

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 662: How Low Will You Go?



As his entry for the Week 657 contest — which was to come up with a creative and funny photo of fruit — Loser Peter Metrisko submitted the photo at left: It's Fruit of the Loom, get it? Yes, that is a picture of Peter. Peter lives in the Washington area. His neighbors may well be looking at this picture at this very moment. Peter is a lawyer. Peter has two children who attend elementary school with other children. We hope those other children are nice. **This week: Humiliate yourself for ink and a stupid prize, even more than this man has done.** This is a wide-open contest: You can tell something embarrassing about yourself, you can suck up to the Empress — whatever shameful thing you like as long as The Post will print it. As always, we have to use your real name. In addition to humiliation, the winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets a fancy one-liter squeeze bottle of Hydro Dog dog water. It contains water and three minerals, and sells for \$2.49. As "the Hydro Dog veterinarian" explains on the product's Web site: "We usually give these fluids via an intro-venous [sic] catheter. Of course, these animals are usually sick. Your dog is not! Why shouldn't your dog get these needed fluids now?"

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions (or whatever they're called this week) 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 by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 22. Put "Week 662" 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 11. 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 Chris Doyle of Forsyth, Mo. The Honorable Mentions name is by Drew Bennett of Alexandria.

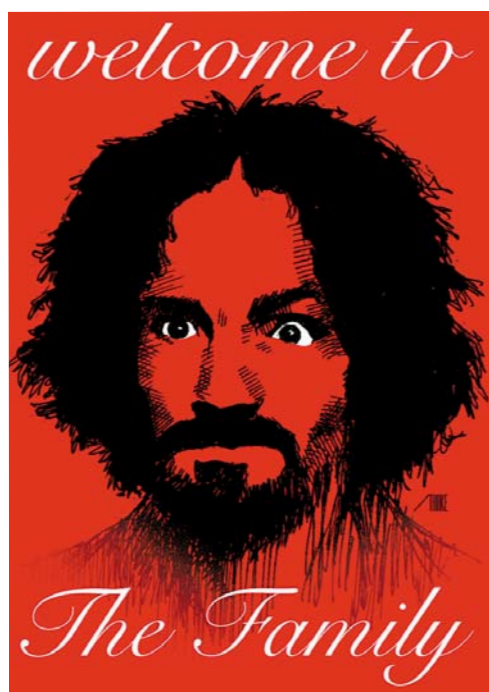
REPORT FROM WEEK 658

In which we asked for greeting card ideas that the Hallmark people might put on their "Funny but No" wall:



Loser Mary Ann Henningsen of Hayward, Calif., earns a belated magnet for the recent recycling-ideas contest with the All-Loser-Magnet tube top she sported at the Losers' own "Flushies" award banquet May 6 in Ellicott City, Md. No, her skeleton does not consist of steel tubing; all those magnets are duct-taped on, presumably not to her skin.

- 4** A child, crushed under the wheel of a bus, cries out: "Don't worry, Ma! I'm wearing clean ones!" Happy Mother's Day (Ira Allen, Bethesda)
- 3** Hope You Get Well Soon! I mean, you're just grossing me out, how disgusting you look and smell right now. (Judith Cottrill, New York)
- 2** The winner of the feckless "Energy Ball": Picture of Sigmund Freud: "I'd wish you a happy Father's Day ... [inside] ... if only I didn't want to kill you and sleep with Mom." (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)



1 THE WINNER OF THE INKER And this illustration by Bob Staake: (Randy Lee, Burke)

OUR CONDOLENCES TO . . .

- [Cover] We Are Saddened by Your Loss [Inside] Whatever It Was** (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)
- With Appreciation on Secretaries' Day** In gratitude for your lovely attitude and excellent work, I've enclosed this gift card — it's so much more fun than stupid old benefits. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)
- Sometimes you can't undo what's been done . . . all you can do is admit the hurt you've caused and say, "I'm sorry." So get off your high horse and apologize already.** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)
- Congratulations, Graduate!** As you enter the workforce, you should know that all jobs fall into four categories: **1. Stimulating, but not financially rewarding;** **2. Secure, but soul-destroyingly dull;** **3. Financially rewarding, but very stressful without being stimulating;** and . . . **(Inside) 4. Somebody else's.** (Douglas Frank, Crosby, Tex.)
- Happy Passover!** [Drawing of door with blood smeared around it] Hope the Angel of Death skips your house! (Judith Cottrill)
- A kid looking at a centerfold: "To the Hottest Mom a Boy Could Wish For."** (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)
- Congratulations, College Graduate!** You are so gonna be THE king of Italian Renaissance poetry among all the baggers at Safeway! (Brendan Beary)
- Picture of Abu Ghraib with holiday decorations: Season's Beatings!** (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

