one of the reasons for the 20th-century revolt against Victorian death customs. At least for gentlemen it was on the sleeve, in the form of a black band. For ladies it was head to toe.

The rules were strict. Black with a shiny surface, such as satin, was considered too racy. Jewelry had to be black, white or colorless, although those left well-off made the successful claim that pearls and diamonds fit the definition. This dreary palette was mandated for a year or more, depending on the relationship to the deceased, before touches of tepid color — gray, white, lavender — were permitted to edge in.

Of course such strictures could not survive in the modern era. What self-respecting lady would want to wear nothing but black, day after day?

Well, yes, New Yorkers, teenagers, theater people, gang members and wedding guests. Oh, and all those people in the fashion business, even while they are in the very act of decreeing citrus yellow or bitter tangerine to be the color of the season.

It is only in regard to going to funerals that people complain that they have nothing black to wear. And that it would be too expensive for them to buy something for one occasion, as they do for weddings, proms, charity balls and cruises.

This attitude arose in the mid-20th century, as funerals were being denigrated as depressing and pointless by people who had noticed that those being honored were too dead to enjoy them. For a while, it was not uncommon for people to declare in advance that they wanted no such ceremonies to be held for them. More recently, as funerals became occasions for friends to tell funny stories, some potential subjects have asked to have them held early so they might

listen. It took terrorism and war to make funerals mournful again.

Yet all along, avoidance, cynicism and revolt did not quell the deeply human need to mourn. Furthermore, the show of mourning, maligned as superficial, serves important purposes. Mourning clothes kept acquaintances from intruding on the mourners' sensibilities. With any luck, they might now serve to discourage strangers from calling out, "Smile!"

Trinkets directly connected with the deceased give the bereaved the comfort of feeling that person's continuing presence. Victorian mourning jewelry used portraits or hair in brooches, rings, lockets and bracelets.

The idea of mourning clothes and mementoes is coming back now as — well, what do you expect? T-shirts, of course. They are being ordered with pictures, messages, praise and promises of eternal love.

No, they are not as subtle as black clothes and treasured curls. But Miss Manners hopes that they are not only comforting to the wearer but also a reminder to others to be gentle.

**Dear Miss Manners:**

**I have been a college professor for 19 years. In that time I've had many wonderful students. On occasion I'll run into some alumni, either in town or at a college function. My problem is that while I may remember their face, or even more details about them, I can't always remember their name.**

**What is the polite way to deal with this? When faced with these situations I use a generic "Hi there, good to see you" greeting. But I'm afraid they realize I can't recall their name.**

Allow Miss Manners to congratulate you for teaching at a college where the classes are small enough to allow the professors to learn their current students' names. And for being in a profession where the inability to master the mechanics of life is considered charming. Should you feel that the student senses your inability to use his name, you need only ask for it by confessing, "You remember how absent-minded I am."

*Feeling incorrect? E-mail your etiquette questions to Miss Manners (who is distraught that she cannot reply personally) at [MissManners@unitedmedia.com](mailto:MissManners@unitedmedia.com) or mail to United Media, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.*

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## ASK AMY

**Dear Amy:**

**I wanted to respond to a recent letter from a girl who wanted her boyfriend to be tested for HIV.**

**My brother died of AIDS a few years ago. He was married and had a young child.**

**He told me while he was dying that his wife — before they were married — had wanted him to be tested. He said he didn't want to. He told me he was afraid of what he might find out.**

**He made excuses to his girlfriend and eventually she gave in. She became pregnant and they got married. A few years later he became ill and found out that he had AIDS. She stood by and cared for him until he died a few months later.**

**Thank God, both my sister-in-law and my nephew are healthy. They did not contract HIV. I am not sure how they were so lucky.**

**The girl who wrote to you is very smart. If her boyfriend cared about her, he would be tested just to ease her mind — even if he felt that it wasn't necessary. If they love each other enough to have sex, then they should love each other enough to want to protect each other's future.**

*Grieving Brother*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 850,000 to 950,000 people in the United States are living with HIV. This number includes an estimated 180,000 to 280,000 people who do not know they are infected.

