

# The Style Invitational

**Week 633: Your Secret Here!**



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**"I like to decorate the instructions in the airplane seat pocket."  
 "When my brother makes me mad, I spit in his shoes."  
 "I threw out your thongs because you're too fat."**

**This week's contest:** In the pleasant Washington suburb of Germantown, there's a man named Frank Warren, who has a document-delivery business and an unusual hobby: He keeps a Web site called PostSecret.com, to which people send anonymous picture postcards containing . . . their personal secrets, including those above. Frank then, of course, posts them for all to admire. **Send us some original secrets (they don't have to be true,** as Frank requires for his actual "group art project"), and the Empress will post the most interesting — at least the printable ones — right here for all to admire. Just the text is fine; you don't have to make a postcard. But if you're inclined, you can compose a postcard with original, previously unpublished art, and we'll print a couple of the best (they'll be in black and white). Send them either by mail or digitally to the address below.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up receives the excellent book "Fonging for the Soul," which delves into the co(s)mically spiritual practice of hanging an oven rack from your fingers and then sticking said fingers into your ears while others tap the rack with kitchen utensils.

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), by fax to 202-334-4312 or by mail to The Style Invitational, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 31. Results will be published Nov. 20. Put "Week 633" 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. 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 was suggested by Joseph Romm of Washington. The revised title for next week's contest is by Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

**Report from Week 629**, in which we asked you to "marry or otherwise combine famous names and supply the result." Yeow, if The Post could run a paid marriage announcement for each entry submitted for this contest, the Empress might be able to stop issuing prizes she finds in the wastebasket. The Steal Invitationalists were out in force this week, with a shocking number of them submitting, under their own names, the chestnut that if Tuesday Weld married Hal March Jr., she'd be Tuesday March the Second. For one more bleepin' time, folks, do *not* send us a really great joke you've heard! We are interested only in really great jokes you've *come up with yourself*.

- ◆ Third runner-up: **If Ewan MacGregor married James Watt and then Dick Army, would he be Ewan Watt Army?** (Chris Doyle, Kyoto, Japan)
- ◆ Second runner-up: **If Tyra Banks married Harrison Ford, she'd be the model T. Ford.** (Michael Baker, Columbia)
- ◆ First runner-up, winner of the special Jamaican soup mix: **If Glenn Close married Bob Seger but didn't change her name, would she be Close, but no Seger?** (Michelle Stupak, Ellicott City)
- ◆ And the winner of the Inker: **If Ivana Trump, Samantha Bee, Lorna Luft and Oksana Baiul formed a matchmaking firm, it would be Ivana Bee Luft Baiul.** (Marcy Alvo, Annandale)