- Congratulations on Your Same-Sex Union** Take comfort that while your souls burn forever in the fires of eternal damnation, they'll be together. (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- Since I met you . . . I'm euphoric I'm relaxed I laugh easily I feel tingly I am free to just be me [Inside] Of course, I've also been sniffing paint . . .** (Molly Norton, San Francisco)
- Front: Picture of a frustrated guy reloading a gun. Inside: I keep missing you.** (Erik Agard, Gaithersburg)
- We'd Make a Great Team!** I've got loose shoes and a warm bathroom. . . . You can bring the rest. (Kevin Dopart)
- Congratulations on Your Retirement** Like a salmon that has swum upstream to its destination, your work is done . . . Now, all that's left is to go belly up and die. (Wilson Varga, Alexandria)
- Congratulations on Your Promotion!** You're an inspiration to shameless brown-nosers everywhere. (Rob Kloak, Springfield)
- M is for the many times you bailed me Out of jail, and rustled up some meds, T is for the therapy that failed me, H, the hours fending off the feds, E is for the energy you wasted, Running ragged while I lounged in bed Put them all together, they spell "suckehhhh . . . Mother," My safety net you'll always be.** (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)
- [Cover] A Belated Birthday Wish [Inside] From Your Conjoined Twin** (Chris Doyle)

Next Week: Tell Us a Fib, or Dorkerel

With Pink Boots, Women Wade Into The Fishing Game

FISHING, From D1

Founder Claudia Espenscheid, a former financial adviser for Merrill Lynch and PaineWebber, has since launched her own plan to expose more women to what she calls "Armani-style fishing."

She considers herself the Martha Stewart of fishing, "without the whole prison thing," and aims to revolutionize the sport by catering to women with sophisticated tastes.

She's done her research — the American Sportfishing Association estimates nearly a third of recreational fishing in the United States is done by women.

"It's my mission to inspire and fashionably attire women to get hooked on fishing," says Espenscheid, who is working on a line of pink fishing nets, lures, hats, boots and other items she hopes to market to sporting retailers.

The 40-year-old mother of two rarely fished before Ivan hit her home on Pensacola Bay in October 2004. The Category 4 storm destroyed the family's boat dock, but Espenscheid found an escape casting a fishing net from the shore.

"I would be standing out there in my waders. It was my way of dealing with the stress, enjoying the beauty of where we live and blocking out all the stress of what we were dealing with."

Neighbors like Tracy Dalton saw her and began fishing themselves.

"Claudia had a vision," says Dalton, who attended a recent Fishing Chix party at the home of another friend.

Dalton became so enamored of the sport that she featured a photograph of her family fishing on their last Christmas card.

Experts say the Pensacola group, which has about 50 members, is just one example of the sport's growing popularity among women.

Outdoor marketers have found it makes good business

sense to reach out to women, says Monica Pelletier, spokeswoman for the national Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

"The thinking used to be that the man is the one who goes fishing and he's going to decide whether to take the family along, but really it's the woman who decides where to take the family. She determines the activities," Pelletier says.

But Pelletier, whose organization represents boating and fishing retailers nationwide, says only handful of small retailers and charter companies cater exclusively to women.

Betty Bauman of Fort Lauderdale began Ladies Let's Go Fishing 10 years ago. The company offers seminars and chartered fishing trips for 300 to 400 women each year.

"We show them how to catch a fish twice their size with minimal effort. A woman's muscles are in her hips and her legs. We don't have the arm strength to reel the fish in the way men do," Bauman says.

"A lot of women want to have a sport that is exciting and that they can be good at, that builds their confidence and gives them quality time with their family and friends."

Bass Pro Shops, the nation's largest outdoor retailer, is among Bauman's corporate sponsors. Women are a growing market for the fishing gear and apparel sold at Bass Pro's 33 stores, says Bass Pro spokesman Larry Whiteley.

"We offer a lot of women's technical clothing. In equipment, I don't know about that much that is designed specifically for women," he says.

The Fishing Chix hoped to find pink rods and reels to match their pink rubber boots. After much searching, they located neon pink fishing lures online to give as Christmas gifts last year.

"You want to fish, but you want to look cute while you're



Honorary Fishing Chix Captain Wes Rozier watches as two of the group's members, Maura Engel, left, and Tris Tessa Osborne, fish.



Claudia Espenscheid grimaces as Wes Rozier guts a speckled trout. She says, "You want to fish, but you want to look cute while you're doing it."

doing it," Espenscheid says.

Although the official purpose of the monthly Fishing Chix meetings is to plan fishing trips,

the events are largely social. The March meeting included an open bar and catered appetizers served around an indoor pool.

At one meeting, a skin care expert gave tips on the best products to protect the face from the sun while fishing. Another meeting was held at a kitchen store and a chef demonstrated fish recipes.

The group makes an effort to include even those women who are the most timid about fishing.

"For all you people who don't like to fish or who are afraid you will get sick on a boat, you can fish from the shore," Espenscheid said at a recent meeting held to discuss a fishing fundraiser for a children's hospice.

But honorary Fishing Chix Captain Wes Rozier says people shouldn't be deceived by appearances — some of the women have become excellent anglers.

They returned from a recent trip with speckled trout, snapper and redbait. Shrieks and cheers accompanied each catch.

They became so excited, they even started a fishing cheer — "F-i, F-i-s-s-h, F-i-s-s-h-i-n-g, Fishing, Fishing."

As Rozier patiently baited hooks and gave instructions, he said many of his female charter clients return with a better catch than his male clients because the women aren't embarrassed about listening to his advice.

"The ladies are quick to turn to me and say, 'What am I doing wrong?'" he says.

And Rozier says a day out on the boat with a group of women or an evening at a women's fishing meeting can be a lot more fun than spending time with a group of men.

"All of the other fishing captains here," he says, "they envy me and want to get a part of this business. They tell me that I've landed the mucho grande of fish with these women."