CAROLYN HAX



BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Hi, Carolyn:

In my first marriage, I was on the receiving end of The Silent Treatment. so I know firsthand how destructive and hurtful it can be. I am now in a happy marriage with a wonderful man. and I am starting to realize that HE may now be the recipient of this.

I've had a really hard time at work and in my family life lately - several serious crises. There's also this one issue between us that we've talked to death and tried to resolve, but it's still just a big giant ball of hurt, and I find myself being quiet, moody, untalkative. withdrawn at home.

I know in my heart of hearts how unfair I'm being to him, but I can't make myself stop it and lighten up! How do you make yourself snap out of a three-week-long bad mood? Georgia

I'm not sure you can you've got to keep working the emotional knot, and that's going to take whatever time it takes.

But you can spare him the silent treatment during this time by stating clearly that you know you're being sullen and difficult, and that you don't want to be, so you're working really hard to try to get to the other side. Thank him for his patience, ask him for a little more, and make a conscious effort to continue with these updates as you go, or even just small gestures of affection.

If you're not sure how to start or what to say, just try to remember what it felt like to be on the receiving end of a partner's withdrawal - you really just want the person to throw you a crumb, to let you know it's okay. That's something you can do for your husband now.

The Style Invitational >>

REPORT FROM WEEK 817

in which we asked you to split a word exactly in half (the middle letter of an odd-numbered word could be assigned to either half); reverse the order of the halves; and define the resulting word. As predicted, the best Flopflips were related in some way to the original word. Note that the hyphen in this week's winning word isn't where it Flopflipped.

THE WINNER OF THE INKER OMG-lo: Chat-speak to describe a lack of excitement in life. (Erik Wennstrom, Bloomington, Ind.)

- the winner of the book "Paper Airplanes With Dollar Bills": Juanamari: A slurred, later regretted proposal uttered while under the influence. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)
- Chopsy: Norman Bates's childhood nickname. (Brett Shoelson, Arlington)
- Blecal: Common sound of revulsion upon reading 500 channels' worth of TV listings. (John C. Feltz, Fairborn, Ohio)

ABLENOT: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Gerswin: Composer of many overtures. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Roombar: Cleaning robot that circles randomly before losing its contents in the corner. (Russ Taylor, Vienna

Le tab: The only thing presented at a three-star French restaurant that leaves a bad taste in your mouth. (Beverley Sharp, Washington)

Merecash: The difference between a sweater and a really nice sweater. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

Inpa: the dad who brags that he's "jiggy with that." (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Agegarb: What a 15-year-old wears to look older and a 35-year-old wear to look younger, and both end up looking skanky. (Kellev Bielewicz. Newark, Del., a First Offender)

Act-red: To do Soviet-style editing. (Hugh Pullen, Vienna)

Icantmend: A laid-off tailor reduced to panhandling. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Herenow: A backwater that claims to have "arrived," when it's touting its classy new seafood restaurant, Red Lobster. (Brendan Beary)

Dow-win: A breath of fresh air. (Marsha Harvey, Falls Church, a First Offender)

Dupoisavoir: An appreciation for Rubenesque women. (Deborah Guy, Columbus, Ohio)

Eymon: Traditional greeting by a Jamaican panhandler. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Ackbar: the point at which right-wing hatemongers choke on their own bile. (Kelley Bielewicz)

Flypop: Common occurrence at the annual Playboy Bunny Softball Tournament. (Christopher Lamora, Arlington

FUSECON: The new military effort to combine DEFCON and REDCON statuses. (Steve Offutt, Arlington)

Gagemort: A loan carefully calculated to be paid off just before you die. (Jim Newman, Luray, Va.)

He's: Not what you think he is. (Jacob Aldridge, Gaythorne, Australia)

Icpub: A seedy bar known for its crabs. (Steve Offutt)

Inbra: Where a guy's mind goes when he sees a hot chick. (May Jampathom, Oakhurst, N.J.)

Cess-suc: The current state of your once-thriving business. (Mary Ann Henningsen, Hayward, Calif.)

