

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 736: So, Should I Drive Like Your Brother?



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

It's just not worth it anymore to get my '84 Escort fixed, you know? So will filling it with barbiturates and applesauce work, the way it did for Grandpa?

For those of us of the Loser mind-set, the sweetest sound to be heard on Earth is that of someone laughing heartily at your jokes. And on several recent occasions, some Losers and their loved ones, caretakers, etc., were sent into paroxysms of ecstasy upon turning on the radio and hearing professional hearty-laughers and auto experts Tom and Ray Magliozzi reading Style Invitational entries on their NPR show, "Car Talk," appropriately cackling and/or guffawing at each.

Let's make it even easier for Click and Clack, the Tappet Brothers: Ask a car-related question that would make the Car Guys crack up. If you're not into cars, you can also post a question for advice columnist Ask Amy or etiquette columnist Miss Manners, though we cannot guarantee that Miss Manners will do the aforementioned cracking.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a container of Anti Monkey Butt Powder, donated by Loser Andrew Hoenig, who, as far as we can tell, has not used any of this package on his own red, swollen heinie. Or even that it is red and swollen — he didn't send a picture or anything.

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 or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 29. Put "Week 736" 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 Nov. 17. 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 and this week's Honorable Mentions name are by Tom Witte. The idea for this week's contest is from Russell Beland.

REPORT FROM WEEK 732

in which we asked for chains of 25 names, each name related in some way to the one before it, beginning and ending with George W. Bush. The *Empress* read 519 of these; we will favor you with fewer, and in most cases just the juiciest parts.

- 5** . . . Molly Pitcher, Nolan Ryan, the KKK, David Duke, Mike Krzyzewski, Carlos Boozer, A.A. Milne, Christopher Robin, Batman, Lestat de Lioncourt, Anne Rice, Condoleezza Rice, George W. Bush. (Chris Doyle, traveling in Tokyo)
- 4** . . . Alvin & the Chipmunks, Dave Saville, "The Barber of Seville," Beverly Sills, Beverly Hills, "The Beverly Hillbillies," Jethro Bodine, George W. Bush. (Robert Elwood, Bushwood, Md.)
- 3** George W. Bush, Bush's Baked Beans, Washington Gas, Gazprom, Putin, Stalin, Larry Craig, Idaho, Sen. David Vitter, Sen. Mary Landrieu, Moon Landrieu, MoonPie, "Brownie," "Turd Blossom," "Scooter," Libby's canned fruit, Mark Foley . . . (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

- 2** the winner of the half-dozen Sigmund Freud Head lollipops: George W. Bush, Karl Rove, Valerie Plame, Scooter Libby, Pinocchio, Cyrano de Bergerac, Roxanne, Sting, Bea Arthur, Betty White, Barry White, Isaac Hayes, Chef, Rachael Ray, Martha Stewart, Ken Lay, Barbie, Skipper, Ginger, Geri Halliwell, Victoria Beckham, David Beckham, Zinedine Zidane, Butthead, George W. Bush. (Laurie Brink, Cleveland, Mo.)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

George W. Bush, Jenna Bush, the Jena 6, James VI, Stuart Little, Mr. Big, God, Chuck Norris, Chuck Taylors, Keds, K-Fed, Britney Spears, William the Conqueror, Norman Mailer, Neil Postman, Will Wright, SimCity, Phil Simms, Disney World, Orlando Bloom, Legolas, Jenna Elfman, the Dharma Initiative, "Lost," George W. Bush. (Danny Brawman, St. Louis)

THE SECOND STRINGS

George W. Bush, Iraq, the Sunni Triangle, the Pythagorean Theorem, Grecian Formula, Ronald Reagan, Bonzo, Cheeta, Gary Condit . . . the Wizard of Id, Sigmund Freud . . . (Russell Beland, Springfield)

. . . Carrie Bradshaw, Manolo Blahnik, Norman Hsu, Hillary Clinton . . . (Randy Lee, Burke)

. . . Clark Kent, Dean Cain, Nod, Wink Martindale, Bob Barker, "Truth or Consequences," Martha Stewart, Martha's Vineyard, Dionysius, Jim Backus, Thurston J. Howell III . . . (Deanna Busick, Knoxville, Tenn.)

