

The Style Invitational

Week 613: Tour de Fours II



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

ERNA: Bumpnannies: The new game for spoiled rich children.

RENA: Re-nad: To undo a vasectomy.

AREN: Arenting: Just saying no to your kids, all the time.

This week's contest is a reprise of one we debuted last year to great success: Create and define a word that includes, *consecutively*, four letters that we supply — this week's are **E, R, A** and **N**, in any order, as in the examples above. The winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets a colorful dinner-size plate from the American Dietetic Association that, right in the middle, offers a "2,000-Calorie Sample Meal Plan" detailing a healthy menu that you can contrast with the grease-dripping stuff you've actually prepared. Lest this be too daunting, the back of the plate, in teeny-tiny print, says: "NOT INTENDED FOR FOOD USE."

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 or, if you really have to, by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Tuesday, June 13. 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. Entries 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 July 3. 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 609, in which the Empress solicited fictional contributions to The Post's corrections box:

◆ **Third runner-up: A June 4 news article described White House senior adviser Karl Rove as "a vicious old bloodsucker in the thrall of corporate paymasters." Mr. Rove is 54.** (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

◆ **Second runner-up: The reviewer of "Monster-in-Law" incorrectly described the film as "two hours of my life I'll never get back." The film's actual running time is 101 minutes.** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ **First runner-up, the winner of the CD of pop song parodies about food safety: In last week's Book World, authorship of the anonymous poem beginning "There was an old man from Nantucket" was incorrectly attributed to Emily Dickinson.** (Dennis Lindsay, Seabrook)

◆ **And the winner of the Inker: Due to a transcription error, the Indian prime minister's wife at Tuesday's White House dinner was incorrectly described as wearing "a sorry ensemble." (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)**

◆ Honorable Mentions:

In the April 24 Travel article "Hiking in Grizzly Country," a word was omitted from the final sentence. The sentence should have read: "Be sure *never* to carry chunks of raw meat in your pockets." Also, a May 11 article, "Area Hikers Mauled in Yellowstone," contained erroneous information supplied by a park official who reported that all the victims were from Maryland; in fact, one was from Virginia. (Dennis Lindsay)

Yesterday's obituary of the North Korean ambassador contained an inaccurate date. According to CIA sources, his death will not occur for several days. (Dan Seidman, Watertown, Mass.)

In an article on swearing in local schools, the principal of George Washington Elementary was misquoted. "He's a %#!@#ing liar" was actually "He's a %#!ing liar." (Chris Doyle, Raleigh)

A recent Metro article listed James Schlemtz of 1223 J St. NE as the surprise witness who prosecutors fear might be murdered before he can testify. While accurate, the story should not have included that information. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

A recent editorial noted that John Bolton's mustache looked "as if it had been torn from the rear end of a baboon." Baboon rear ends are bare. The correct simile is "Japanese snow monkey." (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

A correction in yesterday's paper incorrectly indicated that the editors regretted making an error in the previous day's edition. The editors actually felt no remorse for the mistake. This newspaper regrets the error. (Danny Brawman, St. Louis)

A series of printing errors on the Op-Ed page caused George F. Will to appear to be even more of an insufferable pedant than his column usually makes him out to be. (Russell Beland)

In an article about a principal who refused to let the school chorus sing "Louie Louie," the lyrics "Eh fnh ltl grurl shweat Fermi" should have read "Ehh fnne little ghullsh wate furme." (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Due to a typographical error, an obituary stated that Joseph McDonald was survived by his wife of 270 years. They were actually married for 27 years. It only seemed like 270. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Workers took two hours to remove an eight-foot crucifix from the apse of St. James Cathedral, not the "arse of St. James" as reported. (Bird Waring, New York)

A recent editorial said the president's IQ was equal to his shoe size. It should have made clear that it was referring to European sizes, which have higher numbers than American sizes. For instance, American men's size 10 is equivalent to a European size 43. (Russell Beland)

An article titled "Ann Coulter's Favorite Flicks" should not have included the Zapruder film. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

In last week's Food section, the lists in "Tom Sietsema's 20 Favorite D.C. Dining Destinations" and "D.C. Restaurants Closed for Health Violations" were inadvertently transposed. (Greg Pearson, Arlington)

The map accompanying an article on Monday's Science Notebook page should have depicted a tortoise, not an elephant, holding the Earth on its back. (Jan Stanley, Reston)

Wednesday's Miss Manners column incorrectly stated that if a crouton falls down the dress of the lady seated next to you, etiquette dictates removing it with the sugar tongs. While that remains the case in Europe, Americans follow the precedent set by Woodrow Wilson at a 1916 state dinner, in which the fingers were used. (Mike Fransella, Arlington)

An item in yesterday's Post said the Washington Times would pay \$1 apiece for used diapers for a consumer study. This was erroneous. Oops. Our bad. (Dan Seidman)

