

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 710: Aw, Shoot



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

It's the third Style Invitational photo contest, the bane of a few text-only Invitationalists but a welcome challenge for others, who offered up dozens of clever and surprisingly technically accomplished entries in the previous contests, which featured quirky takes on fruit and vegetables. **This week: Send us a funny, clever, entirely original photo featuring kitchen utensils and/or small household tools.** Digital doctoring is welcome, but you may not steal other people's photos — or ideas. Funny titles and captions are optional (don't bother using a certain play on the word "fork"); don't put them in the photo, though. We prefer that you e-mail the photos as attachments — not right on the e-mail — in standard digital formats (we'll contact you if we can't open them up properly) or you may mail them to the address below. Sorry, photos won't be returned.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets a car antenna ornament — a little yellow ball with hair and sunglasses — that is sold as "Elvis" but is obviously Roy Orbison, donated by Kevin Dopart in a shameless effort to buy ink. Also: the Perfect Parker, a little smiley-face ball with arms and legs and a stop sign in his or her hand. You hang Perfect in your garage so that, at the end of a grueling commute home, you'll have the gratification of driving right into the face of an incessantly cheery person. Both are pictured, right.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called that week) get one of the listed-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by mail to The Style Invitational, The Washington Post, 1150 15th Deadline is Monday, April 30. Put "Week 710" 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 No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Results will be published May 20. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. Next week's revised title is by Tom Witte. This week's Honorable Mentions name is by Roy Ashley of Washington.

REPORT FROM WEEK 706

in which we once again asked people to take a sentence from that week's Washington Post and supply a question that the sentence might answer:

4 "Each time I find myself at the bottom of these behemoths, I slap on a fierce look and begin to climb — determined that this time I won't lose my dignity. As the National Zoo's proctologist, what's it like examining the elephants? (Mike Fransella, Arlington)

3 April is the perfect time/To think of words that match and rhyme. What were the opening lines of T.S. Eliot's first draft of "The Waste Land"? (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

2 the winner of the Brain Drain candy and Scorned Woman mustard: Cut the shrimp in half crosswise and set aside. What will Karl and Dick do if Scooter rats them out? (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

They must also not appear partisan. In addition to being partisan, what's expected of a U.S. attorney? (Russell Beland, Springfield)

BELOW THE FOLD

Some people might say you are trying to take advantage of other people's troubles. When do you reply, "Well, duh, that's why I went to law school"? (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

This is the place that made me who I am. What's so special about the back seat of your parents' SUV? (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

Enter a nondescript building in Ballston, take the escalator to the second floor, and make a sharp right. How do you get hold of Verizon customer service? (John Kupiec, Fairfax)

The researchers matched 9,477 women who died between 1980 and 2004 with women who didn't die. Why did the Lesbian Dating Research Service go out of business? (Chris Doyle)

TD is characterized by four or more loose or watery bowel movements in a day. How has Tom DeLay coping with exile from the halls of power? (Brendan Beary)

"No, no, he says, wrapping his scarf back around his neck." Has he ever heard of Isadora Duncan? (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

But snacking is a different story. Isn't it true that full-blown cannibalism is extremely rare? (Russell Beland)

I could use a lantern down here. What was the tag line on Fox's short-lived series "Grizzly Mendelbaum, Frontier Gynecologist"? (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Officers found a woman performing a dental procedure on a man. What's the first line of Hugh Grant's police record? (Russell Beland)

You're going to have to learn to substitute the excitement of sex with the much more tepid pleasures. What is the true meaning of "I do"? (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

The French can eat all kinds of gross stuff. Why did President Bush serve grits, a corn dog and a Twinkie to Jacques Chirac? (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

It used to be people would complain they were delayed overnight; now you hear of people delayed two and even three days. What has been the public's reaction to JetBlue's new "comfort girl/guy" service for its flight delays? (Pie Snelson, Silver Spring)

Fragmented, insecure, ivory-towered, obsessed with sex and celebrity, the Hellenist era is, as all historians agree, the period of classic antiquity that most resembles our own. How did George Will respond to a waitress who asked if he wanted fries with his gyro? (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

There are ways to deal with that. Senator, how do you respond to your opponent's charge that you're a crime boss in New Jersey? (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

We think it could change Paris's image — make it quieter, less polluted, with a nicer atmosphere. Monsieur, what does the French government want to accomplish with its ban on chain-smoking, wine-snob, arrogant Parisians? (Cheryl Davis, Arlington)

After five weeks, things just drop off. Why does Joan Rivers visit her plastic surgeon every four weeks? (Randy Lee, Burke)

There's free mouthwash and chewing tobacco, free sunblock and tampons, and after a free massage, you can make a delightful lunch out of Jack Link's beef jerky. What do they do at meetings of those Red Hat Ladies? (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Children cannot or do not read labels, but



This week's prize: Golden oldies on your car radio.

