

# The Style Invitational

Week 609: A2D2



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**An article about a comedy camp for children in the Catskill mountains described one boy as "a real ham." The phrase should have read "a real brisket."**

**Tuesday's weather page reported a 70 percent chance of rain for the next day. The chance of rain Wednesday was actually 100 percent.**

**A recent story described the wife of the new pope and her plans to spruce up the Vatican. The pope is actually a bachelor.**

**This week's contest:** This esteemed publication ran one of its most comical corrections ever recently when it clarified that "the Sunday, April 10, edition of 'The Mini Page,' about wind waves, tsunamis and tides, incorrectly indicated that the sun orbits the Earth." The correction was a pretty straightforward acknowledgment of a shockingly stupid inaccuracy (in the children's section, no less), but it can still serve as a gossamer thread to which the Empress can tie a contest: Give us some funny "corrections" to brighten up Page A2, as in the examples above, suggested by the always correct Russell Beland of Springfield.

They can be funny because they are silly, or absurd, or because they suggest a stupid initial mistake, or any other reason you come up with. The winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets a fantastic audio CD called "Still Stayin' Alive: A Take Out Menu of Food Safety Hits," by toxicologist Carl Winter and featuring such rock parodies as "Fifty Ways to Eat Your Oysters" and "I Sprayed It on the Grapevine," donated by longtime Loser Sarah W. Gaymon of Gambrills.

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, May 16. 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 the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published June 5. 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 Phil Frankenfeld of Washington.

**Report from Week 605**, in which we asked you to explain the difference or similarity between two real or fictional people with the same initials. This contest turned out to be harder than we'd predicted, with Losers stretching like Mrs. Incredible to contrive some pathetically awkward connection (e.g., "Jean-Jacques Rousseau taught us about the many faces of enlightenment. Joan Rivers's taut face is more like enlightenment"). But as usual, among the chaff, there was, uh, wheat.

◆ **Third runner-up: Bart Simpson** never has a cow. **Barbra Streisand** never has a pig. (Mike Fransella, Arlington)

◆ **Second runner-up: Carrie Bradshaw** and **Chef Boyardee**: Sex and the ziti. (Chris Doyle, Raleigh)

◆ **First runner-up, the winner of the antique French plate that was made in China in 2003: John Wilkes Booth** and **John Wayne Bobbitt**: Booth wasn't around for the painful Reconstruction. (Kevin d'Eustachio and Andrew Dutton, Linwood, N.J.)

◆ **And the winner of the Inker: Shirley Temple** and **Strom Thurmond**: One publicly acknowledged a relationship with a Black. (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

#### ◆ Honorable Mentions:

**Mick Jagger** and **Michael Jackson**: Both date folks 30 years their junior. (Greg McGrew, Leesburg)

**Susan Sarandon** was in "Rocky Horror"; **Sylvester Stallone** was in several "Rocky" horrors. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**Bette Midler** and **Benito Mussolini**: As far as I can tell, no pope has ever criticized either one by name. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

**Bill Bixby** and **Barry Bonds**: One became an incredible hulk by accident. (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

**Yao Ming** scores 20 times a night. So does **Yo Mama!** (Brendan Beary)

**Peter Angelos** and **Pamela Anderson**: Isn't he rich? Aren't they a pair? (Brendan Beary)

**Cher** and **Camille**: When Camille retired, she *retired*. (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

**Jose Canseco** and **Julius Caesar**: Caesar's pals stabbed *him* in the back. (Steve Fahey, Kensington)

**Charles Darwin** and **Charles de Gaulle**: Both were concerned about how frogs might survive. (Mary Lou French, Eveleth, Minn.)

