

CAROLYN HAX

Adapted from a recent on-line discussion.

Dear Carolyn:

I'm getting married soon and the reception hall holds 150 people max. As such, we did not include "and guest" for any invitees that we know aren't involved with any specific person. A few of these unattached people have RSVP'd for two, or, in one case, three: One person is bringing her cousin, another a friend from his office... people we didn't invite and have never met. Am I out of line thinking this is rude? Besides having to pay for a dinner for them, we simply don't have the room for random guests.

Did we commit a major faux pas by not including "and guest"? And, even if we did, how can we politely tell these people we do not have enough room?

These guests will know plenty of people at the wedding, so their "dates" aren't their only hope for companionship that evening.

Anonymous

Even if they'd be alone among strangers, they'd still have two polite choices: Go solo, or stay home.

Writing in guests is rude. Astonishing, really. So while it won't exactly be a fun conversation, you have every right to call and explain without apology that the limits on your reception hall mean you can't accommodate their write-ins. (Though you can say you're so terribly sorry, if it helps with the impact.)

You can also say that if you change your mind and hold it in a barn, then they and their uninvited guests will fit right in. But that's perhaps best reserved for when you're taking vows of misanthropy and friends won't be necessary.

Re: RSVP:

They could very well be dating someone serious whom the bride could not know about. I agree this is an egregious breach of etiquette — I would instead just stay home out of loyalty to my significant other. I don't advertise my new relationship, but use rather a gradual process of introducing him to one and all.

Anonymous 2

If that's the case, then you either talk to the couple, if you're a close-enough friend; brave it without your mate (loyalty? seriously? if your date was omitted just out of ignorance of your relationship? yikes); or, yes, respond "no" and stay home.

Re: RSVP:

I dunno, the whole "no guest" thing seems so weird and exclusive. If you can't afford to make it a pleasant, inclusive event for all involved, you might want to reconsider inviting 150 people who are forbidden from bringing the people they love. (Also, seriously? One hundred fifty with no guests? You couldn't trim that a little?)

Anonymous 3

Just so I get this right: You want couples to exclude people they know and care about, so they can include and pay for complete strangers?

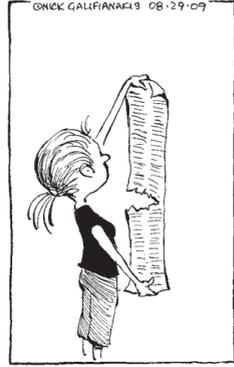
Why do you get to decide what constitutes "inclusive"? Maybe they know a fair number of unattached people. So I see your, "Seriously," and raise you a, "You've got to be kidding": This couple should add... 20? 30? 40? more people to their guest list just because some people lack the [imagination] to dance without an assigned partner?

The issue was that invited guests wrote in names of people who weren't invited. They were rude. You are attempting to discuss something about which there is nothing left to discuss.

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.

ONLINE GALLERIES 08-29-09



BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Style Invitational »

REPORT FROM WEEK 828

in which we asked you to make puns on the names of groups (such as music groups), organizations or companies: As usual with pun contests, there's a high groan factor here.



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE WINNER OF THE INKER
Swansong Dinners: Healthy frozen entrees for those final Death Row meals. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

2 winner of the notecards with images of ancient aroused-warriors art: The National Symphony Orchestra: For when the Salvation Army decides that one bell-ringer just isn't enough. (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

3 J. Crüe: For the preppy hard-rocker. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

4 Chick-feel-A: A spinoff of Hooters where the clientele gets to grab the waitresses. (Nancy Lawrence, Annapdale, a First Offender)

THE BUSINESS DRECKTORY: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Who makes the tightest jeans on the market? Le Visé! (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

Fiends of the Earth: The National Association of Strip Miners, Seal Clubbers and Old Dump Truck Drivers. (Vic Krysko, Surat Thani, Thailand)

LensGrafters: We attach contacts permanently to your eyeballs. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Deere John: Break up in style with our goofy dump-a-grams delivered on lawn tractors! (Craig Dykstra)

What store specializes in bagels, doughnuts and Life Savers? Hole Foods! (Roy Ashley, Washington; Dave Zarrow, Reston)

Burlington Moot Factory: Classic home security systems. (Craig Dykstra)

The Washington Nationals: Who Needs the O's? (Cy Gardner, Arlington)

Hannity Fair: Also known as Oxymoron Monthly. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Incontinental Airlines: On our planes, all the seats are toilet seats. (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)

L.L. Bran: Clothing for the "active" senior. (Craig Dykstra)

Ku Klutz Klan: When they tried to set a cross on fire, they set their robes on fire instead. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

Playtext: The first bra that comes with a built-in phone: Sending a message has never been so much fun! (John Shea, Lansdowne, Pa.)