- ◆ **Honorable Mentions:**  
**In the infinitely unlikely event that Andre Agassi were to marry Pope Benedict XVI, would he be known by the nickname of Afs Benedict?** (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)  
**If Michelle Wie married Prince William, she'd be the royal Wie.** (Pam Sweeney, Germantown)  
**If Irish dancer Michael Flatley partnered with Sandra Dee and Louis Nye, they'd get a lot of government PR work as Flatley Dee Nye.** (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)  
**If Yo-Yo Ma married Yasir Arafat, would he be Yo Ma Arafat?** (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)  
**If Polly Bergen married Cotton Mather, they'd be a Cotton-Polly blend.** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)  
**If Ram Dass, the Dalai Lama and Paris Hilton had a threesome, would they be Ram-Lama-Ding Dong?** (Michelle Stupak)  
**If Carmen Electra married Alonzo Mourning, would Electra become Mourning?** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)  
**If Noah Wyle married James Watt and then Idi Amin, he'd be Noah Watt Amin.** (Joseph Romm, Washington)  
**If Calista Flockhart married Tom DeLay, there'd be a slight DeLay.** (Russell Beland, Springfield)  
**If Robin Wright Penn and Fred Gwynne had a daughter named Marjorie, would she be Marge of the Penn-Gwynnes?** (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)  
**If Anna Kournikova married Martin Mull, Stepin Fetchit, Edwin Hubble, Bobby Orr, Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner and Brett Hull, she'd be Anna Mull Fetchit Hubble Orr Minner Hull!** (Chris Doyle)  
**If Tiger Woods married Jeremy Irons, would they be a Full Set?** (John Held, Fairfax)  
**If Mary Tudor married Tom Mix, would she be Bloody Mary Mix?** (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)  
**If Billy Crystal married Tristram Shandy and then King Lear, would he be Crystal Shandy Lear?** (Judith Cottrill, New York)  
**If Ellen DeGeneres married Amanda Plummer, wouldn't that be ironic?** (Brendan Beary)  
**If Sandra Day O'Connor married Gerald Ford, would she be Sandra Day Tripper?** (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)  
**If Clayton Moore got together with the Dalai Lama, he'd be the Koan Ranger.** (Roy Ashley, Washington)  
**"Will she keep her, um, last name?" we worried at the wedding of Henry VIII and Edith Head.** (Brendan Beary)
- If Briana Banks married David Duke, she'd be Briana Cracker.** (Seth Brown)
- If Nikita Khrushchev married Elisabeth Shue, would he bang her right there on the table?** (Brendan Beary)
- If Alice Cooper married Garry Trudeau, Keye Luke, Larry King and Philip Glass, would he be Alice Trudeau Luke King Glass?** (Chris Doyle)
- If Frank Oz married Sen. Pat Leahy and then President Hu Jintao, he'd be Yoda Leahy Hu.** (Mike Fransella, Arlington; Stephen Litterst, Ithaca, N.Y.)
- If Ruby Dee married the Keystone Kops, she'd be Ruby Slippers.** (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)
- If Chynna the wrestler married Bill Gates, would she be Burly Gates?** (Tom Witte)
- If Isabella Rossellini married Joseph Campanella, would she be Isabella Ringing?** (Mel Loftus, Holmen, Wis.)
- If Michael "Brownie" Brown married Squeaky Fromme, he'd become Mr. Squeaky Fromme, to lessen the opprobrium.** (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)
- If Sharon Osborne married Robert Sherrill and then Dwight D. Eisenhower, she'd be Sharon Sherrill Ike.** (Jonathan Groner, Washington)
- If Lorena Bobbitt married Ashton Kutcher and then Randy Johnson, she'd be Lorena Kutcher Johnson.** (Mary Cronin Cherry, Fairfax)
- If Uma Thurman married Monty Hall, would she be Monty's Uma?** (Ben Schwab, Severna Park)
- If Levi Stubbs of the Four Tops married Brad Pitt, he'd be a Pitt's Top.** (Robin Grove, Woodbridge)
- If Don Ho married Heidi Fleiss, she'd be Heidi Ho — not to mention Heidi, Ho.** (Glenn Smoak, Reston)
- If Tony Soprano married Tommy Tune, would they both end up in Sing Sing?** (Jeff Covell, Arlington)
- If Kim Catrall and Carol Alt opened a sandwich shop/cyber-cafe, would it be called the Catrall-Alt Deli?** (Kyle Hendrickson)
- If Woody Allen divorced his current wife and married Mia Farrow, that would be just too weird. I mean, marrying your ex-wife's mother, how sick is that?** (Russell Beland)
- If Lindsay Lohan married me, the fact that her name would sound like wood preservative would be the last thing on my mind.** (Chris Doyle)
- If Shania Twain married Mark Twain . . . nah, they'll never even meet.** (Kyle Hendrickson)

Next Week: **Hyphen the Terrible, or Two Halves Make One Howl**

## MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

### No Plates Special

**D**o your wineglasses match? Does anybody care?

Miss Manners is presumed to care desperately. A slanderous presumption exists that etiquette has commercial tie-ins with the purveyors of expensive dry goods, and that pronouncements about propriety are suspiciously profitable to the silver, china, linen and crystal industries.

Indeed, the name of etiquette is often illegitimately invoked by hustlers. They have, for example, managed to convince generations of engaged couples that a marriage without 10 lavish place settings is not a valid union. Even more galling to Miss Manners is that these shysters escape the reputation for bludgeoning people into expensive purchases by encouraging them to bludgeon their friends and relations into buying these items for them.

As a result, many people have beautiful tableware that they consider too good to use — not only for themselves, but too good for their guests. At party time, out come the paper plates, plastic forks, paper napkins and beer and soda cans. Using the trousseau items would risk breakage and require all that effort to clean up, and their friends — who might well have been ordered to buy them this stuff in the first place — just don't seem worth it.

Even more disheartening to Miss Manners are the pleas she receives from those who do think their guests deserve the best, but do not own such things. Yet they have been entertained by those who do, and they recognize that they have a social debt.

The solution they propose is to dispense with the guests. Surely, they reason, people who entertain in style will realize that some of their guests cannot reciprocate in kind and will overlook being overlooked.

Well, no. Their hosts were under the impression that these people accepted their invitations because they enjoyed their company, not because they wanted to dine in a better fashion than they could manage on their own. After allowing a certain leeway for inexperience, frequent hosts begin to get annoyed that no one initiates seeing them.

So those who claim that they cannot enter-

tain because they don't have the proper tableware are not off the hook. They don't have to have "good" things; they only have to do the best they can.

Oh, wait. Miss Manners is not going to issue an endorsement like that without knowing what they consider the best they can do. Too often people plead a lack of money, with which she is sympathetic, when they are really talking about a lack of effort, with which she is less so. Paper costs more in the end than simple dinnerware.

It is possible to entertain graciously without using bone china, crystal glasses and sterling silver flatware if you don't have any or if you are including intimate friends at a family dinner. It is ungracious only to have all this stuff yet begrudge your guests the use of it.

Nor do such things have to come in matching sets, if some care is taken to see that the table doesn't look as if it is laid out for a yard sale. Which, by the way, is a good place to start looking for tableware. You may be sure that Miss Manners does not get a commission.

