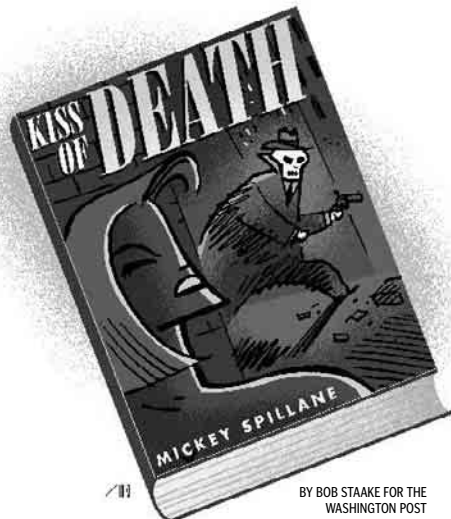


The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 695: Dead Letters



The news hit hard, like a punch from a fist. Mickey Spillane is gonna be missed.

As we kick the door closed on the year 2006, it's time once again to do the same to those who have kicked their last. **This week: Write a poem about someone who died in 2006.** As always, poems of more than four lines must be worth the extra space they're printed on. Winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets a pocket-size book of "Zig Ziglar's Favorite Quotations," a collection of motivational sayings that almost rise to the level of platitude, such as "We don't pay the price for success, we pay the price for failure." Ooh.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called that 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, Jan. 8. Put "Week 695" 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 Jan. 28. 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 prize was donated by Sushant Sagar of Centreville. The revised title for next week's contest was sent by Martin Bancroft.

REPORT FROM WEEK 691

In which we sought clever and funny clues for all 76 words in an actual crossword that ran in The Post Nov. 18, created by bigshot puzzle author Paula Gamache, who'd already included some funny puns in her originals. The Empress received the most entries she'd ever gotten in a single contest — more than 6,000 (many people decided to try all 76 words) — but nobody came up with a very good clue for "roc" or "nail." So we turned to Paula herself. She wins a magnet.

(We've included the winner and runners-up below, rather than show them out of order.)

ACROSS

- 1. **ANGST:** Director Lee's emotion upon seeing the box office returns for "Hulk" (Benjamin Cooper, Springfield)
- 6. **ASIA:** Response to "Where can I find some good Chinese food?" (Richard Wong, Derwood)
- 10. **BBLs:** Bacon, braunschweiger, lettuce and sardine sandwich (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)
- 14. **First runner-up, winner of the dog desserts:** **TAUPE:** It is to "male" as "infield fly rule" is to "female" (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)
- 15. **REDS:** First the left wing, now the right wing (Fred Dawson, Beltsville)
- 16. **ELAN:** Articles in two languages (several entries)
- 17. **KILLERBEET:** He slays 'em on the Borscht circuit (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village; Chris Doyle, Kihai, Hawaii)
- 19. **AUDI:** What Lt. Murphy read on his Medal of Honor that made him send it back. (Bill Moulden, Frederick)
- 20. **Second runner-up: ALPINE:** What Scarlett said when Rhett told her he was leaving. (Thomas J. Murphy, Bowie; Drew Bennett, Alexandria)
- 21. **ROADTEST:** Carjacker's lamest alibi (Arlee C. Green, Newington)
- 23. **TALC:** Stone in a celebrity's eternity ring (Martin Bancroft, Rochester)
- 25. **III:** How Terrell Owens spells "team" (Charles Trahan, Jessup)
- 26. **SLAP:** Reverse a friendship (Ned Bent, Oak Hill)
- 29. **SUPERSTAR:** Clark Kent's sperm (Ari Unikoski, Tel Aviv)
- 35. **HOMES:** Detective who got the L out of there. (Mel Loftus, Holmen, Wis.)
- 37. **ROREM:** Composer best known for his appearance in crosswords (Rick Muenchow, Bethesda)
- 38. **DER:** Opposite of under (Elwood Fitzner)
- 39. **The winner of the Inker: ISIAH:** Thomas à Bucket (Chris Doyle)
- 40. **Fourth runner-up: FDR:** A squished-up hat (Toby Gottfried, Santa Ana, Calif.)