In an article on the history of the Potomac River, rowing enthusiast Max Schmitt was misquoted; he actually referred to Fletcher's as "the best oarhouse I've ever been to." (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

A recent article in Health suggested that thousands of people are deliberately injecting their faces with botulinum toxin. That's just got to be wrong. (Russell Beland)

Friday's Federal Page reported on John Smith's promotion from Special Assistant to the Assistant Deputy Undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security to Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Projects at DHS. Further investigation reveals that this was actually a demotion. (Joseph Romm, Washington, former Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Energy, and also Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, and even Acting Assistant Secretary for six months)

Because of a typographical error, the May 13 editorial page masthead listed The Washington Post's publisher as "Full o' B.S. Jones." His real name is Boisfeuillet Jones Jr. (Tom Witte)

Yesterday's Ask Amy column replied to "Lonely in Largo" with advice that was wrong, wrong, wrong. Don't mistake the giddiness of this new fling for the constancy of your old love. Yes, it can be hard to love a man who's away every night writing corrections at the newspaper, but, oh, come on, Doreen, I'm just asking for another chance. (Brendan Beary)

And Last: In violation of Post editorial policy, today's Style Invitational improperly lists the contest's judge under a pseudonym, "The Empress." She is Valerie Plame. (R. Novak, Washington) (Mark Eckenwiler)

MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

Pay (or Not) as You Go

People who insist on always paying their own way, some of whom also insist on paying everyone else's, are not generally considered social nuisances. Nobody comes away from a losing battle for the check muttering, "Remind me not to go out with them again — they never stick us with the bill."

Miss Manners realizes that with all the gimme artists running around, it is difficult to complain about people who pay their share and more. One has only to think of the contrast to nonchalant freeloaders, with their communistic claims that other people make more money and therefore should treat them. Or of the would-be hosts who whine that they cannot afford to entertain in the style they would like unless their guests defray the costs.

All the same, there are hidden costs to relationships when one person will never consent to be treated. The surface issue of who pays covers a powerful subtext having to do with status, control, independence and connectedness.

An example that Miss Manners finds particularly distasteful is when betrothed couples claim the right to ride roughshod over their parents' wishes "because we're paying for the wedding ourselves." Funny, when they were in college, they didn't concede that their parents could call all the shots because they were paying tuition.

You are not supposed to be able to buy control within a family. Status goes by position, although parents, like colonial powers, are supposed to recognize the necessity to grant increasing independence, hoping that sentimental ties will endure and that self-rule will be successful.

When a lady and gentleman who are in the very act of attempting to ingratiate themselves with each other manage to spoil it at bill-paying time, it is usually over not paying. She expects him to pay for them both and he expects her to pay for herself. But it is also possible to pay and still ruin things. A businessman who insists on paying for a businesswoman who has invited him is offensive. This was a huge problem years ago, but not so much now (the easiest changes learned being those involving doing less).

If the relationship is romantic and the lady always

insists on paying her own way rather than her share of reciprocating and financing invitations, things are probably not going well. Those who insist on avoiding any kind of social indebtedness by paying as they go appear to be considering going.

The same is true between hosts and guests. Friends having meals out typically pay for themselves, but when people clearly intend to entertain in restaurants, their parties should not be hijacked. (Admittedly it is often hard to tell, and one must engage in a gentle tussle when the would-be host may reveal himself by saying: "No, no, we wanted to take you out. We've had so many wonderful evenings at your house.")

Worse is when a guest attempts to upgrade what is offered by ordering a more expensive wine, for example, and announcing that he will pay for it. Even worse is paying for home hospitality, as when a horrified Gentle Reader found that a houseguest had left money for her. Intended or not, that is a pay-as-you-go, now-we're-quits insult.

But then there are those freeloaders. And some people would rather be insulted than stiffed.

Dear Miss Manners:

This is a fairly simple question, but rather important to me. I am always careful to remove a cap or hat when indoors, but the camp I work at has recently switched to dining in a tent. Does the tent count as indoors, and must I remove my hat?

Certainly, one does not wear a pith helmet with black tie.

Oops. Miss Manners has seen too many old British jungle movies. But the principle of observing the decencies is still good. A dining tent is considered indoors, or in-flaps, even if there aren't any.

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.

© 2005, Judith Martin

ASK AMY

Dear Amy:

I have a problem that keeps escalating. I was a single mom for many years and raised twin boys, who are now 23 years old and still live with me.

I have a professional career, my own house and a small business on the side. I married less than a year ago. My new husband complains almost every day that my sons are taking advantage of me. They don't help in the house, with the bills or with anything else, but it has always been this way.

I have told my husband that we should sit down with them and try to set some rules. He refuses, saying that this is not his problem and that he doesn't want to talk to them.

My sons are hearing him complain and nag all the time, and they don't like it. There is animosity between them now, and my marriage is deteriorating. My husband is telling me that he is leaving.

