# The Style Invitational

Week 615: Airy Persiflage



**STYLE** 

"We'll be boarding today by SAT scores — lowest scorers first, please."

This week's contest is a nifty little tie-in with Gene Weingarten's "Below the Beltway" humor column in today's Washington Post Magazine. In it, Gene interviews a standup comic named Dave George, who gets paid to make jokey announcements over the PA system at, of all places, Dulles International Airport, such as the one above. Here's the deal: You write some more jokes you'd like to hear in an airport announcement. And Dave, who works for Independence Air, will actually announce — and videotape passenger reactions to — the funniest ones that don't concern safety or security and are not horribly tasteless or risque. (These are not necessarily the same criteria that the Empress will use, however.) We hope to show the video on washingtonpost.com.

Winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets a genuine black plastic welder's mask, complete with that window thing that flips down, donated by Russell Beland of Springfield.

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 Monday, June 27 Put the week number in the subject line of your email, 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 17. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washing ton 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 Russell Beland

Report from Week 611, in which you were asked to give "Jeopardy!"-type questions to any of 12 answers, most of which contained fairly intellectual references. But as you'll see below, the winning entries often ignored their academic origin. Here's a key to some of the erudition: The French scholar Peter Abelard fell in love with Heloise, the girl he tutored; her uncle eventually had him castrated. The islets of Langerhans are in the pancreas. The ballet "Le Sacre du Printemps" ("The Rite of Spring") caused a riot upon its premiere. Marginal utility is the economic concept of the added worth of one more unit of a product. Montaigne was a 16th-century essayist. The Babinski reflex makes toes curl upward. Sappho was the famous ancient poet from Lesbos.  $6.02 \times 10^{23}$  is the number of molecules in one mole of a chemical substance. William Faulkner set several works in fictional Yoknapatawpha County, Miss.

♦ Second runners-up: Answer: Sappho and Her Lyre. Question: What are the Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy's code names for Hillary and Bill Clinton? (Peter Jenkins, Bethesda; Joseph Romm, Washington)

♦ First runner-up, winner of "Star Trek" Barbie and Ken: Yoknapatawpha Mall: Where do you go when the fetid stench of a humid night hangs on the lip of the sky like a cold sore and magnolia trees shimmering with a patina of regret reach for the sky with the power of a generation lost and the weight of your ancestors throttles your soul so hard that you need Tylenol? (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

♦ And the winner of the Inker: Bob II, Chapter 4, Verse 9: What is: And the guards said unto Pilate: "Where wouldst thou want this killing done?" And he saith unto them: "Out there, upon Highway LXI"? (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

### ♦ Honorable Mentions:

The Isle of Wight & the Islets of Langerhans: What two things will I be really interested in when I'm 64? (Mary Ann Henningsen, Hayward, Calif.; Katherine Hooper, Jacksonville)<ql>

Which territories were exchanged by the treaty ending the Celtic-Pancreatic Wars? (Fred S. Souk, Reston)

What are two places where Jimi Hendrix didn't perform at his best? (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

What are two stopovers on a Fantastic Voyage? (Phil Battey, Alexandria)

What are two little places where you can't get something good to eat, either because they are in the pancreas or because they serve English food there? (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Guns, Butter and Squeegees:

What are President Bush's programs for dealing with terrorists, the rich and the unemployed? (Thad Humphries, Warrenton; Elizabeth Molye, Fairfax)

What were the three items that fans most often tried to smuggle into prison for Martha Stewart? (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore; Katherine Hooper)

Hints From Abelard:

What newspaper column describes how turnips make an excellent faux codpiece stuffing? (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park; Dennis Lindsay, Seabrook)

What's the most popular column on the **Unix User Group Web site?** (Tom Witte)

"Le Sacre du Printemps" but not the Sack of

Rome: What has become an annual tradition among U.S. college students? (Harold Walderman, Columbia; Deborah Guy, Colum-

bus, Ohio) Marginal Futility:

How did Sergio Aragones feel about his long-standing assignment at Mad Magazine? (Bill Spencer, Exeter, N.H.)

What was it like getting Ms. Schott to sing "We Shall Overcome"? (Paul Styrene,

What's an anagram for "Tug Italian firmly" and "Man, I fart guiltily"? (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Montaigne and the Rolling Stones: Who brought down the house at Altamontmartre? (Chris Doyle, Salinas, Calif.)

What French essayist and rock band both date back to somewhere around the 16th century? (Judith Cottrill, New

Who wrote "Of the Necessity to Remove Thyself From My Cloud"? (Jeff Brechlin)

Only in the Slow Movement of the "Pathetiaue":

You've forgotten to turn off your cell, with the ring tone set to "We Will Rock

You." When will it go off? (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

Since his mom wouldn't let him ride the Whirl 'n' Hurl and Cheat the Reaper roller coasters, where did Billy have to spend his whole day at the amusement

The Real Babinski:

What foot masseur didn't achieve success until he switched his stage name from "The Podophile"? (Mike Cisneros, Centreville)

Who is Anna Kournikova? (Jack Cackler, Falls Church; Dot Yufer, Newton, W.Va.)