PHOTOS BY JULIA ENWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ 7 2
♥ A 9 2
♦ Q J 10 9 7
♣ K J 4

WEST

♠ K Q 8 6 5
♥ Q 5
♦ A 3 2
♣ 6 3 2

EAST

♠ 10 3
♥ J 8 7 3
♦ K 6 5
♣ 9 8 7 5

SOUTH

♠ A J 9 4
♥ K 10 6 4
♦ 8 4
♣ A Q 10

The bidding:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| 1 ♣ | 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | Pass |
| 2 NT | Pass | 3 NT | All Pass |

Opening lead: ♠ 6

A new player, said to be an expert, had joined our club and was the topic of the conversation in the lounge.

"Someone told me the man has a mind like a steel trap," an impressionable player remarked.

"Right," nodded Cy the Cynic, who had played rubber bridge against the newcomer. "It's rusty and illegal in 37 states."

Cy showed us today's deal, in which the alleged expert had been declarer at 3NT.

"I was West," Cy said, "and led the six of spades. East played the ten, and South won with the jack and led a diamond. I played low, and my partner won with the king, bless him, and returned his last spade. South took the ace and led another diamond, and I grabbed my ace and cashed three spades for down one.

"I think the best part of the man's game may be placing the blame," Cy went on. "He told North that he shouldn't have raised to 3NT."

What do you think of expert South's play?

South may be an expert, but his mind was more like a steel sieve on this deal. He should let East's ten win the first spade. When East returns a spade, South plays the nine.

West can take the queen, but South's hold-up play has broken the defenders' communication. West can't profit by leading another spade into the A-J. If he shifts to a club — no other defense is better — South wins in his hand and loses a diamond to East's king. South can win any return, force out the ace of diamonds and later run the diamonds for nine tricks. He loses two spades and two diamonds.

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LIFE IS SHORT | Autobiography as Haiku

I shop all over Washington in search of the perfect Chinese baby doll for my new granddaughter, who is half Chinese. I want her to have such a doll to identify with her Chinese heritage. I finally find the right one. As I give it to her, I see a blue-eyed blond doll that her Chinese grandfather, who just arrived from China, shopped all over that country to find for his new American granddaughter.

Jane Steimel
Bethesda



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.

ASK AMY

Dear Amy:

Family holidays are always awkward for me.

I am only 15 but do not have the same beliefs as most of my immediate and extended family. I guess I would consider myself to be some sort of agnostic.

The rest of my family believe in God, and they like to say grace before meals.

I have had to endure my family constantly trying to drag me to church with them, and my sister telling me that I am going to Hell and using other religion-based insults.

At family holidays, I do respect my family by listening to the grace before the meal, but sometimes my grandparents ask "one of the granddaughters" to say grace. Sometimes they even personally call on me.

My grandparents are both 79 and don't know that I have different beliefs than them. I don't

know what to say to this. I don't want to upset them by refusing to say grace, but at the same time, how could I make up something that goes against my beliefs without feeling bad?

What can I do to defuse this situation, especially when all of my relatives' eyes are on me?

The Family Dis-grace

Your family should respect your spiritual journey, even if it causes you to question their beliefs. This is an important part of your intellectual development, and it is common at your age. Of course, your sister shouldn't bug or bully you about this, but knowing what sisters are like, if your parents won't intervene to stop her comments, you might just have to ignore her.

I applaud your instinct not to explain all of this to your grandparents, and I think that you can come up with a grace that satis-

fies the basic parameters of the pre-meal prayer (giving thanks) without necessarily directing it toward a God whose existence you question.

If called upon to say grace, perhaps you could say something like:

"Thank you to the farmers who grew the food that we are about to eat."

"Thank you to those who prepared this meal, which looks and smells delicious."

"And thank you to family members who have gathered today to enjoy this meal together."

Dear Amy:

I am extremely allergic to tobacco smoke and have been advised by my doctors to avoid any place (or anyone) that has been contaminated with smoke.

I develop respiratory infections, and I can be ill for weeks even from exposure to someone who

has smoked.

My condition has made me almost a recluse because my symptoms seem to be getting worse. Leaving my house is always a concern.

I have gone to places that ban smoking but I still encounter smokers. I have been in a smoke-free restaurant but have been seated near people who smell of smoke or waiters who have smoked. What should I do so I do not come off as a complainer?

Ronald

Taking responsibility for your own health and making sure that you don't endanger your health doesn't make you a complainer.

Because of your extreme allergies and compromised health, you should always call a restaurant beforehand, explain yourself, and say, "I'm sure that this is a challenge, but is there a way for you to accommodate me?" Get

the name of the person you speak with, thank him or her, and seek this person out when you arrive. Make sure there is no smoking near the entrance (some cities ban smoking near a building's entrance).

A restaurant can't ensure that you won't be seated near people who have smoked, but if you enlist the restaurant's help in your cause, they will probably try very hard to give you a hand. Once you've been seated, if there is a problem, let the staff know and either change tables or leave. Always be courteous and make sure to explain what's going on.

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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