

**CAROLYN HAX**

Adapted from a recent on-line discussion.

Dear Carolyn:

My boyfriend proposed on Valentine's Day. I declined because the logistics don't make sense right now. I love him very much, but our relationship has become strained and hostile since then. He says he understands and that his feelings aren't hurt, but I think they are. Is there anything I can do, short of accepting a ring I'm not ready for yet?

Providence

No. Hold your course, show your love and wait to see how he, and your relationship, weather this.

Obviously you feel confident you made the right choice. Obviously he's hurt and wishes you'd made a different choice. If you can both be honest about what you're thinking and feeling, and both cognizant and supportive of the other's position, then you're giving yourselves the best chance you've got.

If instead one of you is saying things that don't reflect what you really feel — and this situation presents classic temptation to say whatever the other wants to hear — then it doesn't look good.

Your job is to run your life, not his, so set the example for clear, honest, thoughtful and loving dissent.

Hi, Carolyn:

I've been lamely "quitting" smoking for a year now. Is there anything you can say to inspire a better effort? I don't want to be a smoker — but it's far too easy to let myself slide in the moment.

Chicago

If it's a medical/addiction issue: You're the one who controls whether you get help. So, take control and get help.

If it's not a medical/addiction issue, and it's a matter of comfort: You're the one who controls who you are. You don't want to be a smoker, so start acting like a nonsmoker. It really is that basic, even when you account for the fact that quitting is harder for some than others. Stock whatever gum and carrot sticks (and images of cancer-riddled lungs, lips and tongues) you need to get it done, and get it done.

Then, reward yourself in ways that advance your cause: New exercise gear, tooth whitening, etc., financed by your daily cig money, now saved in a jar. Tangible markers of your daily progress can be a powerful motivator.

For the Smoker:

I smoked a pack a day for 20 years, and haven't had a cigarette since 2005. It took me three years to quit successfully. The main thing was, I kept at it — even after I slipped up, I never allowed myself to think I couldn't do it.

I found with each attempt, I got better at it. I learned what my triggers were and figured out ways to navigate those situations.

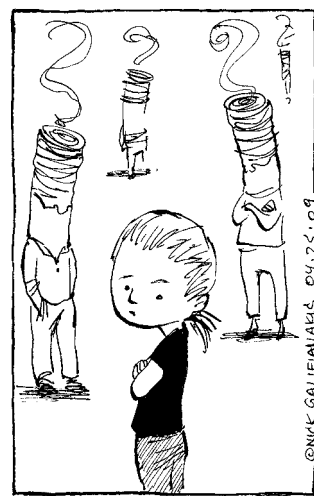
Lastly, it helped me to take up a hobby that I couldn't do while smoking. I started running and can now run six miles. I couldn't run a half-mile when I was 16.

Anonymous

The part about keeping up the effort even after a slip is universally applicable. Trying to get back in shape, lose weight, leave a bad relationship — a slip doesn't mean all is lost. If you make your next decision a good one, then you've limited your damage to the absolute minimum. That not only helps with the bad habit itself, but also with the morale plunges that make our bad habits worse.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on [www.washingtonpost.com/discussions](http://www.washingtonpost.com/discussions).

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or [tellme@washpost.com](mailto:tellme@washpost.com).



BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**The Style Invitational »**

**REPORT FROM WEEK 810**

Our 15th (yes!) annual running of the contest in which we supply a list of 100 horses nominated for this year's Triple Crown races, and ask you to "breed" any two and name the offspring: As usual, the Empress received thousands of entries, many of them fabulously clever — her "short" list of worthies numbered 280 names. If you entered this contest and your name does not appear here, it's no doubt among those remaining 224. (A little self-delusion is good for the psyche.) Note: We have so many First Offenders this week that we'll save space and mark them with asterisks.



**THE WINNER OF THE INKER**  
Sir Phenomenal x Empire State = Knight Who Says NY (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

- 2 the winner of the teacup depicting a peeing statue: Pitched Perfectly x Gone Astray = Don Larceny (Andrew Hoenig, Rockville)
- 3 Pitched Perfectly x Danger to Society = Criminal in Tent (Susan Thompson, Cary, N.C.)
- 4 Street Car x Rocket to the Moon = Stellaaaa! (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

**TRAILING BY A NOSE: HONORABLE MENTIONS**

- Skipadate x Pedestal = One Nightstand (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)
- Advice x Gluteus Maximus = Buttinski (\*Pat Kanz, Ocean Pines, Md.)
- Affirmatif x I Want Revenge = An Aye for an Aye (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)
- Antitrust x Chocolate Candy = Policy Wonka (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)
- Antitrust x Sea Level = Sherman's Lagoon (Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)
- Baryshnikov x Andiron = Grace Under Fire (Harvey Smith, McLean)
- Baryshnikov x Mr. Fantasy = Misha Impossibly (Steve Price, New York)
- Beethoven x Red Wine = Ludwig Vin (Tom Witte)
- Beethoven x Danger to Society = Sociopathetique (Chris Doyle)
- Beethoven x Wise Kid = Moonlight Snorter (Steve Price)
- Bridging x Danger to Society = Dentist the Menace (Dave Komornik, Danville, Va.)
- Bridging x Precious Package = Kwai Baby (Mae Scanlan, Washington)
- Bunker Hill x Shafted = Boston Scrod (Gary Welsh, Potomac)
- Charitable Man x Poltergeist = Dead Giveaway (Jim Newman, Luray, Va.)
- Checklist x Sullenberger = Fly Me