**Jimmy Dean** and **Jeffrey Dahmer**: One wanted us to eat his sausages, the other wanted us to *be* his sausages. (Dennis Lindsay, Seabrook)

**Barbara Eden** and **Buddy Ebsen**: Both were stars of '60s sitcoms, and we never saw their navels. (Brendan Beary)

**Martha Stewart** and "Last Tango in Paris" actress **Maria Schneider**: Martha would never let someone use butter straight from the wrapper. (Peter Metrisko, Chantilly)

**Harrison Ford** was famous for "Star Wars." **Heidi Fleiss** was famous getting stars whores. (Pam Sweeney, Germantown)

**Huck Finn** and **Heidi Fleiss**: Huck went *down* the river. (Mark Eckenwiler)

**Jerry Garcia** and **Jeff Gillooly**: A pipe got them in trouble with the law. (David Gardner, Richmond)

**James Hanratty** and **John Holmes**: One was hanged . . . (Russell Beland)

**Pamela Harriman** and **Paris Hilton**: Pamela was more discreet. (Chris Doyle)

**Robin Hood** and **Rock Hudson**: Both liked their merry men. (Randy Lee, Burke; Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

**Jacques Barzun** said, "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball." Coincidentally, **Joe Biden** said that, too. (Brendan Beary)

**Thomas Hobbes** and **Tonya Harding**: To Hobbes, life was nasty, brutish and short. Tonya just was. (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

**Michael Jordan** and **Michael Jackson**: They appeared in an equal number of Wizards playoff games. (Greg Pearson, Arlington)

**Bob Keeshan** and **Bobby Knight**: Let's just say that Mr. Moose wouldn't dump those ping-pong balls a second time on one of them. (Brendan Beary)

**Alan Keyes** believes in old-fashioned marriage between a man and a woman; **Ashton Kutcher** is a man who believes in a fashionable marriage to an old woman. (Schuyler Clemente, Northampton, Mass.)

**Jennifer Lopez** and **Jean Lafitte**: The pirate tried to hide his booty. (Dave Franz, Havana, Cuba; Barbara Mason, Fort Washington)

**Broderick Crawford** played a state trooper who protected the citizenry. **Bill Clinton** was protected by state troopers while he played with the citizenry. (Chris Doyle)

**Ru Paul** and **Richard Pryor**: Only one was flaming by accident. (Mark Eckenwiler)

**Dan Rather** and **Damon Runyon**: Both created memorable works of fiction. (Jerry Ewing, Orlando)

**Paul Revere** and **Paul Reubens**: When Revere was caught, the British were coming. (Mark Eckenwiler)

**Ronald Reagan** and **Rocky Raccoon**: The girls of their fancy were both known as Nancy. (Michelle Stupak, Ellicott City)

**William Shakespeare** gave us Hamlet; **William Shatner** gave us ham. (Joseph Romm, Washington)

**Helen of Troy** and **Harry Truman**: One started a war and one ended one, although in both cases, Paris's weakness was partially to blame. (Mike Cisneros, Centerville)

**Mike Tyson** and **Mao Tse-tung**: An hour after eating, Mike's always hungry again. (Jack Cackler, Falls Church)

**Mark Twain** and **Mike Tyson**: As good a raconteur as he was, Twain would still only bend your ear. (Mark Eckenwiler)

**Martha Washington** and **Mary Worth**: Martha Washington was conceived a couple of years earlier. (Russell Beland)

**Thomas Wolfe** and **Ted Williams**: One got home again and again. (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)

**Anti-Invitational: Elizabeth Dole**. Her initials are ironic enough on their own. (Brendan Beary)

**And Lasts: Tiger Woods** and **Tom Witte**: Both were winners on April 10, but one got a green jacket and the other got rat brain tissue on a slide. (Jeff Covell, Arlington)

**The Exorcist** and **The Empress**: One casts out evil possessions, while the other mails them out as prizes. (Jerry Ewing)

## MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

### A Call for Disaster Relief

**H**ere is something special that everyone can do for mothers — all mothers: Stop telling them disaster stories.

How it came to be believed that Things Gone Hideously Wrong is the favorite genre of mothers, Miss Manners cannot say. But any lady who is so much as eligible for motherhood will find herself treated to this form of entertainment.

Potential mothers, a category no longer considered to be limited to married ladies, are a new target. Any lady without children is considered a suitable audience for stories about those who "waited too long" and underwent dreadful procedures.

