

The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 709: A Return Engagement

Even though this year's tax deadline isn't until Tuesday, it is still possible that one or two of you reading this column have already sent in your returns and can turn your attention fully to the task at hand. And the rest of you can easily catch up, because you'll be full of fresh ideas with which you can vent: **This week: Come up with some novel change to the tax code: a tax on something that ought to be taxed, a credit for something that should be rewarded, what that \$3 should go to instead of presidential campaigns, etc.** Serious tax reform ideas are not welcome, any more than they are in Congress. This week's contest was suggested by Eager Beaver Loser Drew Bennett, who probably filed on Jan. 2.

Winner gets either (1) his next year's taxes paid for by The Washington Post Co. or (2) the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy (The Post chooses). First runner-up receives an original poster of the Captain and Tennille — those icons of the Golden Age of the Death Throes of Top 40 Radio — that Washington Post sports copy editor Sushant Sagar had been holding on to since 1976. We are certain that Sushant will henceforth be called Muskrat Love Sagar by the sports department, including on his pay stub.

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, April 23. Put "Week 709" 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. Results will be published May 13. 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. 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 Honorable Mentions name is by Randy Lee. Next week's revised title is by Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

REPORT FROM WEEK 705

in which we asked for amusing analogies: Note that, unlike in the two previous analogy contests, we didn't ask for bad ones, just amusing ones. Sure, often their badness is what's funny about them, but even here, things don't always have to be bad to be good.

5 His heart sank like a rowboat made of fish sticks. (W.H. Welsh IV, Springfield)

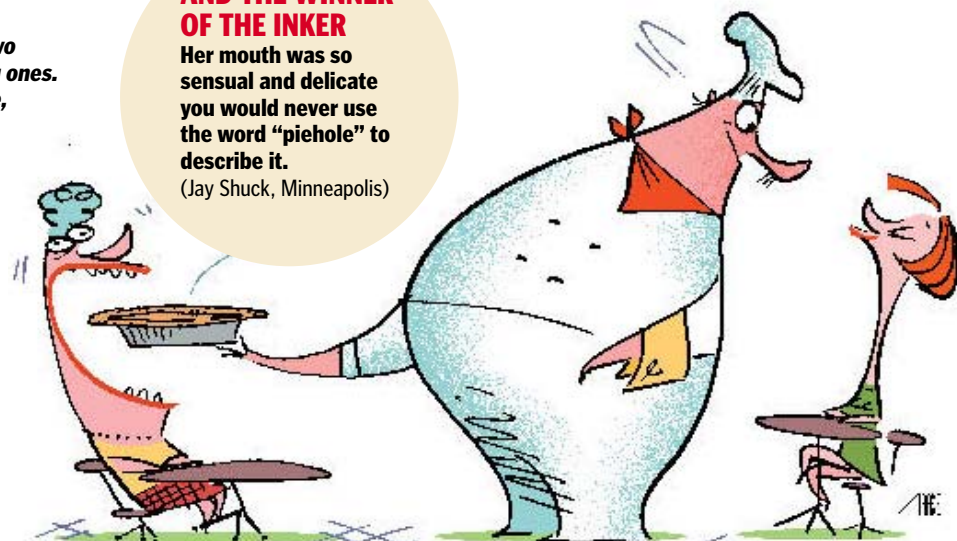
4 The evening was as uneventful as a spin of Left Foot Red when your left foot is already on red. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

3 Jim was as nervous as an albino penguin in a bowling alley. (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

2 the winner of the Wedding Slinger toy-bride-shooter: His eyes were a deep blue, like the color someone's lips turn when he's had a heart attack in the airport, just before he gets hit with the automatic external defibrillators. (Anthony Yeznach, Wilsonville, Ore.)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Her mouth was so sensual and delicate you would never use the word "piehole" to describe it. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE OTHER METAPHORTUNATES

She felt alone and threatened, like a fat cell on a fashion model's thigh. (Dennis Lindsay, Seabrook)