What's the name of that new prosthetic supply house? Hands' End! (Charles Koebel, Houston)

Chef Boyar-D-minus: Pasta in a can. (John Shea)

On what planes do they still call the flight attendants "stewardesses"? On Leerjets! (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)

Confidential Airlines: Want to hike the Appalachian Trail in Buenos Aires? We'll get you there! (Charles Koebel)

Phasebook: Keeping you wasting your time until the next big thing comes along. (Bruce Alter, Fairfax Station)

Where's the best place to shop for high-water pants and short-sleeve dress shirts? Nerdstrom! (Elise Jacobs, Silver Spring, a First Offender;

Stephen Dudzik)

Boing Aircraft: Safest planes on the market with their patented rubber fuselage. (Dave Zarrow)

What PR firm has the best spinmeisters? Whirlpool! (Dave Zarrow)

Where can I outfit my survival bunker? Have you tried Fear 1? (Elise Jacobs)

Congressional Fudge-It Office: "If you don't like our cost assessment, we'll change it." (James Noble, Lexington Park)

Bang of America: A nationwide chain of brothels. (Craig Dykstra)

Wells Neargo: Local deliveries only. (Vic Krysko)

Dead Mobster: Where you can eat fish with the fishes. (Yuki Henninger, Vienna)

The Boston Rude Sox: "Stop asking us about steroids, you #@&*%!!!" (Cy Gardner)

Loins Club: It's a, um, service organization. (Chris Doyle)

Next Week: Limerixicon 6, or Di-Odes



CROSSWORD BY BOB KLAHN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 832: Clue Us In

1 Across: HUBRIS: Cocky mohel's flaw

Sorry, we're no longer going to have an annual backward-crossword contest — in which you supply one or more clues for the words in a filled-in grid. We're going biannual, thanks to Bob Klahn of the CrossSynergy puzzle syndicate, who wrote us asking if he could please please please make a puzzle just for The Style Invitational. (The renowned Paula Gamache will once again contribute her puzzle in a few months.) As usual, it's more important for the clues to be funny than to fit crossword conventions; for instance, you don't have to signal wordplay by ending the clue with a question mark — otherwise almost every clue would have one. Still, as for a crossword, the clue needs to match the part of speech; if the word is a singular noun, the clue can't refer to a plural verb. Offer as many clues as you like, but be concise, because we're cramped more than ever on this page. Please say which word the clue is for; don't just write "36 Down."

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the recently awarded Superfly Monkey slingshot toy, regifted by Lois Douthitt, who ended up — we swear this was not engineered — winning the prize she donated to us. (The Empress let her have a mug instead.)

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions 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 Tuesday, Sept. 8. Put "Week 832" 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. 26. 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 results is by Tom Witte; this week's Honorable Mentions name is by Chris Doyle.

ON WASHINGTONPOST.COM

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

The Bizarre Abduction and Return of Jaycee

KIDNAP, From Page C1

and locked, in the back yard of a ramshackle house in a rundown neighborhood.

She was living under the name "Allissa"; she had two daughters, 11 and 15, allegedly the result of rapes by the registered sex offender now charged with kidnapping and holding her, 58-year-old Phillip Garrido, Nancy Garrido, his wife — and a ringer for the woman Probyn described as leaping out of the car — was also living with them. She's under arrest, too.

Authorities are trying to figure out, frankly, how on earth all this happened.

They're trying to figure out how a parole officer visited the home several times over the years and never noticed that a woman and two children were being held captive in the back yard. They're trying to figure out whether Dugard ever tried to escape. They're wondering why officers didn't respond more forcefully to a 911 call on Nov. 30, 2006, from neighbors alerting them that a convicted rapist had little girls in his house.

"I can't change the course of events, but we are beating ourselves up over this and are the first to do so," Contra Costa County Sheriff Warren E. Ruff told a news conference late Friday. He said the deputy who responded never entered the house or checked the yard, missing "an opportunity to rescue Jaycee."

"There are a lot of reasons that go into these things," he said. "There are no excuses."

The San Francisco Chronicle reported late Friday that yet another police agency is now investigating Garrido as a suspect in the slayings of 10 prostitutes in 1998 and 1999. The bodies were discovered at the time in an industrial area near where Garrido was then working.

