

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 731: Doo Process

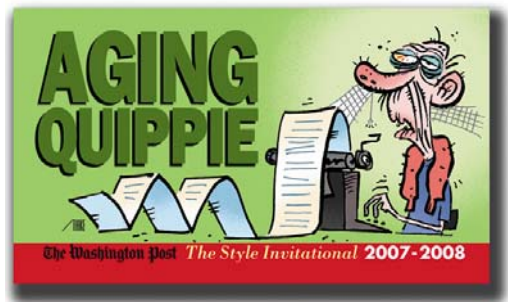
The Empress, for whom coffee constitutes the top three levels of the food pyramid...

This week's contest, suggested by Loser Mark Eckenwiler of Washington: Describe for us a wildly inefficient and ridiculous way to produce or prepare an ordinary dish or beverage.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

We introduce the 2007-08 lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets for honorable mentions...



(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)



(Bruce Carlson, Alexandria)

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives this fabulous electronic stuffed lamb...

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug...

REPORT FROM WEEK 727

In which we asked you to speculate on the effects of The Style Invitational's move from Sundays to Saturdays...

Many people lamented no longer being able to read the brand-new Invitational results during the minister's sermon...

Aside from that, well, we're afraid that this wasn't one of the Losers' more fruitful weeks. In fact, the contest was pretty much a bust...

At least the Empress was comforted by these encouraging words from Bill Moulden of Frederick...

THE WINNER OF THE CUSTOM-MADE LOSER EAR PICKER: Promo slogan: The Style Invitational: Now taking up an even larger percentage of the newspaper!

TO BE READ WHILE WATCHING CARTOONS

Post management can bring the "I Moved Dilbert to the Business Section" booby prize out of retirement.

At least that all-important 78-91 demographic will still see The Invitational.

The extra day before the deadline means that if we don't submit polished entries, it will be no one's fault but our own.

This is a positive change because we Style Invitational writers will be getting our royalty payments a day earlier.

If it ain't broke, find a way to break it. We're moving to Saturdays!

It's a good thing The Invitational moved to Saturdays: As a contest calling for wit and brainpower, the Invitational couldn't hope to hold a candle to the new Washington Post Magazine feature...

Spared from having to read derisive jokes about them on game day, the Redskins will learn to relax, feel better about themselves, and not let boneheaded ineptitude get in the way of a positive self-image.

I don't like it: This thin Saturday paper makes my entry look fat.

I won't see The Style Invitational any longer, since I do not read the Saturday paper.

I'll no longer feel so bad about throwing the rest of the paper away, since it's smaller.

Alas! What a great loss there will be to learning Before the cycle of the moon is completed.

Fire, great floods, by more ignorant rulers; How long the centuries until it is seen to be restored.

Russian agents who have been hiding coded messages in their entries will need to alert Moscow of the change.

Pro: I'll have an extra day to think of two or three more entries. Con: Russell Beland will have an extra day to think of two or three hundred more entries.

Next Week: Tour de Fours, or STAR Wars



This week's prize, the gospel-shouting lamb.

Pro: I'll have an extra day to think of two or three more entries. Con: Russell Beland will have an extra day to think of two or three hundred more entries.

ASK AMY

Dear Readers:

Recently I ran a letter from "Fleeting," who posed a very provocative question when he asked what people should do with any surprising, "interesting" and potentially upsetting possessions...

I followed up by asking readers to tell me about their secret possessions, and also to share any opinions and experiences they have had about discovering "surprises" after a loved one's death.

As usual, readers have responded with enjoyable, informative, tender, touching and insightful stories. I'm delighted to share them.

Dear Amy:

"Fleeting" needs to get himself a "shovel buddy." This is a person whom you tell where to find all the things in your home that you do not want anyone else to find...

The obvious assumption here is that there is nothing illegal, only things that would be embarrassing.

These things should be removed and buried, hence the term "shovel buddy." It's also obvious that this should be the person whom you trust the most not to forget his or her duties and carry them out with the utmost discretion.

The Ace of Spades

Dear Amy:

I don't like being the bearer of bad news, but yes, you will die, so be prepared with documents, talk with your kids about your last wishes, distribute your heirlooms before death to minimize feuding, and please discard all items you do not want found by a loved one.

I work as an estate liquidator. Julie in North Carolina

Dear Amy:

"Fleeting's" unintended legacy problem reminds me of my 86-year-old father-in-law's death a few years ago.

Among his belongings was a collection of Playboy magazines. My wife was appalled, but I was delighted.

Like clockwork about a month after his death, here comes the next issue. Her reaction was to call Playboy to get a refund for the rest of the subscription.

My comment was "How many more magazines could arrive? Surely someone his age will only have a one-year subscription."

As usual, she didn't listen and collected a check for eight years' worth of the undelivered magazines. I always thought of the world of him, but now he's my hero.

Doug in New Orleans

Dear Amy:

I recently lost my 22-year-old son in an accident. While cleaning out his room (he still lived at home after having been away at college for several years), I found a number of items that, while not surprising for

a normal young man, were not the kind of things his mother ever wants to see (e.g., Playboy-type pornography and marijuana paraphernalia).

Although this was not pleasant, it made not the least difference in my feelings for my dear son — it was so insignificant next to my feelings of love and loss. He was human, and he made some mistakes, and I will always love him.

Susan, a Loving Mom

Dear Amy:

Grandpa died more than 10 years ago, and Grandma has recently gone into assisted living. This has left my mom, aunt and the grandchildren to go through things at the house.

My grandmother seemingly had nothing to hide — nothing juicy in her dressers, no hidden cache of naughty bits. My grandpa, however, left marijuana joints hidden in desk drawers and in his toolboxes. We figure that these came from

his brother, also long deceased, who grew marijuana in his back yard. We also found porn in the garage tucked in with repair manuals — and pictures of naked Army buddies sunbathing in Fiji during World War II; all of this from a pretty strict Catholic.

People are human. They have vices. None of us was disgusted, shocked or appalled at what we found. I'm going to leave behind something, I'm sure, that others will raise their eyebrows at. Who cares? You're gone. It'll give those left behind a chuckle and one last thing to talk about.

Not Ashamed

Dear Amy:

I think the most surprising thing that our kids will find in our drawers (I mean, our dresser drawers) when

we die is that we had a very interesting sex life.

I hope that will give them something to talk and laugh about, while going through our stuff and figuring out who gets what.

Jackie & Bob From Anytown, USA

Dear Readers:

Thank you so much for sharing your opinions and experiences. Now I have to go and clean out a few drawers.

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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3:10 to Yuma movie advertisement featuring Russell Crowe and Christian Bale. Includes quote from Roger Ebert and a list of theaters.

The Brave One movie advertisement featuring Jodie Foster. Includes quote from Rex Reed and a list of theaters.

Nanny Diaries movie advertisement featuring Scarlett Johansson and Mira Sorvino. Includes quote from Milon Paurich and a list of theaters.