

# The Style Invitational

Week 618: Of D.C. I Sing



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**We can't get no ballot action,  
We can't get no ballot action,  
Oh, we try and we try and we try  
We can't get no, we can't get no . . .  
When we're drivin' in our cars,  
And that sign is on the license plate,  
And it's tellin' how we got no vote  
Even though we're part of this big nation.**

**We ain't got no participation . . .**

In a story in The Post's July 4 Style section, staff writer and all-around good guy Paul Farhi noted the lack of popular songs about Washington, D.C. Hearts are left in San Francisco, New York is a hell of a town — but the District's song list is dismayingly short. **This week's contest:** Fill it up. Give us a song about Washington, set to a recognizable tune.

The winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets the CD "The Symphonic Whistler," which features a guy whistling the solo parts of the Hummel Trumpet Concerto, etc. Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get one of the just-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, July 18. Put "Week 618" 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 Aug. 7. 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 Mark Eckenwiler of Washington.

**Report From Week 614**, in which the Empress asked you to pair up any of dozens of personified product icons we supplied, and pitch an idea for a movie. The length limit was an arbitrary but firm 82 words.

◆ Second runner-up: **Ms. Magazine, by day a prim periodicals editor concerned with dotting i's and crossing t's, by night is an assassin with a fully loaded magazine concealed on her rack, a beautiful tease whose face causes men to cross their eyes. But then she meets Mr. Coffee, who's assigned to assassinate her. Can she resist his steamy aura that sends her pulse racing?** (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

◆ First runner-up, the winner of the empty bottle of Chateau de Tourettes wine: **Papa John has the tomatoes and cheese for his pizza. Mr. Salty has the salt for his pretzels. But they both need flour, water and yeast. Unable to finish their products, they sit around and talk for two hours in "Waiting for Good Dough."** (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

◆ And the winner of the Inker: **"Extra-Pulp Fiction," complete with voice-over: She appeared in my office, stacked like a bulimic's plate at a breakfast buffet. "Mr. Coffee? I'm . . . Aunt Jemima." But your real name's Trouble, I thought. "Whaddya want?" "Photos on my husband. He's tomcatting with Mrs. Butterworth." "The maple heireess? What kinda sap do I look like?" "One who can't afford to be choosy. Let's discuss the details . . . over breakfast?" My better judgment was scrambled by the idea of her squeezing my juice. "Maybe I could tail him — syruptiously," I waffled . . .** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

**◆ Honorable Mentions:**

**At the peak of the Atkins Revolution, young Mr. Potato Head is filled with doubt and self-loathing. But wise Uncle Ben teaches him the ways of the Starch, an all-powerful energy that controls the universe. Together they build the Death Carb and wipe out the revolution, restoring peace and obesity to the galaxy.** (Stan McCoy, Washington)

**Dr Pepper creates a secret serum that he then tries on himself, changing him into Mr. Pibb, a creature who is . . . pretty similar to Dr Pepper, actually.** (Art Grinath; Brian Barrett, New York)

**Count Chocula abducts his rival Cap'n Crunch. The Count locks him in a castle of chocolaty goodness. Soon kids everywhere hire mercenaries Bazooka Joe and Ms. Magazine (a woman of the highest caliber, but with a lot of issues) to bust him out. The castle's walls weaken under an assault of milk-filled rockets.** (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

**"The Doctor Is Out": Lying in the gutter, a ruined man, Mr. Pibb reflects on his life's mistakes: "If I had just finished medical school . . . I coulda been somebody!"** (Josh Borken, Bloomington, Minn.)

**Burger King is finishing his first year of college; Dairy Queen just graduated from high school. They meet on a kibbutz over the summer, and it's love at first sight. They long for the day they can marry and have a Baby Ruth of their own. But there's something not quite kosher in the relationship . . .** (Andrea Kelly, Brookeville)

**"They Call Me Mister Pibb": Just because he's different, a dark and effervescent detective trying to solve a case in the Deep South encounters hostility from the redneck sheriff, Cracker Jack. This story has plenty of pop, but is definitely an acquired taste.** (Brendan Beary; Noah Bartlett, Washington)

**Diary of a Tasty Young Thing: After dating Mr. Softee and Mr. Peanut, it's no wonder Little Debbie decided to do Dallas.** (Michelle Stupak, Ellicott City)

**Manhattan, 1962. Betty Crocker, Mrs. Smith and Aunt Jemima vie to become the next pop culture trademark icon. There's the partying, the payola, the flirtation. But in the end, the 15 minutes of fame go to a lowly soup can — for some reason, Andy Warhol just wasn't interested in these women.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

**Uncle Ben doesn't like things to simmer too long — they call him the eight-minute man. One day, he suddenly fears that he has gotten his wife, Aunt Jemima, pregnant, even though he has no evidence except her rotund belly. So they ask Dr Pepper to administer tests. All ends well, as the doctor says with a smile: "The only one missing a period here is me."** (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