- 41. **ASONE:** That dam in Egypt — D. Quayle (Jeff Miller, Brookeville)
- 43. **FEN:** With 38 Across, what kept Jimi Hendrix from being just some guy who mumbled (Jerry Miatech, Falls Church)
- 44. **EIEIO:** How they answer the phone at the East Indian Energy Independence Organization (Todd Carton, Wheaton)
- 46. **LORDS:** Polytheist pean: Praise the ___! (Julie Thatcher, Fairfax)
- 47. **TROJANWART:** Why Paris is burning (Gerard Zarchin, Annapolis)
- 50. **FESS:** Coonskin hat worn by Shriners (Larry Yungk, Arlington)
- 51. **ETS:** The folks who SAT on your college dreams (Kevin Dopart, Washington)
- 52. **SEAT:** One of the few places where Britney Spears doesn't have enough coverage (Tom Galgano, Bowie)
- 54. **BIGSHOTS:** With 19 Across, Prince Bandar, e.g. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)
- 59. **RESCUE:** With 54 Across, Bush's domestic policy (Cy Gardner, Arlington)
- 63. **ERAT:** Borat's techie brother (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)
- 64. **FRYINGPANT:** The Oven Glove's less successful competitor (Dennis Lindsay, Seabrook)
- 66. **DAZE:** Stage C after "Shock" and "Awe" (Irving Shapiro, Rockville)
- 67. **AINT:** Are you learning much in your home-schooling? (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)
- 68. **IONIC:** A column that just predates Art Buchwald's (Barbara Turner)
- 69. **SEAR:** They've downsized the department store so much they had to change its name (numerous entries)
- 70. **ROCS:** Phoenix relatives (Paula Gamache, Rye, N.Y.)
- 71. **STETS:** Puts a cowboy hat back on (Chris Doyle)

DOWN

- 1. **ATKA:** Text message during a prison riot (Jay Shuck)
- 2. **NAIL:** Item to be filed (Paula Gamache, Rye, N.Y.)
- 3. **GULP:** Plug up (Valerie Matthews, Ashton; Ross Elliffe, Picton, New Zealand)



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- 4. **SPLITPEA:** Lunch for two fashion models (Russell Beland, Springfield)
- 5. **TEENA:** "Smells-a Like-a ___ Spirit-a," the Nirvana song covered by Lawrence Welk (Ir-a Allen, Bethesda-a)
- 6. **ARB:** Reversible undergarment (Michael Baker, Columbia)
- 7. **SEER:** One who trades in futures (Vic Fleming, Little Rock)
- 8. **IDEO:** Direct to DVD, a documentary on the life of Freud (Bob Kopac, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.)
- 9. **ASTAIRE:** What the Thin Man received after he had his dog fixed (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- 10. **BEATIT:** "Closed" sign at a brothel (Ben Schwalb, Severna Park)
- 11. **BLUE:** Waiting to exhale (Vic Fleming)
- 12. **LADS:** Sex objects. — M. Foley, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (Chris Doyle)
- 13. **SNIT:** Angry people can be found in one (Rick Muenchow)
- 18. **RELS:** Bottom of the barrels (several entrants)
- 22. **DISMAL:** State of conditions in Iraq if they were to improve markedly (Drew Bennett)
- 24. **CURFEW:** WWI ace Fudd: "___, Wed Bawon!" (Jerry Ewing, Orlando)
- 26. **SHIFT:** The key to the capital (Judith Cottrill, New York)
- 27. **LOSER:** Anyone who spends a week working on a crossword puzzle with the answers already filled in (Brendan Beary)
- 28. **AMINO:** The acid-tongued Marx Brother (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