In some of these tales, the lady never succeeds in becoming pregnant and, after using up all her money, energy and hope, faces a bitter and lonely old age. In others, she produces an abnormal child and uses up all her money, energy and hope in the unsuccessful effort to give that child a happy life. A third version has her producing a litter of so many children that she uses up . . . and so on.

Those who are already pregnant also get to hear deformed-child stories. But there is a new twist, in that the deformity becomes the result of ordinary behavior on the part of the mother, which is newly thought to be harmful. Other topics considered of interest to expectant mothers are horrific labor, stillbirths, weight that never comes off and fathers who go off.

"Your life will never be the same again" is the usual refrain.

True enough, but why is it said in a doleful, rather than congratulatory, tone?

When the baby is born, the mother is thought ready to hear stories about sudden infant death syndrome and common household arrangements that

have taken on the ability to snuff out young lives. That serious birth defects may be imperceptible at this time is another favorite theme.

As the child develops, the mother will be asked if he or she has reached this or that stage of development — here comes the ominous word — "yet." It seems that everyone keeps a calendar of achievement.

Later, the focus of disaster stories moves to the outside world. Preschools are said to put vulnerable children through a selection process that leaves them and their parents psychological wrecks. Failure means that the child will never have enough skills to earn a living. Success means that his family will no longer have enough to live on. Using public schools means that between the drugs and the guns, he may not live anyway.

It gets even more exciting for the mothers of teenagers, who are told about car fatalities and sexually transmitted diseases and the impossibility of getting into college without already having a Nobel Prize and an Olympic trophy.

Miss Manners realizes that people say these things to mothers because they don't know what else to say. She recommends dropping the category of potential mother, saying "Congratulations" to expectant mothers, "How adorable!" to new mothers and, to the rest, "So — how are the kids?"

*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 am a heterosexual male who has never been married. Why? Because in my 30-plus years of dating women, every female I met seemed to be measuring me against the other guy she is, or was, seeing, seeking a BBD (Bigger and Better Deal) — probably getting proposed to by me and one or more other guys, choosing the one whom, if things do not work out, she can best take to the cleaners.**

**I believe in "until death do us part" and if I had ever met a woman that I felt was attractive, that I felt loved me as much as I loved her, then I would have married her and be married now, and either be a grandfather or maybe even a great-grandfather by now.**

**However, because I was neither as wealthy as Bill Gates nor a lawyer, an MD or a PhD like my brother, who is one of the most stupid people on this planet, I could not attract the type of woman that I have been looking for.**

**So, for now I have to be content for people to assume that I am gay.**

**I guess I am that impossibility: a gay heterosexual male.**

*Fed Up in D.C.*

The primary hole in your theory is that women marry non-MDs and non-PhDs every day. Women happily marry contractors, out-of-work actors and poets. Women marry gym teachers, preachers, farmers and fry cooks.

In order to be loved, you have to find yourself lovable. You have to be capable of joy.

I believe that you can discover what is really going on with you if you will drop your defenses and sit down to speak with a counselor. This could take quite a few sessions, mind you, but in your case the alternative to self-knowledge is self-pity, and that is highly unattractive.

Dear Amy:

**I have a new friend who is a mom like me and is really into self-help books. I really like her and appreciate her opinion.**

**However, the issue of finances comes up because we both agree to entertain our kids as inexpensively as possible so they can play together once a week. I explained how difficult it seems to me to put into play all the things these financial books recommend — we just don't have the income.**

**My friend has pressed the importance of creating a financial plan and sticking to it. I now agree with her and am working toward financial independence and thinking about our future, no matter how hard it is.**

**Now, through deaths in her husband's family, they will come into a substantial amount of money. In her words, "I am so glad we will never have to worry about money again."**

**My family will never get an inheritance from anyone.**

**How do I keep the irony and jealousy at bay?**

*Wondering*

You can't keep the irony at bay. The irony just keeps on coming. In this case, it is ironic that your

friend, the very one who urged fiscal restraint and responsibility, just won a reprieve from worry.