**Okay, so everyone and their mothers got Uncle Ben and Aunt Jemima in a romantic comedy. But who's got Uncle Ben and Aunt Jemima in a Bonnie and Clyde adaptation set in a post-apocalyptic abandoned roadhouse overrun by zombies . . . with lasers! This stuff worked for Brangelina, and by God, it'll work for Benima!** (Brian Barrett, New York)

**"Fry Spy": Dr Pepper and Mr. Salty star in this buddy movie in which two undercover agents pose as cooks in a mob-run restaurant.** (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

**Kicked out of the house by his wife, fussy Mr. Clean moves into the castle of his messy friend Count Chocula. Mr. Clean drives the Count crazy by vacuuming up all the cobwebs, spraying disinfectant in his coffin and dry-cleaning his tuxedo. After Mr. Clean serves his roommate linguini with garlic sauce and replaces the window treatments to let in more sunlight, the relationship abruptly disintegrates.** (Lewis Lesansky, Burke)

**Mrs. Dash is a long shot in the Olympic 100 meters, until Dr Pepper gives her a little "prescription" . . .** (Ken Gallant, Little Rock)

**In a town soiled with crime, Mr. Clean, ex-hit man for the mob, becomes an agent of good as he scours the town searching for his kidnapped Baby Ruth. After Clean mops the floor with a slew of mob enforcers, his ex-partner Mr. Fixit is dispatched to grease him.** (Brayton Bigelow, Annapolis)

**Mrs. Butterworth, finding too much starch in her hand laundry, angrily confronts the proprietor, Mr. Potato Head. In the encounter he loses face — one piece at a time — and retaliates via a series of mash notes. In the end, the two are reconciled as she realizes he only has eyes for her.** (Mark Eckenwiler)

**MISS MANNERS**

Judith Martin

## Parents, Rearing to Go

**P**arents will do anything for their children. Anything, Miss Manners has observed, short of actual childrearing.

It's not that parents don't realize that their children need to learn manners, morals, and how to refrain from repulsing those in a position to give them degrees, riches and happiness. They simply do not see teaching these as being their job.

Anyway, they have their hands full complaining and protesting that others are not doing it.

Concerned parents are especially vehement about the failure of the entertainment industry to exhibit well-behaved role models to inspire children to follow them into the magic land of decorum. Of course, they also expect television to entertain their children while they have other things to do. Conflict being the essence of drama, how long do they expect those children to be mesmerized by the spectacle of characters being polite to one another?

But then couldn't the actors and athletes who are known and admired on television conduct their personal lives so as to provide the young with examples of dignity, honor and restraint?

Never mind that the public has already taught them that modesty and sportsmanship, far from being admired by their audiences, are considered dumb, if not actually unhealthy.

Fortunately, the public does admire philanthropy. So it is not uncommon to see entertainment and sports figures touting, and perhaps even supporting, causes and charities. It is just that when it comes to the exemplary private life, young people who have made sudden, vast amounts of money are not the likeliest candidates for practicing financial or romantic restraint.

Politicians should be more responsible, parents have charged. Surely they should be examples of upstanding citizens. How is it that so many of them get involved in scandals for love or money? And how is it that the ones who have not morally transgressed have such poor manners, insulting and cursing those who disagree with them?

Miss Manners has to point out to whom those politicians are responsible. As long as voters mistake beligerence for high-mindedness, they will keep putting rude people into office.

This leaves teachers to do the job of civilizing children. They, at least, are undistracted by money and adulation. And goodness knows they try to do the job.

So when even they give up, parents are outraged. News reports that it was not uncommon for schools to expel 3-year-olds produced general shock. Of course they're unruly, people responded indignantly. What do you expect of small children? Isn't preschool supposed to teach them to behave?

Not from scratch. In three years, parents were supposed to teach them respect for authority and not to hit and scratch others. Lapses will occur, but they need to know and accept the principles.

If not, serious, one-on-one remedial work needs to be done before any other socialization can be taught — let alone the beginning academics that parents now want in the curriculum. Now that there may be more than one such child in a preschool class, teachers — who hate to give up on any child — can no longer do that job.

Parents are just going to have to find someone else to blame for not parenting their children.

**Dear Miss Manners:**

**I was wondering the proper order of events, pertaining to an engagement. Does the groom ask her father for her hand in marriage, then ask her and give her the diamond? Or does he ask her to marry him and then her father?**

He should not ask her father to marry him. Proposing to two members of the same family can only end in strife or bigamy.

If, however, you wish to ask the father's permission to ask the lady to marry you, you must do so first. However, Miss Manners warns you not to attempt this before being reasonably sure of a favorable reply from the lady. "Your father is okay with your marrying me" is not a persuasive argument these days.