George W. Bush, George Washington Carver, Goober, Andy Griffith, Ron Howard, the Fonz, Ling-Ling, Chairman Mao, Fidel Castro, Washington Senators, Walter Johnson, Bob Feller, Bob Newhart, Christiana Barnard . . . (Jim Ward, Manassas)

. . . Stonewall Jackson, John F. Kennedy Jr., Aristotle Onassis, Plato's "Republic," the Republican Party, "The Elephant Man," John Hurt, Lorena Bobbitt . . . (Russell Beland)

George W. Bush, Nicholas II, Rasputin, Art Monk, the Artful Dodger, Tony Snow, Snow White, Dopey, Rush Limbaugh, the Goodyear Blimp, the Hindenburg, "Great Balls of Fire," Bill Clinton . . . (Jack Dean, Clinton)

George W. Bush, George Lucas, "Attack of the Clones," Dolly, Dolly, Dolly . . . (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

George W. Bush, Al Gore, Tipper, Tippecanoe, Liv Tyler, Aerosmith, "Walk This Way," Marty Feldman, "Beau Geste," Bo Derek, the Dominos, Gen. Westmoreland, the Louisiana Purchase, Napoleon Dynamite, Alfred Nobel . . . (Russell Beland)

George W. Bush, Twiggy, Tommy Tune, Thomas Paine, Clay Aiken, Harry Potter . . . (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

. . . George Clooney, George Meany, Dick Cheney, George W. Bush. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

. . . Virgin Atlantic, Madonna, Jesus, Bethlehem Steel, the Steelers, the Pirates, Johnny Depp, "Edward Scissorhands," Chicago Cutlery, O'Hare Airport, Bugs Bunny, Doc, Snow White, Vail, Modern Bride, Princess Diana, Prince Charles, Royal Air Force, Texas Air National Guard, George W. Bush. (Chuck Koelbel, Houston)

. . . Ho Chi Minh, Minnie the Moocher, Cab Calloway, Shelley Hack, Robitussin . . . (Sandra Hull, Arlington)

. . . Baron von Trapp, Christopher Plummer, G. Gordon Liddy, Howard Hunt, Holly Hunter, Catfish Hunter, Edmund Muskie, Hubert Humphrey, Humphrey Bogart, Sam Spade, Andy Card, George W. Bush. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

. . . James Galway, Doug Flutie, Brian Piccolo, James Caan, Sonny Corleone, Fredo, Alberto Gonzales, George W. Bush. (Brendan Beary)

. . . "Moby-Dick," Moby, "Play," Playtex, Crawford Ranch, George W. Bush. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

. . . Michael Moore, Dinty Moore, Stewie Griffin, Homer Simpson, Barry Bonds, Asterix, Tintin, Tin Man, "A Horse With No Name," My Little Pony, "My Pet Goat," George W. Bush. (Randall Kunkel, Spotsylvania, Va.)

. . . Neverland Ranch, Macaulay Culkin, No Child Left Behind Act, George W. Bush. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

. . . Rudy Giuliani, Manhattan, Mariel Hemingway, "To Have and Have Not," Donald Rumsfeld, George W. Bush. (Kevin Dopart)

. . . Gordon Ramsay, "Hell's Kitchen," Adolph's Tenderizer, Eva Braun . . . (Chris Doyle)

. . . the Beatles, the Byrds, Alfred Hitchcock, "Dial M for Murder," Bette Midler, Pete Rose, the Reds, Joseph McCarthy, Charlie McCarthy, Edgar Bergen, Candice Bergen, Dan Quayle, George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush. (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

. . . Mr. Peepers, Wally Cox, Wally Schirra, John Glenn, John Fogerty, "Fortunate Son," George W. Bush. (Randy Lee)

. . . Frank Stella, Stanley Kowalski, Marlon Brando, Land O'Lakes Butter, Linda Richman . . . Bill Cosby, "I Spy," George W. Bush. (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)

. . . Operation Iraqi Freedom, Arlington National Cemetery, taps, Larry Craig . . . (Kevin Dopart)

. . . Captain Ahab, Starbuck, Chock Full o' Nuts, Kim Jong Il, Seoul, James Brown . . . (Ellen Raphael, Falls Church)

. . . Joan Lunden, Dennis Frantz, BVDs . . . (Sandra Hull)

. . . "Cheers," Ted Danson, "Three Men and a Cradle," Anna Nicole Smith . . . (Kevin Dopart)

. . . Grace Slick, Exxon Valdez, EPA, FEMA, Hurricane Katrina, the Big Easy, Monica Lewinsky . . . (Russell Beland)

. . . Eddie Murphy, Gummy, Joe Theismann . . . (Randy Lee)

Next Week: Just Drop It, Okay? or And the Next Shall Be First

ASK AMY

Dear Amy:

Ever since my two tenants moved in two weeks ago, I have been awakened 1 1/2 hours before my alarm goes off.

Their bedroom is directly above mine. Its hardwood floor squeaks. When one of the tenants gets up, I'm jolted awake because of a loud thump on the floor. Then there is constant activity directly above, preventing me from falling back to sleep. I am so tired the whole day. I have four kids; I work and have household duties to do. I am physically drained.

I have asked the tenants if they could walk a bit more softly and keep the activity above me to a minimum at that early time, when the rest of us are still asleep. They said they pay a lot to lease the apartment and are not going to change their lifestyle. I told them I need my sleep.