CDC statistics also show that there have been an estimated 524,060 deaths from AIDS since the beginning of the outbreak about 25 years ago.

Getting tested for HIV and other STDs should be nonnegotiable for both partners before people choose to have sex. As your brother's story sadly points out, people who don't want to be tested sometimes have very good reason to fear that they are infected.

For more information and statistics on HIV and AIDS, readers can check the CDC's Web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

For information on STD testing, call 800-342-2437.

**Dear Amy:**

**I got married six months ago. My wife and I started sending out wedding thank-you cards promptly, but**

**between a recent big move, working and trying to find a home, we have misplaced our list, and now I do not know how to handle writing the rest of the cards.**

**I can only remember some of the gifts that were given to us. What should I do with the rest?**

**I hope you can help my wife and me.**

*A New Husband*

Before I answer your question, let me bestow upon you the "Ask Amy Medal of Gratitude and Good Intentions."

The AAMGGI is a high achievement. It goes only to grooms who write in with thank-you card questions.

You have given me all sorts of ammunition for the scores of people who write in to me complaining that newly marrieds don't pay enough attention to the niceties, so thank you.

In a situation like this, I think it's best to employ a combination of charm and honesty. Let's call it "charmesty."

First you should rack your brains to try to re-create your master gift list. Then call your folks and your wife's folks, as well as various bridal attendants, to ask them to supplement your memories. If you registered at a store, they could help you track down some gifts.

After you've arrived at a master list of sorts, I think you need to contact each guest whose gifts you're unsure of. Write a note saying that you and your wife have been so caught up with recent events in your life that you have lost track of your gift list. Say something to the effect, "We are trying to figure out which fabulous gift came from you, and rather than call in 'CSI: Matrimony' to dust for prints, we wonder if you could confirm what you gave us so that we can thank you properly. This is pretty embarrassing, but we hope you'll understand."

I think people will be tickled that you are trying to get this straight. I know I am.

*Ask Amy is written by Amy Dickinson, a journalist who has worked for NBC News, Time magazine and National Public Radio. Write to her at [askamy@tribune.com](mailto:askamy@tribune.com) or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.*

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## BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

N-S vulnerable

**NORTH (D)**

♠ 9  
 ♥ Q3  
 ♦ A Q 6 2  
 ♣ K Q 10 6 5 3

**WEST**

♠ 8 7 5 3 2  
 ♥ A K 10 4 2  
 ♦ 10 9  
 ♣ 2

**EAST**

♠ 6  
 ♥ J 9 8 6 5  
 ♦ J 8 7 4  
 ♣ A 8 7

**SOUTH**

♠ A K Q J 10 4  
 ♥ 7  
 ♦ K 5 3  
 ♣ J 9 4

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass

Opening lead: ♥ K

**I**n my experience, much sound advice is only 10 percent advice; the other 90 percent is merely sound.

Today's East-West might have been down only two if they'd sacrificed at five hearts. As often happens, they had no obvious way to enter the auction. At four spades, South ruffed the second heart and pondered. He then led a club: deuce, king, ace.

East returned a club, West ruffed and North took on the look of a condemned man. But when West shifted to the ten of diamonds, South won, drew trumps and claimed the rest. Making four.

"Here's some advice," North sounded off. "Draw trumps so the defense can't ruff your winners."

"Sound advice," South agreed. What's your opinion of North's advice?

Say after South ruffs the second heart he takes the A-K of trumps. When East discards, South is beyond help. If he draws trumps, he has none left, and the defense will cash three hearts when East takes the ace of clubs. Nor will it help South to start the clubs next: When East takes the ace, he will (or should) see what is happening and return a heart, forcing South to ruff again. West then has more trumps than South.

Since a 5-1 trump break will occur about 14 percent of the time, South should protect his contract by forcing out the ace of clubs at Trick Three. He may run into a ruff but will lose only three tricks in all.

They say advice is worthless if you lack the wisdom to profit by it. When you get advice, it's good to know how much of it is sound.

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Next Week: **Top of the Inking, or Hacks of Diamonds**