As usual, Larry King's questioning was anything but tough — it was like trying to stone a heretic with Peeps. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

The point of his argument came across about as clearly as the white subtitles in "The March of the Penguins." (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)

The truth was slippery, like a lake trout used as a ping-pong paddle. (W.H. Welsh IV)

She was as thin as Ann Coulter after a bile-ectomy. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

She was as controlling as the software that blocks DoctorDentons.com because "Access to lingerie Web sites is forbidden." (John Kupiec, Fairfax)

When the bomb fell on that freight train in the war zone, it sounded just like a tornado. (Ira Allen, Bethesda; Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

There was something about him that just screamed money, as if he'd trained a myna bird to fly around him shouting "money." (Russell Beland)

Her eyes were like twin cyclopes. (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

Watching forlornly as his prom date danced with another guy, Jake realized that in the game of love, he was as pathetic as a n00b who's been pwn3d for the first time. (Beth Baniszewski, Somerville, Mass.)

His mustache looked like a fuzzy caterpillar seeking shade under a big nose. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Looking for the right Google entry to plagiarize is like trying to find June 16 on one of those flipping calendars in old B movies. (Ira Allen)

Her chest was flatter than the "t" on a used-up tube of Crest. (Mel Loftus, Holmen, Wis.)

Seeing this guy, it was like I was looking in the mirror,

except he was three-dimensional and didn't wear his wedding ring on his right hand. (Russell Beland)

He mangled his prose the way he mangled his bifocals when they fell in the blender and ruined the margaritas, which he drank anyway, which might have been why he mangled his prose. (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)

The baseball flew at his face like a white meteor with red stitching. (Dan Bahls, Brighton, Mass.)

She was jumping up and down laughing hysterically, like a hyena duct-taped to a kangaroo. (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

Trying to keep down his anger was like trying to stuff Siamese twins into a garbage can: No matter what part you shoved down, some other part popped up. (W.H. Welsh IV)

He knew this argument with his wife was unwinnable, like the war in Iraq, but that's why he couldn't resist one final surge. (Joseph Romm, Washington)

There was something funny about it, like it was the opposite of "The Family Circus." (Russell Beland)

The daylight slowly stole away like a crooked bookkeeper. (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)

His life had reached a dead end, as if he had Googled "What do I do next?" and retrieved "HTTP Error 503: Service Unavailable." (Jay Shuck)

Huck gradually accepts that liberty and self-sacrifice are inseparable, like Paris and Nicole. (Laura McGinnis, Takoma Park)

Bob felt as out of place as a Kotex decal on a NASCAR vehicle. (Brendan Beary)

She had the litting, country-fried drawl of a senator from New York. (Jay Shuck)

Her pushed-up cleavage reminded him of two Charlie Brown heads. (Randy Lee, Burke)

The dragonfly's wing was as iridescent as the silvery purple/blue streaks in Arby's sliced roast beef. (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

Her eyes were entrancing, the pale liquid blue you see in the toilet bowl when the Ty-D-Bol tablet is almost gone. (Dennis Lindsay)

The diamond glistened like the pavement underneath a turkey deep-fryer. (Andrew Hoenig, Rockville)

Dangerous Bob was so dangerous that if you crossed a wolverine with a grizzly bear with a mountain lion with a Siberian tiger, he'd probably kill you because he hates animal experimentation. (Seth Brown)

The law's purpose was inexplicable, like that weird yellow grit on the bottom of English muffins. (Brendan Beary)

There was something appealing about her that he just couldn't put his finger on, unlike that last girl, who smacked him when had put his finger on her appealing part. (Russell Beland)

Her skin was cold and clammy, like a clam that had been stretched over a human body. And not a cooked clam, either. (Andrew Hoenig)

Her emotions were a mixture of fear and joy, like when you have a really good-looking stalker. (Kevin Marshall, South Riding)

We were all alone, just like the characters on that show "Lost" except that we were all alone. (Russell Beland)

Her tears rolled down her face, playing pinball on her zits. (Chuck Smith)