- a River (\*Vicki Sullivan, Washington)
- Coffee Bar x Tone It Down = Kona Silence (Susan Thompson)
- Desert Party x Wat = Sheikh Your Buddha (Mia Wyatt, Ellicott City)
- Dream Now x Parade Clown = Bedtime for Bozo (Bryan Crain, Modesto, Calif.; \*Stephen Power, Woodbridge)
- Dunkirk x Boyhood Dream = Mr. Sulu (\*Brett Shoelson, Arlington; Dave Zarrow, Reston)
- Giant Oak x Shafted = Richard Roundtree (J. Larry Schott, Gainesville, Fla.)
- Gluteus Maximus x Advice = CYA (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)
- Gluteus Maximus x They're Late = In Arrears (Mike Hammer, Arlington; Mark Eckenwiler)
- Gone Astray x Rendezvous = Err I Met You (Steve Shapiro, Alexandria)
- Hello Broadway x I Want Revenge = Maim (Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney)
- Hold Me Back x Gluteus Maximus = Restraining Ordure (Cy Gardner, Arlington)
- Il Postino x Gone Astray = Went Postal (\*Christopher Washburn, Ottawa, Ill.)
- Il Postino x El Rapido = Oxymoro (Steve Offutt, Arlington)
- Logic x Affirmatif = Yes We Kant (Jonathan Paul)
- Jack Spratt x Gluteus Maximus = Jack's Prat (Marty McCullen,

- Gettysburg, Pa.; David Smith, Santa Cruz, Calif.)
- Lookn Mighty Fast x Sumo = Lookn Mighty Fat (Sam Laudenslager, Burke)
- Lyn' Heart x The Big Dunkin = Nope, Not Torture (Mark Eckenwiler)
- Rocket to the Moon x Gluteus Maximus = Tang N Cheek (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)
- Old Fashioned x Total Gentleman = Chauvinist Pig (\*Erik Wennstrom, Bloomington, Ind.)
- Omniscient x Cribnote = And That's Why (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- Poltergeist x Affirmatif = Booyah (Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)
- Poltergeist x The Big Dunkin = Creepy Cruller (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)
- Presto Change O x Wise Kid = Abracadabrat (\*Barbara Strandridge, Alexandria)
- Precious Package x Rocket to the Moon = Jewels Verne (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)
- Red Wine x Shafted = Pinot Envy (Russell Beland, Fairfax)
- Remember Mike x Presto Change O = Meet Michelle (Barrett Swink, Annandale)
- Remember Mike x Red Wine = Forget Mike (Erica Rabbin, Olney)
- Rendezvous x Logic = Tryst but Verify (Steve Shapiro)
- Sir Phenomenal x Gluteus



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Week 814:**  
*There Will Be Bloodline*

Hot on the heels of the breed-the-racehorses contest whose results run today, it's of course post time for Year 4 of our grandfoals race. **This week: "Breed" any two of the winning "offspring" included in this week's results, and name their foal.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives both a 2007 Kentucky Derby souvenir mint julep glass, donated by 12-time Loser Wilson Varga, and a tin of no-doubt-stale horse-shaped chocolates; on the can is painted a horse and the legend "Are you a stallion . . . or a gelding?"

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). 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, May 4. Put "Week 814" 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 May 23. 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 Pam Freeman of McLean, a First Offender; the revised title for next week's results is by Beverly Sharp.

- Maximus = Good Knight Moon (Ellen Raphael)
- Sir Phenomenal x All the Bases = Sir Pheremonal (Sam Laudenslager)
- Sneak Peek x Dunkirk = I See France (Roy Ashley, Washington)
- Sullenberger x Gluteus Maximus = Seat of the Pants (Martin Bancroft)
- The Big Dunkin x Hold Me Back = Donut Pass Go (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)
- Tiz True x Wat = Surely Temple (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)
- Total Gentleman x Red Wine = Cop

- a Feel (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)
- Unionize x Party Hard = Wobbly (\*Chris Maloof, Philadelphia; Chuck Smith)
- Wall Street Wonder x Quarter Given = Nickel Returned (Jon Reiser; Kevin Mellema, Falls Church)
- West Side Bernie x Baryshnikov = A Jeté All the Way (George Vary, Bethesda)
- Wild Entry x Gone Astray = All We Like Sheep (Pam Sweeney)
- Next Week: Rock Bottom Lines, or Economic Whoas

**This 'Journey' Doesn't Take Viewers Anywhere New**

TV PREVIEW, From Page C1

new Miami Beach, and as for the Keys, Jeez Louise! They'll submerge in a nonce and vanish in a snap.