Koldcuc: To strike another with the lowest blow of all. (Tom Witte)

Lardol: A government-issued stimulant made with pork. (Stephen Donnelly, Falls Church, a First Offender)

Hermot: Woman who stays home, never goes anywhere, never does anything, just takes care of her rotten ungrateful kids. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Insta: Spot on a child's clothing that appears immediately upon being donned. (Randy Lee, Burke)

Tonbut: Someone who's about to bust his britches. (Gary A. Clements, Bethesda)

Mode.com: Your online source for fine bathroom furnishings. (Mike Turniansky, Pikesville, Md.)

Ivan Min: Feckless brother of "The Terrible"; lives in the Moscow suburbs with his wife, three kids and dog. (Craig Dykstra)

Type-T: A chronic nitpicker. (Craig Dykstra)

Racylite: Porn for Beginning Readers. (Sylvia Betts, Vancouver, B.C.)

Risesurp: The bile that fills your throat when something totally nasty suddenly occurs. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

Sippi-missis: Old Man River's alcoholic wife. (Kelley Bielewicz)

Sure Lei: Vacation in Hawaii. (William Bradford, Washington; Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Bierflab: We're gonna need a **bigger casket.** (Chris Doyle) Uretort: "Water" boarding. (Patty

Hardee, Flint Hill, Va., a First Offender)

Toostat: Hasty decisions with a permanent impact. (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)

Ensenons: Meaningless flipflopped words. (Dave Prevar)

Ink BO: Loser pheromones. (Mike Ostapiej, Tracy, Calif.)

Test-con: Getting away with a pseudonymous entry. (Inkev Artdop, Kuzcek, Kazakhstan)

Le Sty: Where your "amusing" entries really belong. (Chris Rollins, Cumberland, Md.)

And Last: Lastand: A final, feeble, futile effort. (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

Next Week: Name the Day, or **Mock Your Calendars**

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 821: Spit the Difference

K

The Washington Post



An elderly Labrador retriever is like Saturn: Both take about 29 years to take a walk around the neighborhood.

Maraschino cherries on a hamburger

- The entire nation of Latvia
- A Buckingham Palace guard An elderly Labrador retriever
- Third base at Nationals Park
- One Somali pirate
- Six Somali pirates

- The Social Security number of Todd
- Davis CEO of LifeLock

matter. This week: How are any of the items on the list above alike or different?

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives four denture-shaped ice cube molds, discourtesy of Adam and Russell Beland. "No one will 'accidentally' take your beverage again,' the package promises. It cries out for new cocktail names: the molartini?

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or Loser Mug. 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* or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, June 22. Put "Week 821" 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 July 11. 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 was submitted by both John O'Byrne and Michael Reinemer; the revised title for next week's contest is by Russell Beland

ONLINE DISCUSSION Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join The Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

teeth in vour drink

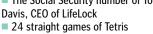


The redesigned Facebook home page

A poison ivy vine The 2012 presidential campaign

Saturn

Someone named Kaytlynne





Once again, a random list of items drawn from a handy collection of warped cranial



Dear Carolyn:

I didn't know before we married how much TV my husband watches when he isn't at work. He will watch pretty much any sporting event, and, at the few times those aren't on, any rerun sitcom will suffice.

I respect that everyone is due their downtime, but this is so annoying to me. I am thinking of getting pregnant, with his blessing of course, just so that we will have a child and he won't be able to zone out in front of the TV. Thoughts regarding more healthy solutions?

Anonymous

1. Realize he will zone out in front of the TV with the baby/ toddler/child/'tween/ teenager/etc.; and, 2. Tell him exactly how discouraged you are by being married to a television set.

If he doesn't respond by making some time for you, then please take a hard look at whether you're happy with other aspects of this marriage. Don't add a child and hope it gets better. That strategy has a failure rate that approaches 100 percent.

Re: Anonymous:

'Telling him exactly how discouraged you are by being married to a television set." Wait, my wife and I are in a longstanding three-way relationship with the TV. Frankly, it's more of an open relationship; we'll hook up with any TV that happens to be there wherever we are. Are we [trollops]?

You're all consenting adults and/or electronics; nothing to apologize for here.

Va.

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

Write to Tell Me About It. Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.