*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**

**Dear Amy:**

**I am 25 years old and have a wonderful boyfriend. He is perfect in every way except one: He regularly looks at images of naked women.**

**These photos are usually e-mailed to him by friends several days a week. I know this because I have seen his e-mail in-box and see what has been sent to him.**

**I have let him know that this really bothers me, but he says, "I'm a man and this is how men are."**

**This upsets me because I obviously cannot compare to some fake-breasted blond model who is airbrushed to look perfect.**

**I feel that if he has to look at pictures of other women, then he's not happy with the way that I am. It upsets me because, even though he knows how much this bothers me, he is not willing to stop.**

**I've asked him to tell his friends not to e-mail him things like this anymore, or if they do, to just delete them right away when he sees a subject line like "Big Jugs."**

**He says he will not do this. Amy, this upsets me no end. I regularly cry about it. I'm in no way a super-feminist, but it bothers me deeply when men look at women as objects.**

**There is something about this that makes me feel like the lowest of the low.**

**What can I do? Is it worth it to break up with him over this?**

*Insecure on Long Island, N.Y.*

One way of getting past this impasse would be to stay out of Mr. Wonderful's e-mail.

I'm no fan of porn, mind you, but you say that this upsets you and makes you cry, and that you've expressed yourself clearly to your boyfriend. He doesn't care how this makes you feel, so if you choose to stay with him, then you will have to find a way to tolerate his habit. He has made that crystal clear.

Loving, wonderful partners don't engage in activities that diminish and continually upset their partner. Your guy chooses his freedom to acquaint himself with "Big Jugs" over your feeling good about yourself.

Let me put it this way. If your guy hated smok-

ing and you loved to smoke, then eventually he would probably tire of your smoking and ask you to stop. If you refused to stop, then he would assume that you liked smoking more than you liked him. He would also have a good reason to leave the relationship.

If feeling "like the lowest of the low" isn't a reason to leave this "wonderful" and "perfect guy," then I don't know what is.

**Dear Amy:**

**Last year, my mother passed away unexpectedly. Because she had no will, I was appointed personal representative of her estate.**

**The only asset that my mother had was her house. She owed a lot of money to creditors. The house finally sold in March, and after paying all of my mother's debts, there was very little left for me and my sister.**

**I got a call yesterday from my aunt saying that she lent my mother \$800 to pay her car payment and mortgage sometime last year, and that she wanted the money back. I was appalled. I knew nothing of this.**

**To keep the family peace, I told her I would meet her halfway and give her \$400. She came back saying that she had \$550 in canceled checks and the rest she didn't have proof of, but that I should pay it back.**

**Amy, I'm willing to give her back what she has proof of, but I don't feel I should give her any more than that.**

**What do you think?**

*Wondering*

I hope you remembered to thank your aunt for bailing out your mother when she needed it. After you thank her, you should repay her. Why? Because that's the right thing to do. Unless you have reason to believe that your aunt is being untruthful or trying to soak you, then I think you should repay her the full amount.

*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

<b>N-S vulnerable</b>			
<b>NORTH</b>			
♠ 2	♥ Q 10 6 3	♦ Q J 8 7 4	♣ 6 5
<b>WEST</b>			
♠ A J 10 4	♥ 10 8	♦ A 10 9	♣ 10 9 4 3
<b>EAST</b>			
♠ K Q 9 8	♥ A 7 5 2	♦ 3	♣ K J 8 7
<b>SOUTH (D)</b>			
♠ 7 6 5 3	♥ K 4	♦ K 6 5 2	♣ A Q 2

The bidding:  
**West** Pass  
**North** 1 ♠  
**East** 1 ♣  
**South** Pass  
 1 ♠ Dbl 3 ♠ 4 ♦  
 Dbl All Pass

**Opening lead:** Choose it

**M**ike Lawrence, whose credentials as an author are second to none, and Swedish expert Anders Wirgren have produced a scholarly book that all players, but especially disciples of the "Law of Total Tricks," should read.

The law, treated in a best-selling book by Larry Cohen, states that the total number of trumps both

sides have in their best suit should equal the total number of tricks available in the deal. In today's deal, East-West have eight spades and North-South have nine diamonds, hence 17 tricks should be won at spade and diamond contracts.

Many players have come to rely on the LOTT to make competitive decisions, but Lawrence relates how the deal made him look with suspicion on the "law." Mike was West, and when North-South competed to four diamonds, he doubled. He thought he might make four spades, but then, according to the LOTT, South would be down three at four diamonds.

When Lawrence led a club, South won with the queen. He forced out the ace of trumps and lost only to the defenders' three aces, making four for plus 710 points. Much later, Lawrence found that a spade opening lead would beat the contract, but as he points out, the law assumes perfect play and defense that don't always happen.

In "I Fought the Law," Lawrence and Wirgren address the LOTT's inaccuracies and the misconceptions players have about it. They put forth an improved method. To get "I Fought the Law," a landmark

book, go to [www.michaelslawrence.com](http://www.michaelslawrence.com).

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**Next Week: Airy Persiflage, or Quipped Wings**