What should I do? If I have to choose, I will choose my sons before anything else. My husband knew how the situation was before he asked me to marry him.

Tug of War

I can tell that you feel unfairly squeezed by the men in your life, and I would love to sympathize. Unfortunately, I've decided to slap you upside the head instead.

This situation is entirely of your own making, and it is entirely in your power to fix it.

Yes, your new husband walked into this domestic arrangement when he married you, but I'm sure he found it hard to imagine that you would continue to wait on, house and support your two grown sons after marriage. Regardless, this is a conversation that you should have had before your wedding, don't you think?

Perhaps your husband is another version of your sons — lazy and entitled and unable to live on his own — but let's assume that he is a fairly normal man who wants a fairly normal life and marriage. Of course, he is not getting that, and I'm not surprised that he is a little grouchy. He is right — disciplining your sons is absolutely your job. It's too bad that you passively refuse this basic responsibility.

Unless your sons are disabled and physically or mentally unable to care for themselves, you need to give them a chance to live their lives and prove their worth. They should be living outside of the home, working and taking their own first steps toward maturity. They cannot do that when they are living at home, watching reruns of "Full House" and letting you bring them meals on a TV tray.

Out they go.

Dear Amy:

I am 34 years old. I would like to get back in touch with my father.

My mother and father never married. In fact, they never really had much of a relationship. It was over before my mother realized she was pregnant.

My mother (and our family) raised me, and when I was young I visited him and his wife and my half-siblings a few times a year.

I never felt comfortable there for many reasons, but the biggest reason was that they were very religious at the time and tried to demonize my mother for being a single mother. It was so wrong to me, even as a 6-year-old.

When I was around 11 or 12, I decided I didn't want to go there anymore and apparently that was fine with them too.

I live thousands of miles away from my home now. I have a great relationship with my mother. My father and my half sister have tried to contact me through my mother. She told me about it both times, but I wasn't ready. The last attempt was several years ago.

I have found my father's phone number through Google. I want to contact him and my half sister, but I feel like just calling and saying, "This is your long-lost daughter" would be too much of a blow to the psyche for all of us.

Is there any way to do this so that no one has to freak out?

Also Amy

Make the call. Script out something to get you started and go ahead and practice in the mirror.

If you end up leaving a message, make sure to say that you realize he has tried to contact you over the years and that you appreciate it but that you weren't ready. Tell him that your life is good (I certainly hope it is) and that you were prompted to call because you realize you're ready to reach out and you hope he is too.

Leave your number, slowly and clearly, and also an e-mail address. E-mail might be a great way for the two of you to get to know each other, though it doesn't work for everyone.

If you don't hear back, you might want to follow up with a letter, though I'm sure you realize that your father might not be ready to communicate with you right now. (I'll bet he's thrilled, though.)

Good luck!

Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribune.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

© 2005 by The Chicago Tribune
Distributed by Tribune Media Services Inc.

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

The late Barry Crane, the best match point duplicate player who ever lived, insisted on the following rule for guessing missing queens: "A major-suit queen lies under the jack; a minor-suit queen lies over the jack." Whether the rule worked every time, as some of Crane's former partners maintain, it did save wear and tear on the brain.

To locate a missing queen, players use various approaches. Today's declarer takes the ace of spades and sees he'll be safe if he picks up the queen of trumps. An inexperienced South might cash the A-K, applying the old adage of "eight ever, nine never."

A more enlightened South would note that West's opening bid had promised a six-card suit, hence East had more room in his hand for hearts. South would cash the ace of hearts and lead the jack, intending to

finesse. A South who was confident of his "table presence" might lead the jack of trumps from dummy at the second trick. He'd hope to judge the position of the queen from East's reaction or induce East to cover if he had the queen.

Only the last of these methods might work in the actual deal, but a capable declarer would succeed without guessing. He would ruff a spade at Trick Two, lead a club to dummy, ruff a spade, lead a club to dummy and ruff a spade. South would then cash the ace of diamonds and exit with a diamond.

The defense could cash two diamonds and a club, but with three tricks left, dummy would have A-J-3 of trumps and South would have K-10-9. With a defender to lead, South would be home.

© 2005, Tribune Media Services

Next Week: **MASH**, or **Meshin' Pictures**

The bidding:
West 2♠ North 2NT East Pass South 4♥
All Pass
Opening lead: ♠ K

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH
♠ A 8 7 2
♥ A J 3
♦ 7 6 2
♣ A K 4

WEST (D)
♠ K Q 19 5 3
♥ Q 8 5
♦ J 8 5
♣ 10

EAST
♠ 10 6
♥ 4
♦ K Q 9 4
♣ Q 19 7 5 2

SOUTH
♠ 4
♥ K 10 9 7 6 2
♦ A 10 3
♣ 8 6 3