- 30. **PODIA:** They're pushing up daises (Chris Doyle)
- 31. **ERRORS:** Even if immigration restrictions are liberalized, the Bush administration will refuse to admit these. (John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)
- 32. **ADORE:** Worship at Jim Morrison's grave (Michael Baker)
- 33. **RENDS:** Breaks into tears (Chris Doyle)
- 34. **TRESS:** Hair on a flying but (Creigh Richert, Aldie, Va.)
- 36. **SHEATH:** Castilian pronunciation for poop (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)
- 42. **SOFTSPOT:** Where you're not allowed to poke the baby (Daniel Bahls, Brighton, Mass.)
- 45. **Third runner-up: INsofar:** With 42 Down, before- and after-Viagra nicknames. (Kerry Humphrey, Woodbridge)
- 48. **JESTER:** Class clown at Shirley U. (Chris Doyle)
- 49. **TERN:** What fans of the Byrds do three times to every thing (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)
- 53. **AEGIS:** "To ___ own," Athena said to Zeus (Kevin Dopart; Phil Frankenfeld)
- 54. **BEDS:** With 15 Across, Castro convertibles (Chris Doyle)
- 55. **IRAE:** Roman retirement accounts (Kevin Dopart)
- 56. **GAZA:** Strip noted for its bombshells (Rick Muenchow)
- 57. **TRIO:** Harry Belafonte's new calypso song to commemorate Arbor Day (Jeff Miller; Ira Allen)
- 58. **SYNC:** What Lance Bass's career did after he came out (Jeff Brechlin; Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)
- 60. **CANE:** Nursing home support staff (Vic Fleming)
- 61. **UNIT:** How to call someone a louse via text message (Donna Mountfort, Biglerville, Pa.)
- 62. **ETCS:** Lousy grades at Alien U. (several entries)
- 65. **ITS:** Oobs. (Jim Lubell, Mechanicsville, Md.)

Next Week: Reinkarnation, or Threecycling

TELL ME ABOUT IT



OKAY. YOU HAVE TWO HOURS TO MAKE "ALONE FOREVER" SOUND LESS APPEALING TO ME THAN IT DOES RIGHT NOW.

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

There is no Sunday Source section this week. Tell Me About It appears in Style instead.

By CAROLYN HAX
Washington Post Staff Writer

Hi, Carolyn:

I am 34 and single. I have had four major relationships in my life, but I would not say I was a constant dater. After a breakup, everyone always tells me to get back out there and have a rebound because that will help me get over it. I tried it once, but it didn't work. The only way for me to move on is to get back to being comfortable being alone again, and that usually takes at least a year.

I went through a major breakup a year and a half ago, which was followed by a severe depression. I was really in love and I got seriously crushed. I have spent the last year and a half doing everything from prayer to meds, therapy, yoga and whatever else seemed to be a way to find some peace and contentment. During this period, my job performance suffered, my family and friends suffered, and my financial stability suffered along with me. I am finally starting to feel like I am coming out of the fog.

But what I wonder is whether I am just one of those people better off alone. I like being with someone. I loved being in love. But it seems to set me more off-kilter each time when things go wrong, and they always seem to go wrong because the person I am with simply doesn't want to be with me. When I am alone and not in a funk, I seem to do just fine. I am not a clingy person who needs to have someone to go to the movies with (even if I think it is

better with someone). I have friends who are sweet and caring, and I have a great family. So my question is, do you think there are people who are just supposed to live life alone, without a significant other?

Better Alone?

I know there are people who do live life alone; I'm also pretty confident they don't want someone like me declaring this is how they're "supposed" to live.

I think it's a life that just happens, by choice, tragedy, or just by inches — and that sometimes happens to fit.

And, I think that if you think it fits, then I'm not going to try to talk you out of it. Your friends and their go-for-the-rebound advice are elegant reminders of the futility of advising against history, nature, willpower and the obvious. You don't have the stomach to take on another romance. So, don't.

For now, there is one viewpoint I will try to sell you: Life is long. Right now you've found a balance that's too precious to yield to anyone — but every element of that balance is subject to change, including the solidity of it, your confidence in it, its value to you, and the anyone for whom you'd be willing to risk it.

In other words, keep choosing to trust yourself, and any future is possible; choose not to trust others, and you allow exactly one. I agree, forcing yourself to date is anathema to trusting yourself and your instincts — but so is forcing yourself not to.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.

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