FLAG, From Page C1

For Libby, however, this year's Flag Day will mark the culmination of eight years of research into one of the very first Old Glories, a historic flag that flew over the Maryland State House in the winter of 1783, when Annapolis was the capital of the fledgling United States. When a replica of this flag is hoisted tomorrow at the State House, it will fix a reproduction error that hung for vears. The new flag will be more faithful to its 1783 roots, its stars and stripes put right by Libby. His work, part luck and part pluck, will be remembered as one of the more compelling flag coups recently pulled off by an amateur researcher. Congress moved into the recently

completed State House in 1783, as the Revolutionary War was winding down, and Maryland's governor commissioned a new flag to greet his distinguished guests. John Shaw, a local cabinetmaker-factotum, took the assignment, which came with the vaguest of instructions from Congress: "Thirteen stripes alternate red and white ... thirteen stars white on a field of blue.'

The rest was left to his whim. The Shaw flag flew over the capitol when George Washington resigned as commander in chief of the Continental Army, and Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris. The British finally withdrew from New York, Congress moved on to Trenton after its nine months in Annapolis, and the flag was lowered, and lost to history.

"And here we are today with absolutely no flag to refer to," Libby explained last week, sitting in his living room, a binder thick with archival research on his lap. "There is not one single shred of fabric.

He had never heard of the Shaw flag when he and his wife, Kathryn, retired to Annapolis in 1999, but he had been afflicted for years with what he calls the "flag bug."

Libby owns more than 80 replica flags, including about 50 from the Colonial era. For decades, he has been a member of the North American Vexillological Association - in his words, "the national group of flag nuts." When he and Kathryn lived in Rhode Island, Libby become so well-known for flying rare flags on his waterfront pole that neighbors took to inquiring, "Dick, what are we going to be flying today?"

"Basically, I'm always thinking about flags," Libby said. "I'm always dreaming about having more, always planning where I can fly the next one. I like colors, and I like symbols. Flags are very colorful, and they're moving symbols.'

It was natural for such an ardent vexillologist to take note of the Shaw replica, commissioned for the 1983 bicentennial of the state's time as the nation's capital. It had been painstakingly re-created by state archivists, working from an entry in the "Day Book for the Intendent of Revenue" for the purchase of varying lengths of red, white and blue bunting. With the help of the late

Grace Rogers Cooper, then a former curator of textiles at the Smithsonian and the author of a book on Colonial flags, they constructed a flag 23 feet long and nearly 10 feet wide, with 13 red and white stripes and 13 eight-pointed stars arrayed on a blue field. Scholars positioned that field (or canton, as it known in the argot) in the top-left corner.

Flagging an Error: True 1783 Replica to Fly

And it was natural for Libby to become intrigued when one day he discovered, by happenstance, what appeared to be a mistake.

He was wandering through the 1774 Hammond-Harwood House, where his wife volunteers as a docent, when he saw "a little gem of a painting." A 1794 watercolor by a man named Cotton Milbourne, it depicts a view of the State House. About midway up the State House's dome, atop a pole supported by an odd platform that extends 90 degrees from the building, seemed to be some kind of early American flag. "It's really quite lucky that I no-

ticed it," Libby said. He learned that Milbourne worked in Annapolis in the late 1700s. Connecting the dots, Libby surmised that the flag in the painting had to be the John Shaw flag with a major difference from its replica: The blue canton ran vertically, down the whole left side of the flag, and not, as the 1983 version had it, across the left corner.

Last year, at an art opening, Libby met Elaine Bachmann, the state archives' director of artistic property. "We started chatting," Libby ex-

plained, "and Elaine said that her office was planning on re-hanging the John Shaw flag," which had been taken down for State House refurbishing. "Well, my head spun around about four times. I said, 'No, no, you don't want to do that. What you want to do is re-hang the right John Shaw flag.' And then, of course, her

head spun around about four times. "Once we discussed the Milbourne painting, bingo, we were off and running.

Libby began to scour the archives. He learned Milbourne had depicted his buildings accurately, from the seven still in existence. Why wouldn't the flag be accurate, too

"If the artist were simply taking it upon himself to add a flag," Libby reasoned, "then most likely he'd have placed that flag on top of the State House dome. But he didn't. The flagpole sticks out from the middle of the dome."