#### Dear Miss Manners:

**I'm not new at the manners game, but I'm not sure on this one. I'm 5 feet 4 inches tall, and my husband is 5 feet 8 inches. When we go to social functions, I'm uncomfortable wearing my high heels and being taller than my husband. But they do make my legs look longer and more shapely than flats. Do you have a solution?**

Yes: Do your husband the honor of assuming that his stature does not diminish in dignity in comparison to yours. Miss Manners only hopes that you can hold on to your own dignity in — if she has done the arithmetic correctly — what must be five-inch heels.

*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 just found out that my live-in boyfriend has a 2-year-old child. He wants nothing to do with her or her mother, who was pregnant when we began to date. He had already broken up with her and has not seen her since the breakup.**

**We have no desire to see this child. He may have to pay child support anyway. We had to change our telephone number when we moved to avoid the calls.**

**The problem is his friends and family. I found out about this child when I read an e-mail — we share everything — from a close friend just ripping him to shreds.**

**I want to send an e-mail to everyone on his list telling them to butt out. What do you think?**

*Not Interested*

Ewww. I think I need to take a shower.

Of course your live-in boyfriend will have to pay child support; furthermore, running from it (changing your phone number, etc.) is against the law.

This guy's friends and family aren't the problem.

He is. And you are.

Don't you get it? Guys who dump pregnant girlfriends and deny their children are sleazebags. And, just to be clear, when I say "sleazebag," I mean a giant bag of sleaze.

Women who do the dirty work for their sleazebag boyfriends are aiding and abetting in the commission of a crime against society — and though it's not technically a crime, I certainly wish that I could make a citizen's arrest.

Dear Amy:

**Is there a difference between being gay and being homosexual?**

**When I came out in the early '60s, homosexuality was a sexual preference. It was what I did in bed, and the early gay rights advocates were fighting for the right for legality of what was done by consenting adults in private.**

**Today, it seems as if "gay" is a minority group on a par with racial and religious groups. There**

**are gay stores, gay music groups, gay restaurants, etc., none having anything to do with homosexuality except for the sexual preference of those involved.**

**Gays parade in the streets and let people know what they do in bed. I have been told on more than one occasion that I am homosexual, not gay, because I don't participate in primarily gay activities.**

**I do not hide my homosexuality, but I don't flaunt it either. I don't think it is something to be proud of, nor do I believe it is something to be ashamed of. It is just one part of me, but I do not build my whole life around it.**

**I'd be interested in your views on the difference between homosexuality as a sexual preference and being gay as a total "lifestyle."**

*Not Gay but Happy*

My one quibble with your letter is your assertion that being homosexual is a sexual preference. If sexuality were a preference, then I might choose to be gay, because I seem to know so many fabulous women. Let's stipulate that a person's sexuality is not a preference or a choice any more than a person's eye color is.

I ran your letter past Josh Tager, editor of PlanetOut.com, the popular online gay community. Tager says that "gay pride" is the natural reaction of people who have been shamed for so long, but really, "it's all semantics."

Tager points out, "We are all the sum of all of our characteristics. Gay versus homosexual is an artificial distinction." He says your attitude — that your sexuality is private and not necessarily a lifestyle — actually puts you on the forefront of where gay culture is headed.

After the cultural pendulum takes its inevitable swing back toward the middle, you may find that you feel less pressure to be "gay." Then you will realize that, as Tager says, "you can define yourself in any way you choose."

*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

N-S vulnerable

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

The bidding:  
 South 2♣ West Pass North 2♦ East 3♥  
 3♠ Pass 4♠ All Pass  
**Opening lead:** ♠ A

**"I** saw it and still don't believe it."

Ed, my club's best player, was telling me about a deal he'd encountered against the redoubtable Minnie Bottoms. Minnie is 82 and wears ancient bifocals that make her mix up kings and jacks, usually to her opponents' chagrin. Against Ed's four spades, Minnie led the ace and a low heart, and East took the queen and led the king.

"I didn't like my chances," Ed said. "I could ruff with the ten, but West figured to have the jack. If she overruffed, I'd be down one even if the clubs broke 3-3.

"Finally, I came up with a line of play that looked good. I knew East had a shapely hand to preempt, but she had only six hearts, and if she had one low trump or three clubs, I had little chance. So I gave her 2-6-1-4 distribution.

"I ruffed the third heart with the king," Ed went on. "I'd cash the ace of diamonds, A-K of clubs and A-Q of trumps and throw Minnie in, I hoped, with the jack of trumps. If she had no more clubs, she'd have to lead a diamond to dummy, and my club losers would go away."

Ed's picture of the deal was on target, and he was due to make the contract. Alas, Minnie's bifocals got him.

"When I ruffed with the king of trumps," Ed sighed, "Minnie 'over-ruffed' with the jack. She thought I'd ruffed with the jack, and she had the king. Now I couldn't end-play her, and I lost two clubs and went down."

"Your technique was almost perfect," I consoled Ed. "But against Minnie, ruff the third heart with the ace of trumps."

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