What was Babar's grandfather's name before he came through Ellis Island? (Michelle Stupak, Ellicott City)

Sappho and Her Lyre:

What sounds like it should be a really hot video, unless it turns out to be, y'know, just Sappho and her lyre? (Bren-

**How was the Marx Sister billed?** (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

Who's in the kitchen with Dinah, strumming on the old banjo? (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

What was the opening act for Priapus and His Organ? (Chris Doyle)

Yoknapatawpha Mall:

Where is the only food court where you can skin your own dinner? (Sue Lin

What brand of cigarettes sold better after the name was shortened to Pall Mall? (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

Where was Billy Joe MacAllister supposed to be going when he headed for the Tallahatchie Bridge? (Pam Sweeney,

In what shopping center is The Gap a dentist's office? (Russell Beland)

How would you anagram "Apply anal tomahawk" to sneak it into a family newspaper? (Dan Seidman, Watertown,

6.02 x 10<sup>23</sup> pencils

Over the years, how much makeup has Cindy Crawford used to keep that cute mole on her face? (Marc Leibert, New York; Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.; Peter Me-

What's the Bush administration's name for the U.S. national forest system? (Mike Cisneros; Robin D. Grove, Woodbridge; Brendan Beary)

What's the code in the Pfizer accounting department for the number of Viagra doses sold? (Michelle Stupak)

And Last: What is an appropriate Style Invitational Prize because it consists of an enormous quantity of No. 2? (Mark Eckenwiler: Brendan Beary)

Next Week: Oh, and One More Thing, or A Fever of 102s

#### **MISS MANNERS**

Judith Martin

# Egg on Their Face

n more primitive times, not being able to boil an egg was considered an identifying characteristic of the deficient bride.

Chosen for her looks and charms, she proved a bad bargain by being incapable of producing the simplest cooked breakfast.

The lesson here was supposed to be that the luxury of glamour is no compensation for a lack of basic skills. It no longer applies to brides, who are less likely to be shamed into mastering humble tasks than to inquire why the bridegroom can't produce his own silly breakfast. Or why anyone needs a cholesterol-packed egg when there are so many sugary, ready-to-eat alternatives on the market. Or how it is possible to organize one's life so one can have any breakfast at all, other than office snacks.

But Miss Manners wants to revive the cautionary tale about the object of desire being revealed as worthless by an inability to boil an egg. Only she is not referring to brides, bridegrooms or any other individuals.

She is referring to hotels. In her admittedly limited experience, the more luxuries a hotel promises, the less likely it is to be able to produce a correctly boiled and served egg.

Miss Manners has been served eggs that were evidently hoping to serve as tennis balls. She has been served eggs that were still hoping to become baby chickens. Some of these eggs are rolling around on flat plates. Others have been scooped out into soup bowls. And there is never a spoon with which to eat them.

And this is at the sort of hotel where room service comes with a rose in a vase, a large linen napkin, a dinner-size knife and fork, and a dinner-size price. As the rooms also come with vast amounts of self-praise about providing individualized luxury service, it is possible to request a spoon. You just have to be prepared to see a figure dressed as a 19th-century butler showing up at the door brandishing a huge oval soup spoon.

There may be little call for boiled eggs at such places, where so many fancier dishes are available that the other eggs must be ashamed of being associated with them. But that does not excuse the ignorance.

Civilized life begins with a boiled egg sitting up-

right in an egg cup. The problem of getting the top off the egg while preserving the rest of the shell sharpens the mind for the day. This may be done by tapping the top smartly with the egg spoon, coming in sideways with the butter knife or performing an execution with egg scissors that are traitorously

decorated with a reassuring chicken motif. At the same time, it must be recognized that the hour is too delicate to face real life. Therefore, not only the spoon, but the other cutlery and napkin, should be of non-threatening sizes. Even proper breakfast china is small and does its best to be reassuring by covering itself with tiny painted flowers.

Providing all this inspires more lasting love than mere glamour.

#### **Dear Miss Manners:**

My friends and I are entering the time of life when we will (hopefully) propose marriage to certain eligible young ladies.

If a young lady's reaction to a marriage proposal is unexpectedly along the lines of, "I'm not sure, I need to think about this," what should the proposer do?

Withdraw the proposal in the belief that in this particular situation, the absence of an affirmative answer is the same as a negative answer? Wait for a solid answer? We have had "Seinfeld"-esque discussions about this; what does etiquette say?