The news hit him hard, like a stack of Sunday Washington Posts thrown from a moving truck, in fact exactly like that. (Drew Bennett, Alexandria)

Next Week: Questionable Journalism, or Jest Ask

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ 7 4 3 2
♥ A 5 3
♦ Q J
♣ A 10 9 4

EAST

♠ 8 5
♥ Q 10 9 8 7
♦ 9 8 7 5
♣ K 8

SOUTH

♠ A K
♥ K 6 4
♦ A 6 4 2
♣ Q J 5 2

The bidding:

South West North East
1 NT Pass 3 NT All Pass

Opening lead: ♠ Q

Cy the Cynic still has trouble keeping his weight down. He's always on one diet or another. The last one ended after two weeks, and according to Cy, he lost 14 days.

"What's your plan now?" I asked him.

"It's taken a lot of willpower," the Cynic replied, "but I've finally given up dieting."

I watched Cy play today's 3NT in his penny Chicago game, after which he was a little lighter in his billfold. He won the first spade with the king and led the queen of clubs to finesse. East took the king and returned a spade, forcing out Cy's ace. Cy then cashed his clubs and let the queen of diamonds ride. West produced the king and took three spades for down one.

North, who also had watched some of his money disappear, wasn't happy.

"Lead a heart to dummy at the second trick and finesse in diamonds," he told Cy. "You win the second spade and finesse in clubs, and even when East wins, you're safe: He has no more spades."

"That's no good," Cy pointed out. "When West takes the king of diamonds, he leads the jack of hearts, setting up East's hearts while East still has the king of clubs."

How would you play 3NT?

Cy can fatten up his wallet if he correctly leads a low diamond from his hand at Trick Two. Cy must force out West's only possible entry to his spades before they're established, hence Cy should start the diamonds early. But Cy can't afford to go to dummy with the ace of hearts for a finesse: If West takes the king of diamonds, he may be able to continue hearts effectively.

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LIFE IS SHORT | Autobiography as Haiku

I used to know poems should rhyme and stories should start with "Once upon a time." I used to know Saturdays are for waking up early to make sure you don't miss a second. I used to know you could wear the same shirt to school every day just because it's your favorite. I used to know that games without boards or controllers or buttons are the best. I used to know that boys had cooties. I used to know that parties are for special hats and, if not, at least for piñatas. Maybe I still know. Maybe that's the worst part.

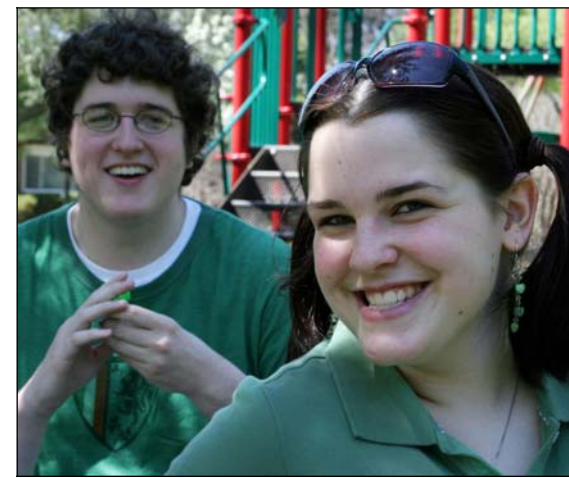
Madeline Holland
Bethesda



BY DAYNA SMITH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Finding a role model isn't as easy as it would seem. Surrounded by potential mentors, I found guidance in an unexpected friend. We became friends when I gave him my only container of Play-Doh so he could fiddle with it in class. He's an odd one for a mentor, considering he failed almost every class this semester, but this same boy who has every reason to be bitter is the one who came to me with a 10-pack of Play-Doh and explained very simply that when you do something nice for someone, you get it back 10 times as much.