Soon, Libby was climbing up that capitol dome, searching for remnants of history. As it turns out, scholars at the state archives were actually aware of the Milbourne painting back in 1983, when they performed the original research on the Shaw flag. Edward Papenfuse, Maryland's chief archivist, learned of it between the time he placed the order for the replica flag and when he received it from the manufacturer.

In a letter dated April 13, 1984, former Smithsonian scholar Grace Rogers Cooper wrote, "I did consid-

er placing the field vertically, as the long dimension was exactly that of the thirteen stripes." She went on: "Did we not know about this painting before the project started a year ago? It might have made a difference.

"Can you believe that?" Libby says, eyebrows raised. "She was within an inch of figuring this out. All we had to do was take the canton and flip it 90 degrees. It drops right into place. Then, you just scoot some stripes over to fill in the space."

And that is precisely what the new replica of the Shaw flag looks like. Papenfuse gives all due to Libby: "This often happens in history. We have the tendency to think that history remains immovable and immutable. The truth of the matter is the more you learn and comprehend, the more you make new discoveries.

At tomorrow's unveiling, which is free and begins at 2 p.m., Libby will deliver the invocation. And he will recount the colorful back story.

And yet one day last week, after having spent the day discussing the Shaw flag, he seemed to have moved on to his next project.

"A block over, there's a flag in front of a house," he began. "It's just a little white flag with a red X on it. Now, I can tell you, that person's either from Alabama — because that's what that flag looks like — or he's got some reason to care about the cross of Saint George. I'm going to have to find out."

A 'Fearless' Taylor Swift at Merriweather: Pop Without the Tart

 $B\gamma$ David Malitz Washington Post Staff Writer

As the music industry continues to fragment into a niche-oriented landscape, Taylor Swift stands out as an exception. She's a hit at the cash register: Her 4 million albums sold in 2008 was tops in the business. She's a star on the radio: Swift owns the country charts and has made a successful crossover to pop and Top 40 stations. This summer's Fearless Tour - her first headlining venture — is one of the season's hottest tickets, selling out sheds in blue states and red states alike. Tickets for Thursday's show at Merriweather Post Pavilion were gone in 30 minutes. a record for the venue (since broken by reunited jam band Phish). This outing is being positioned as

nothing less than the coronation of the next great pop music queen who, at just 19 years old, will be the shining star to prop up a faltering industry.

No pressure, kid.

Thursday's show made it clear exactly why Swift is viewed as a star with some serious staying power. After her opening number, the infectious "You Belong With - which, like many of her Me" songs, had only a slight hint of twang to go with its bouncy pop delights - she soaked in the deafening cheers at center stage. Sporting a sparkling silver dress (one of some 10 she'd wear over the course of the evening), Swift repeatedly mouthed the words, "Oh, my God" as she surveyed the screaming, sign-holding, picturetaking masses. A few minutes lat-

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Swift could do no wrong — as usual at her sold-out show Thursday.

er she told the audience. "This is the most beautiful sight I've seen in my entire life.

It's likely that every crowd gets the same treatment. But in the moment, it was hard not to believe her, that this was *truly* special.

She's the kind of girl you want to believe.

Of course, modest charm alone does not a star make. There's a reason the gracious guitar player at your local open mike night can't find another gig, after all. Swift's songs — all of which she at least co-wrote — are mostly masterful, if slightly formulaic, creations.

That Swift doesn't have the most dynamic stage presence is neither surprising nor disappointing. The dramatic hair fling was about as showy as she got, leaving the limited pomp and circumstance to a small team of extras who acted out the lyrics to "You Belong With Me" and "Love Story" in a manner as cheesy as you might expect.

It's also easy to overlook the fact that Swift has a fairly ordinary voice. Belting is not a part of her oeuvre, and there were a couple of moments of minor fluttering. But when the occasion called for it take the fire-breathing chorus of rage-rocker "Picture to Burn," for instance — she proved to be game by rising above the din, all while skipping across the stage.

Still, it was the poignant ballad "White Horse" that found her most in her element. She was alone, strumming an acoustic guitar, singing words that were clearly penned by a teenage girl 'Cause I'm not your princess / This ain't a fairy tale / I'm gonna find someone, someday / Who might actually treat me well") but had a universal appeal. It was sentimental, just the right amount of sappy and more than plenty catchy.