Traditionally, saying one would think it over is the only correct positive response. A lady would not like to indicate that she had been ready with the answer before the gentleman was ready with the question.

Miss Manners is aware that this has been forgotten now that courtships are characterized by testy discussions about willingness to commit oneself. Nevertheless, it would be rude to announce one wanted to spend the rest of one's life with a lady but that the offer is about to expire.

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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#### **ASK AMY**

I have been married to my wife for a little more than four years. We have a wonderful 10-month-old daughter. I love my wife very much, and I think she loves me too. My problem is that my wife is very hot-tempered, and when she is arguing she gets so agitated that she doesn't care how her words and actions hurt me.

While she usually calms down within a few hours, some of the things that she has done have

left a permanent scar. Two weeks ago, during a fit of rage, she told me that if I didn't shut up she would call 911 and say that I was abusing her. She proceeded to actually up before the call went through. However, this is

the second time in two weeks she has done this. I feel hurt and dismayed that she could actually ever think of doing such a thing, and I cannot seem to overcome the feeling that her behavior crossed the line and has ruptured the fabric of trust in our marriage.

Is this something I should continue to ignore as a temper tantrum, or should I be concerned?

A Concerned Husband

Not only should you be concerned, you should be alarmed. If your wife is capable of threatening and abusing you in this way, I shudder to think what she might do when your daughter reaches the toddler stage and starts to trigger her temper. Have you thought about the effect all of this will have on your girl?

You need to take immediate steps to interrupt this cycle of abusive behavior. You should do whatever is necessary to force your wife into counseling and also to protect your daughter. I suggest seeing a lawyer immediately to get advice on how to properly document this behavior and perhaps prepare to remove your daughter from the home.

Your wife is ruthlessly willing to accuse you of abuse to punish you. I don't think you fully realize what a world of hurt that accusation will visit upon you if she follows through.

## Dear Amv:

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I am a part-time stay-at-home mom with a year-old daughter. My husband works full time and loves to golf on the weekends. He usually goes golfing all day Saturday. This wasn't a problem until our daughter came along.

I have expressed to him many times how I really

need his help with our daughter on the weekends, and to be honest, I really just enjoy having him home to talk to!

We worked out a plan where he could golf every other Saturday, which I thought was more than fair. But now that golf season has come around, he seems to be backing out of our deal.

He gives me a lot of grief about how this is his only escape and that I should let him have his fun because he works all week.

I love my daughter, but I need a break sometimes too! Plus. I feel that she is missing out on daddy time and family time together.

Am I being unreasonable about this? Should I ntinue to let him golf every Saturd shut my mouth? This is becoming a big source of stress in our relationship.

Mad Mommv

This situation cries out for a compromise. Some families I know work this out by making sure that both parents get some alone time — unstructured time when they can do as they please.

You and your husband also need time together, with just the two of you, and I hope that you make sure you get a sitter occasionally so you can enjoy a night out. According to Susan Heitler, a marriage and family therapist and author of "The Power of Two: Secrets of a Strong & Loving Marriage," couples need 15 hours a week as a couple (not in the presence of their children) to have a strong mar-

Your husband has unilaterally decided that he needs to "escape" your home and that he will do so, regardless of your feelings — or your previous deal. One way to approach this positively would be to offer him a set number of hours each Saturday (not the entire day), while you take a set number of hours each Sunday.

Working dads sometimes take a while to catch on to the whole child-rearing thing. Some alone time with your daughter, where you aren't around to direct the action, could be just the thing he needs to become a more confident and involved father. Once he realizes that he always shoots under par as a dad, the golf course might hold less allure.

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

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# **BRIDGE** | Frank Stewart

sn't the longest day of the year coming up?" someone asked in the

club lounge. "The longest day of the year is always tomorrow," Cy the Cynic observed, "judging by all the things people say they're going to do then."

Today's declarer wasn't the type to put off anything until tomorrow. He took the king of clubs, drew trumps and next led the ten of hearts. West threw a club.

"No hearts?" South asked, aghast.

West shrugged. "Look again," South pleaded.

West searched through his dia-

monds but still couldn't find a heart, and South lost two hearts to East.

If you were South, how would you play the slam?

South had no reason to try the hearts immediately. He can in-

stead test the other suits, hoping to count the defenders' distribution. After South draws trumps, he takes his second high club and ruffs a club in dummy. East discards a heart, so South knows East had two clubs and West had six.

South next cashes dummy's A-K-Q of diamonds, discarding two hearts. Both defenders follow, but on the next diamond East throws another heart.

South then has enough information to make the slam. He knows East had two trumps, three diamonds and two clubs, so all six missing hearts. If South ruffs the fourth diamond and leads a heart, he'll go down. Instead, he discards another heart as a loser-on-loser. West must then lead a minor-suit card, and South ruffs in dummy and discards his last heart to fulfill the contract.

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