Jennifer Ford
Washington



BY REBECCA D'ANGELO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Find a way to give insight into your life in under 100 words. Authors of selected entries will be notified and paid \$100. Send text (accompanied by a home phone number) via e-mail (lifeisshort@washpost.com), fax (202-334-5587) or mail (Style, Life Is Short, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071). Only entries from The Post's immediate circulation area can be considered at this time.

The Woman Who Won't Be Queen: William and Kate Split

ROYALS, From D1

Middleton was increasingly frustrated that William seemed to prefer drinking with his army buddies to spending time with her in London.

The newspaper also reported that William considers himself too young to marry and bristled at media and public pressure on him to become engaged to Middleton, who appeared to many as a likable and intelligent young woman who would have brought new youth and glamour to the royal family. Many in England were virtually certain that Middleton would be the next fairy tale princess, and possible someday Queen Catherine.

Speculation that the couple would marry was so rampant that the retailer Woolworth's had already designed commemorative royal wedding collectibles, from mugs to mouse pads, featuring their photographs.

Paddy Harverson, spokesman for Clarence House, Prince Charles's office, said in an interview Saturday that Prince William did not want an official "running commentary" on his private life except for announcements of engagements, graduations, etc. "Even in something as high-profile as this, we have to hold that line," Harverson said, declining to comment on the media reports about the split.

But royal watchers said the fact that Clarence House did not deny the reports was essentially a confirmation of their accuracy, given the royal family's history of quick and forceful denials of stories they consider inaccurate.

"When something is not true the royal



BY LEWIS WHILD — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kate Middleton appeared to become frustrated with photographers following her everywhere, including outside her home.

spokespersons deny it," said writer Robert Lacey, who has written extensively about the royal family, including a biography of Queen Elizabeth II.

Lacey said he believed the intense press scrutiny of the young couple's every move must have been at least partly to blame for the split.

"Maybe the relationship had to end anyway, but the intrusion and the pressure of the press must have been a factor," he said. "It is hard enough to be young and decide if something is right for you without that."

Lacey said pressure from the British media, which delights in stories about the royal family, was a factor in the engagement of William's parents. Diana was one of the most photographed women in the world, and she died in a car crash in Paris in 1997 while being chased by aggressive paparazzi. William was 15 at the time of his mother's death.

"It is a formidable challenge being a royal in the present day," Lacey said. "With what dread they must contemplate walking down the aisle," knowing how intensely they are being examined.

In recent months Middleton seemed to grow increasingly angry that photographers followed her every move.

On her 25th birthday, in January, speculation was so intense that William was going to propose that more than 50 photographers and camera crews had camped outside her London apartment by 6 a.m. Although Middleton did not have a royal security detail, police were called in to guide her through the pack of paparazzi who blocked her way to work.

Earlier this month, Middleton settled a harassment complaint against the Daily Mirror, another London tabloid, after the paper apol-

ogized for publishing a grim-looking photo of her. The paper said she looked upset because of stories about William's partying with other women; she said it was because she was being harassed by photographers.

Middleton may find the press attention subsiding over time — as long as the couple don't rekindle the romance — but for William it seems unlikely to abate, as royal romances are the stuff of dreams for tabloid editors here. According to the Press Association, British bookmakers have wasted no time taking wagers on William's most likely future bride, offering 6-1 odds that William would marry a female army officer. Others in contention suggest the torrent of silliness heaped on Britain's royals: Bookmakers are also offering odds of 14-1 that William will marry Australian pop singer Kylie Minogue or party girl Paris Hilton and 20-1 on troubled pop star Britney Spears.

To many observers here, the low-key Middleton, who favors conservative hemlines and stirs little controversy, was a far better match for William than Diana had been for Prince Charles. Diana was a 19-year-old kindergarten teacher when she became engaged to Charles, the 32-year-old heir to the throne. William and Middleton were college classmates, just five months apart in age, who seemed much more like contemporaries with similar interests.

Middleton also comes from a stable family background and is frequently photographed shopping with her mother. That stability also appealed to William, who watched his parents' own marriage end in a messy divorce.