Jealousy is another matter. You can control it, with help from your friend. She is going to have to be gracious and keep her end zone celebration in check.

Friends should feel good about one another's good fortune, even when there is a twinge of jealousy. Please remember that in your friend's case, somebody had to die for her family to prosper. That's a less-than-ideal way to get rich.

Your friend has done you a favor that will last for the rest of your life, by mentoring you in this way. I hope you'll remember that a pile of money can be frittered away almost as quickly as it is acquired. Your good habits and financial responsibility will benefit you for a lifetime. I can't resist recommending one more self-help book that I think you would appreciate, "The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of America's Wealthy," by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko (Pocket, \$15). This book is full of stories of "real" people who grow their nest eggs the old-fashioned way — by saving and not spending, by living in houses of reasonable size, not overloading on "toys," staying debt-free and buying used cars.

Can you do it? I think you can.

Dear Amy:

**I read a letter from a "Mom in Virginia" asking about how to celebrate Mother's Day for moms who recently lost a child. I thought the writer's suggestions were very good.**

**But what about those of us who do not have children? You can really feel like a second-class citizen thanks to society's and especially retailers' big squeeze for certain "holidays."**

**Don't get me wrong. I think being a mom is the most important job in the world. My husband and I haven't been blessed with children; I am an aunt and a godmother. Every year our friends' children give me a plant or a card on Mother's Day. It is very sweet and a nice way of including those of us who are not biological moms but are still nurturing in other ways.**

*Happy to Be Included in MA.*

Every year I grit my teeth through Valentine's Day. I try to ignore St. Patrick's Day (quite a feat in Chicago). I celebrate others' birthdays, wedding showers and Pulitzer Prizes.

My point is that not every holiday is meant for all of us to celebrate ourselves and to feel special. But even those of us who are not mothers have mothers or know mothers, correct? Mother's Day is a day meant to celebrate that relationship, not to feel bad about our own losses.

It is very thoughtful for your friends to remember you on this day, but I hope you remember to celebrate the mothers in your own life.

So, Mom, this one's for you!

*Write to Amy Dickinson 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

Neither side vulnerable

**NORTH**  
♠ Q 10 9 5  
♥ Q J 3  
♦ A 10  
♣ K Q 4 2

**WEST**  
♥ 8 4 2  
♠ K 9 6 2  
♦ K J 8 5 2  
♣ 7

**EAST**  
♠ A 7 6 3  
♥ 10 8 5  
♦ Q 7  
♣ J 10 9 5

**SOUTH (D)**  
♥ K J  
♠ A 7 4  
♦ 9 6 4 3  
♣ A 8 6 3

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Opening lead: ♠ 5

**C**hess is known as a one-on-one battle, while bridge is a partnership game. But some of history's famous chess games were contested by a master against two players in consultation. At bridge, you can't get any help: no pocket calculator, no counsel from partner.

Let's bend the rules and play today's 3NT together. West leads a low diamond. While I plan the play, you do the same.

If the missing diamonds break 4-3 and clubs break 3-2, all is well. We can take the ace of diamonds and force out the ace of spades for nine tricks. Assuming West has five diamonds, East must have at least one honor since West would have led the king from K-Q-J-5-2. If we play dummy's 10, East can win and return a diamond to set up West's diamonds. But if we play the ace, we'll block the

defenders' diamonds.

What next? Let's test the clubs. We take the A-K, and West throws a heart.

Now we have only three club tricks, and setting up the spades will yield only eight in all. We must finesse in hearts as well. Should we play spades or hearts next?

Since West has long diamonds, it's right to lose a trick to him before his diamonds are cashable. Since only West can win a heart trick with the king, let the queen of hearts ride at Trick Four.

West wins and leads a diamond to East's queen, and East leads the jack of clubs. We win and try the king of spades. We're down if West has the ace, but East wins, cashes a club and leads a heart.

Finally, we can claim the contract.

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Next Week: The News Could Be Verse, or The Froth Estate