Those who take a dim view of ridiculing floods, tsunamis and other forms of soggy devastation should be reassured that if those sorts of terribleness were portrayed with appropriate horror and conviction in "Journey," the urge to hoot would be easily suppressed. But in the past 10 or 15 years, fairly frequent moviegoers have seen all these mishaps and many others so credibly depicted — via high-tech CGI illusions — and with such stunning fidelity, and such numbing frequency, that even minimally sophisticated moviegoers have started taking them for granted.

A hole opens up in the Pacific Ocean and swallows the melting Golden Gate Bridge? Seen it! A towering skyscraper leans over on its moorings and falls against the skyscraper across the street, leaning against it for support like a drunk being helped home after a wild party? Seen that, too.

As it happens, similar sights are seen only briefly in "Journey," which is something of a bait-and-switch item, as documentaries go. The program may sound like an hour-long examination of horrors that could be perpetrated by a rise in greenhouse gases and commensurate increased melting of polar ice caps, but as thrilling as that may sound, it's primarily a video journal of an Arctic exploration undertaken by the eight-person and two-dog



MSNBC

MSNBC's lackluster "Future Earth: Journey to the End of the World" relies on cliché CGI-generated illusions of environmental disaster.

crew of a ship called the Tara (the token Southern Gothic among ice bashers?) from late 2006 to early 2007.

Surrounded by and trapped in oodles and acres of ice — as everyone on board must have known it would be — the Tara becomes "a virtual prison" for the scientists, technologists and plain old sailors on board, the narrator states, but then there is the occasional "astounding find" and various "incredible discoveries" that perk up morale and make the

journey allegedly historic — despite, of course, that "intense, nagging boredom" that plague the crew.

Chocking the script with clichés is no help whatsoever: "Unlike cats, dogs don't have nine lives," the narrator says when a dog is injured during a fight with a bear, although it is noted that a dog can be "man's best friend." The crew finds the Arctic to be "a mythical and in some senses a mystical place . . . where explorers come to die — or be severely disappointed." Gosh, are those the

only options?

As it happens, the lackluster documentary not only resembles any number of Hollywood disaster movies but also bears a likeness, in substance and title, to the Discovery Channel's recent speculative documentary "Journey to the Edge of the Universe" and to the National Geographic Channel's "Aftermath: Population Zero," about what the Earth might be like once all the messy human beings have been depopulated from it.

Unfortunately, the most conspicuous way that the MSNBC documentary does not resemble those other two is in quality. On "Journey," the most endangered species appears to be TV documentaries themselves. If too many more of them are this bad, the whole genre may go the way of the gooney bird — crash, bang, splot.

**Future Earth: Journey to the End of the World (one hour)** airs tomorrow night at 10 on MSNBC.

**'Obsessed': Scheming to Seduce Beyoncé's Man? Bad Idea.**

MOVIES, From Page C1

and how he likes his coffee.

The situation devolves from there. "Sexual harassment" is too mild a term. Lisa, hellbent, creates an appearance of infidelity by spreading gossip, dragging a resistant Derek into a men's room stall during the office Christmas party, and hiding in his Mercedes-Benz while wearing a nightie.

"She did WHAT?" Why doesn't Derek fire Lisa after things go haywire? Because he has a reputation around the office for having romanced his underlings. Sharon, after all, used to be his secretary (he liked it, so he put a ring on it).

Who's to say he's not just bedding the next woman in the executive-liaison line? It's his word against hers.

As far as the crazy-stalker-chick genre goes, "Obsessed" isn't horrible. It's just intensely simple-minded. It boils down the genre — like rabbit on a stovepot — to its essence. Unlike "Fatal Attraction," there is no actual extramarital affair. Unlike "Basic Instinct," there is no mystery to be solved. There is only a crazy stalker chick.

As Lisa, Ali Larter (of "Heroes") isn't as seductive as Sharon Stone or as terrifying as a crimp-haired Glenn Close, but she gets the job done. Larter uses a flick of her eyes to jump be-

tween stone-cold rage and whimpering sycophant. Elba (of "The Wire" and "The Office") has the tough role, the good guy who sinks deeper the more he struggles, and his restraint makes "Obsessed" occasionally believable.

Before the film clicks into autopilot for the standard descent into outrageousness, the script is sensible and the characters are human. Credit writer David Loughery, who put his talent for spinning psychodramas to better use in last year's smart thriller "Lakeview Terrace."

As for Beyoncé, she cannot act. Neither can Sasha Fierce, even when she's throwing punch after punch at the woman who did her wrong.

"This is some crazy [expletive]!"

**Obsessed (105 minutes, at area theaters)** is rated PG-13 for sexual material and violence.

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BY SUZANNE TENNER

"Obsessed" concerns a happily married man (Idris Elba) and a psycho stalker (Ali Larter).