

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 727: We Get a C-Section



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Next Sunday on this page (if you are reading this on an actual tree- based page), you will see "The Style Invitational." But you will not see The Style Invitational. There will only be a box directing you to go back in time to the previous day. Because this coming weekend, with Week 728, the Empress is packing up her inkblots and moving to Saturday's Style section, Page C2. It's just one of the ripples caused by the consolidation of Sunday's Style and Arts sections into — ta-da! — the Style & Arts section, debuting next Sunday.

Given that the Invitational has for quite a while been posted online every Saturday morning, the move won't make much difference to some regular readers. But surely, there will be some effect worth noting, or predicting, or speculating on in a ridiculous manner. This week: **Tell us some pros and cons (they don't necessarily have to be in sets) of moving The Style Invitational to the Saturday Style section. Alternatively: Write us up some free promo-ad copy announcing the move.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets an official Loser Ear Picker or Key Chain, shown here in the former function by its creator, Kyle Hendrickson of Frederick, who sculpted a number of these himself for the 18 participants of this year's Loserfest field trip to Williamsburg and Jamestown. (In Jamestown, archaeologists recently discovered an ornate silver ear picker among the artifacts, thus inspiring Kyle's Loserly version.)

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. 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](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 27. Put "Week 727" 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 Sept. 15. 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 Kevin Dopart, who also suggested, in a way, the new contest.



Don't try it at home or elsewhere: Kyle Hendrickson demonstrates his Loser Ear Picker.

BY JUDITH BAZIS HENDRICKSON

BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

West dealer  
N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ K J 4 2  
♥ 10 7 5 3  
♦ 8 6  
♣ K 10 7

EAST

♠ A Q 10  
♥ J 9  
♦ 9 7 4 2  
♣ 9 6 4 2

SOUTH

♠ 8 5  
♥ A 8 6 4 2  
♦ A K  
♣ A J 5 3

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	4 ♥	All Pass	

Opening lead: ♦ Q

I've heard an expert defined in many ways: someone who knows why he lost; someone from out of town; someone who knows just when to panic. An expert is also someone who can produce a convincing excuse when he guesses wrong.

Today's declarer was an expert, at least in his own mind. At four hearts, he won the first diamond with the king, took the ace of trumps and the ace of diamonds, and exited with a trump. West next led a spade, and South pondered and played the jack from dummy. East took the queen and ace and led the 10.

South threw a club and took dummy's king but still had to guess the queen of clubs for his contract. Alas, when he led to the king and back to his jack, West produced the queen. Down one.

"Anyone's entitled to an off-day," was South's excuse. "I had nothing to go on in clubs, and there was no way to guess right in spades."

Where did South go wrong?

Even if you have an excuse, it's better not to use it, and South had none. After West, who passed as dealer, shows the Q-J of diamonds and K-Q of hearts, East surely has the ace of spades. South should therefore not try to guess the spades: He plays LOW from dummy on the first spade.

East wins with the 10 but has no winning continuation. If East leads a club, he guesses the queen for declarer. If East leads a diamond, he concedes a fatal ruff-sluff. If instead East cashes the ace of spades and leads another spade, South gets two club discards on dummy's K-J.

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BY SUSAN BIDDLE — THE WASHINGTON POST

Urban sprinkled up-tempo rockers among the lovers' laments on Friday.

Keith Urban, Wooing the Ladies

MUSIC, From D1

atop the shoulders of their dates — at least until security ordered them to dismount.

And they positively swooned as Urban sang song after (mostly) sensitive-guy song in that sweet, light tenor of his. Though his music can be tough and muscular — particularly his rhythmic guitar work — Urban specializes in lyrical vulnerability and gentle, almost gentlemanly romance. Hence, the title of his musically ambitious new album: "Love, Pain and the Whole Crazy Thing."

Leave the chest-beating to Trace Adkins and his manly man ilk; no songs about honky-tonk badonkadonks here.

"I can see it in your eyes and feel it in your touch / I know that you're scared, but you've never been this loved," Urban sang during the opening rocker, "Once in a Lifetime."

During the acoustic ballad "Raining on Sunday," he declared: "Let the water wash our bodies clean / And love wash our souls."

The shuffling, sentimental "Making Memories of Us" included a promise: "I'm gonna be there to meet you with a warm, wet kiss." During the soul-pop song "Got It Right This Time," he sang: "I can't picture myself with no one

but you." (Sorry ladies, but Urban dedicated the song to his wife, Nicole Kidman.)