I asked if they could do their morning activities in another room (it is an eight-room apartment). They said I was out of line asking that. They agreed to try a rug I had, but after one night, they said that rug is not what they want and buying a rug is not in their budget. They told me I should replace the weak floors and

put insulation in.

That's not in my budget. I've lived here for 25 years and never had an issue like this.

Miserable Mom in Chicago

It is surprising to me that this has never caused a problem for you before. You don't indicate that your tenants are doing anything unusual or extreme to cause this noise, only that they are getting out of bed with a thump.

Any rental unit I have ever lived in has had a lease mandating that a rug cover a certain percentage of the floors; you should double-check the lease to make sure that your tenants are abiding by it.

I agree with your tenants that it is unreasonable for you to expect them to use or not use certain rooms during a specific time of day. I also agree with them that, unless they are in violation of their lease, you should remedy this situation. You may be able to compromise by getting a less-expensive carpet remnant and rug pad that everybody can live with. A carpenter might be able to find a less expensive way of fixing your floorboards

so they don't squeak, or you may want to drop the ceiling in your own bedroom as a less expensive way of muffling the noise.

Dear Amy:

I am responding to the letters in your column from people complaining about people who take their dogs into stores. My husband and I live in Colorado. We have a sweet, mild-mannered beagle named "Little D." I've always enjoyed that when we're out and about she can put a smile on a stranger's face. She's well behaved and leash-trained, and in Colorado she is welcomed in many stores (those that don't sell food).

A couple of years ago we were in Chicago visiting my husband's family. We drove and took Little D with us, and I was surprised at the reaction to our trying to take her into stores there. When I tried to take her into a Best Buy, the security guard acted as if she were a vicious dog and might bite someone. We were also firmly asked to leave Borders.

I'm pleased to read that store owners in the Chicago area are opening up to the idea of allowing dogs to visit. Dogs relax people and give unconditional love. The little bit of dander they shed is nothing compared with the smile they put on a stranger's face. *Patty in Colorado*

Dogs don't put a smile on everyone's face. Certainly anyone whose asthma or allergies have kicked in because of a "little bit of dog dander" would have a hard time smiling, not to mention breathing, in your dog's presence. I have enjoyed airing various viewpoints on this hot issue. My own view is that while dogs are treasured companions, some dog owners don't seem to realize that their pets might not be welcomed everywhere.

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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CAROLYN HAX

Adapted from a recent live discussion.

Carolyn:

A close friend's husband asked me to help him host a surprise birthday party for her. It will be at my house and, realistically, I'll be doing most of the work. Birthday Girl has a good friend whose husband offends me with his frequent homophobic comments. I make a point of avoiding this couple, but Birthday Girl and other friends who will be at the party include them because they like the wife. Am I being unreasonable in refusing to invite him to my home?

Somewhere in Maryland

That isn't unreasonable, but you are injecting yourself into a situation that's more about Birthday Girl and the people she chooses to befriend. It is your house, and you do have final say. You also know better than I do how toxic this guy is. But it's also within your power to remind yourself that it's one night and the gods of principled purity will understand.

For what it's worth, I might feel different if the wife herself were a hate-spewer, because the responsibility chain would be shorter; Birthday Girl would be directly abetting a bigot. As it stands now, excluding this couple would essentially be punishing two people, one of them innocent, for a third person's bad behavior.

Also for what it's worth, my answer wouldn't change if the hate speech were misogynistic vs. homophobic, since I feel that challenge brewing even as I write this.

Carolyn:

As a non-straight woman, I'd certainly be loath to invite the guy into my home, but I think I'd do it (invite the wife, at least) because my friend would want them (well, her) there.

However, once he's in my house, I'd feel more at liberty to call him on his homophobic comments. A "my house, my rules" clause to the Gracious Hostess Agreement.

About the Surprise Party

Great call, thanks.

Carolyn:

I have a bunch of alumni-type events coming up in the near future, for both high school and college. While I generally like my life, I always come away from those events feeling really poor/undereducated/unmarried/barren/trivial compared with everyone else. I've decided not to go to them anymore. I compare it to not liking scary movies — you intellectually know Freddy Kruger can't hurt you, but if you don't enjoy yourself, why bother watching? But my friends will not shut up about how fun it will be, how I



BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

should totally go, etc. Should I face my fears and go, or can I tell my (well-meaning) friends to give it a rest?

Baltimore

How long ago was the last one you attended? You're certainly entitled to despise reunions and stay home — and your friends should give it a rest regardless — but I've found that people get mellow as the reunion year creeps higher. It isn't just that fortunes change and marriages end, though they certainly do; it's that maturity makes braggarts look silly. People are more into just laughing at how fat and bald they've gotten. They also cross farther over high-schoolish status lines to do it.

If you're still subject to feeling trivial, maybe the faint praise in "generally" liking your life is worth a harder look.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www.washingtonpost.com/discussions.

Write to Carolyn Hax, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.

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