Dugard and her mother, Terry, have been reunited at a Bay Area hotel. Probyn, now divorced from Dugard's mother, told CBS's "Early Show" that his ex-wife had told him that Dugard "looks very young, she looks very healthy," but that she "feels really guilty for bonding with this guy."

He later told the Orange County Register that Dugard and her children had only the clothes on their backs. He said she kept referring to her daughters as "babies."

"That tells me her education stopped at fifth grade," he said. "Even though she's an adult, she's 29, in a way, she's 11. She's never



BY BRUCE CHAMBERS — ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER VIA AP

Carl Probyn with a photo of his stepdaughter, Jaycee Lee Dugard. For years he was the prime suspect in the case.

driven a car."

For his part, Garrido called a local television station from El Dorado County Jail on Thursday and told them he had done a "disgusting thing" at the beginning of the case, but swore that when everyone knew the full "heart-warming story," they would be "impressed" at how he had turned his life around.

He said he loved the daughters he'd had with Jaycee. The eldest was born when Jaycee was 14.

"Those two children, those two girls, they slept in my arms every night since birth. ... I never touched them," he told reporter Walt Gray of KCRA-TV. He started to cry.

Family members said Garrido has a long history of drug use, religious mania and mental illness.

Okay, so there. That's the story. You can puzzle over it all you want, and there will be more details in time, but it is never likely to all add up.

For example, Garrido's downfall began Tuesday, when he took his daughters to the University of California at Berkeley to distribute religious literature. (Garrido lists himself as affiliated with an otherwise unknown church called "God's Desire.") An officer thought the interaction between the man and the girls was "suspicious," authorities said. In doing a background check,

the officer learned that Garrido was on parole as part of a 1971 rape and kidnapping conviction.

The next day, Garrido went to see his parole officer. It's unknown whether he was ordered to do so, or went voluntarily. But most oddly, he took his wife, a woman he introduced as Allissa and his two daughters. The parole officer, who had visited Garrido's home several times, had never noticed the backyard compound, and had never met Allissa or the two girls.

At that meeting, Allissa eventually revealed herself to be Jaycee Lee Dugard, police said.

"She was relatively cooperative," Fred Kollar, the El Dorado County undersheriff, said at a packed news conference Thursday. He added that, before that disclosure, there were "no known attempts by her to outreach to anybody."

Kollar said the children were apparently born on the property. Neither Dugard nor her daughters had been to school or to a doctor, he said. The young girls bore no obvious signs of neglect or abuse, Kollar added.

Neighbors told reporters that Garrido, who ran a small print shop out of his home, was creepy. The ranch-style house is in a tumble-down neighborhood of high grass, wire fences and laundry hanging in back yards. It was known that Garrido was a registered sex offender,

feet high and 10 feet by 10 feet. Also in the compound: the gray Ford believed to be the vehicle used in the abduction.

Nobody really knows what happens next. Garrido referred to a "huge trial" in his telephone call to the television station.

Probyn, the stepfather, is now 60. For 18 years, he has been the prime suspect in the case. He said the FBI has repeatedly given him lie-detector tests over the years. He said the stress over the abduction led to the breakup of his marriage. When his ex-wife called to tell him Jaycee was live alive, they went together, he told the Sacramento Bee.

Ernie Allen, president and chief executive of the Alexandria-based National Center on Missing & Exploited Children, said that of the thousands of abductions of children by non-family members each year, the overwhelming number of victims are kept hours, not overnight, and are released after being sexually or physically abused.

When kidnapped children are held for long periods — as in the famous case of Shawn Hornbeck, abducted in 2002 while riding his bicycle near his Missouri home and held for four years — some appear not to have aggressively sought to escape. Allen pointed out that the victims are young and said they are often threatened with harm or told that their family will be harmed if they try to get away. They also are often "abused and brutalized for a long period of time" and they "find a way to curry favor with the captor to survive," he said.

June Jeffries, a longtime D.C. prosecutor who specialized in child-homicide cases, said that in Dugard's case, there had to be moments in 18 years when she could have "called attention to who she was, or gotten away." But clearly some type of "brainwashing" occurs. "I assume there are tremendous mind-games played on them."

Allen, who has met with many kidnapped children who have been reunited with their families, said there can be some return to normalcy. He noted that Elizabeth Smart, the 14-year-old Salt Lake City girl taken from her bedroom in 2002 and held for nine months, has been doing well studying music at Brigham Young University.

But, of course, nine months isn't 18 years. There are not happily-ever-afters at such a remove. They are only afters.

Staff writer Mary Jordan contributed to this report.