There were tortured tear-jerkers and aching laments, too. "You'll Think of Me" was soft-rock breakup song. On the bereft piano ballad "Tonight I Wanna Cry," he sang of drowning his sorrows — no doubt making his sponsor cringe, given that Urban checked himself into the Betty Ford Center just last year to deal with a drinking problem. Best, though, was the stirring "Stupid Boy," on which Urban's singing was deeply soulful and his guitar playing followed. Or was it vice versa? His parched voice began to reach higher and louder as the guitar notes turned more frenetic, until Urban was nearly screaming. There was a sublime desperation to the performance, which was flat-out brilliant.

Whether it had anything to do with country music is another matter. Urban has never been a pure country artist and, in fact, was initially rejected by Nashville. The New Zealand native eventually fell into the warm embrace of the country establishment, but he continues to color way outside the lines, both in the studio and especially in concert. If anything, Urban is a rock star with serious pop sensibilities and an affinity — and aptitude — for blue-eyed soul.

Friday's show included references to the classic rockers Pink Floyd and Free and covers of the Steve Miller Band ("The Joker") and the Violent Femmes ("Blister in the Sun"). Urban's own songs often featured a four-guitar attack, with plenty of power chords and riffs inspired by the likes of Mark Knopfler and AC/DC's Malcolm Young. There were multiple drum tracks but no fiddles or pedal steel guitar. And Urban's five-piece band looked like it might have just played Lollapalooza: Not a single cowboy hat in the bunch, though Urban did have tattoos on both arms.

Sure, some of the instrumentation leaned toward country, as did some of the songwriting. But even the boot-stomping "Where the Blacktop Ends" — with its six-string banjo, mandolin, high harmonies and lyrical references to farms and fresh country air — was, at its core, a rock song, built on a rhythmic groove and power chords. A little bit country, a whole lot more rock-and-roll.

And yet there was Urban, standing onstage near the end of the show, thanking country radio for its ongoing support. If this guy is country, then so is Jon Bon Jovi!

Oh, wait. Nashville now loves Bon Jovi, too. Almost as much as the ladies love Keith Urban.

ASK AMY

Dear Amy:

My husband and I are having a dispute I hope you can help settle. Our middle son is turning 10 this month, and for his birthday we agreed to paint and decorate his room. (We live in a new-construction home and all the walls are currently white.)

We let our son pick a border to go around the middle of the room (it is his room, after all), and he picked a black and gray camouflage, which he really loves. The problem is that my son picked a dark charcoal gray for the bottom of his walls and a very light gray for the top. I respect my son's choice and agreed to the paint job, but my husband now refuses, saying that the color scheme is too dark and he's afraid our son will turn into some kind of dyed-hair, pierced-eyebrow Goth kid.

My husband's reasoning also includes the fact that the son in question is the middle of three boys and already feels like "the middle child." He thinks this color scheme will serve to encourage his self-imposed outcast status.

I say he's overreacting, and we should paint our son's room in a way that will make him happy. What do you think?

Decorating Mom

My own decorating sense is that you should split the difference and lighten up on the paint color, not because little Jimmy will become a Goth if his walls are dark but because young kids don't always grasp the impact of having an entire room painted in their choice of color.

When this happened in my home, my daughter ended up with two opposite walls painted puke green (instead of all four), and everybody was fairly satisfied.

Kids' rooms are their own territory, and they should be given a lot of latitude over how they are decorated. But their rooms are also part of a family's home — just as the kids are part of a family — and their schemes should be in the acceptable range for the rest of the family.

As to your son's "self-imposed outcast status," you and your husband need to nip

that in the bud. There is no question that birth order is very influential in a child's perceptions — and how he's treated — but birth order is one of many influences in a person's life. You might benefit from reading "Birth Order Blues: How Parents Can Help Their Children Meet the Challenges of Their Birth Order," by Meri Wallace (Owl Books, 1999). The more you understand the impact of birth order on all of your sons, the easier it will be for you and your husband to understand that sometimes a paint color is only a paint color.

Dear Amy:

My mother recently took my brother and me to the grocery store. We are 19 and 17, respectively, and my brother has autism. For some reason, my brother was upset when we went to the store, and as my mother went to go grab something, she left us in the line, and my brother started to move the cart away from the checkout line. I did my best to pull it back, and we got into something of an argument. The woman in front of us

asked me, "What's wrong with him?" I felt a little taken aback by this question, but I responded with my best smile. "He gets cranky sometimes." My own question for you is this: Was that the right answer?

Wondering in Glenview

You did wonderfully in this situation. You could also say, "There's nothing wrong with my brother. But he has autism and some situations are challenging for him. I hope we didn't bother you too much."

It's not your job — or your brother's — to educate people about autism, but if you respond to someone's clunky or rudely expressed curiosity respectfully and accurately, it might have an impact beyond your brief encounter.

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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