

THE TV COLUMN

Balloon Boy story still has legs

TV COLUMN FROM CI

husband lied to authorities and knew their son was not in the balloon but safely stashed away at home. (We already suspected as much, since Falcon told CNN's Wolf Blitzer on international TV that he had hid in the family garage because his parents "said that we did this for a show," causing all hell to break loose.)

Mom and Dad ginned up the con game in hopes it would help them become stars of their own reality series. As their hoax unraveled, it was discovered that the Heenes had been developing a reality series about their family with RDF Media USA, the same company that produces "Wife Swap," on which the Heenes had appeared twice.

The judge at Friday's hearing told the dotting parents that they may have to cough up some serious cash for various government agencies to cover the cost of the effort to "rescue" Falcon. That fateful day, the Heenes called 911, the Federal Aviation Administration (and a local TV news outlet) to report that their son was aboard the runaway balloon, causing authorities to shut down Denver International Airport — ka-ching! — and deploy National Guard helicopters in an attempt to pluck the balloon out of the air — ka-ching!

Richard Heene pleaded guilty to attempting to influence a public servant, a felony. His wife pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of making a false report to authorities. They agreed to the deal so that prosecutors would not try to have Mayumi, who is a Japanese citizen, deported if convicted of a felony.

Jon Gosselin has gobsacked the Discovery-owned cable network with a \$5 million lawsuit, accusing it of violating Pennsylvania child-labor laws when it shot footage of his eight children for the reality series that made him a household name, "Jon & Kate Plus Eight."

The lawsuit, filed late Thursday in Montgomery County Circuit Court — but only after having been filed in the court of *Radaronline.com* — claims the Silver Spring-based TLC failed to get work permits for the kids.

Evidently, Mr. Gosselin figured out that children need work permits only *after* he milked the show for five seasons.

The aggrieved father's move is a countersuit: Last month, TLC sued Gosselin for allegedly breaching his contract with the cable network when he started getting paid to do interviews on celebrity suck-up shows and generally carrying on around the television firmament.

That suit, also filed in Circuit Court in Montgomery County, claims Gosselin did not meet the terms of his contract when he started popping up on other TV shows for pay and making unauthorized public disclosures — like his salary, to CNN's Larry King.

Gosselin's attorneys contend that his pact with TLC was designed to take advantage of his experience in TV contract matters and that by trying to prevent him from exploring other on-air opportunities, because of his TLC contract, the cable network is denying him the right to earn a living as an "on-camera personality."

"I don't know what greater example there is of something against public policy than this case where in the workplace, babies — because these kids were babies — were taken advantage of by a multimedia, multinational corporate giant and conglomerate such as Discovery and its subsidiary TLC," Gosselin's attorney, Mark Jay Heller, told The TV Column.

TLC declined to comment. demoraes@washpost.com

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

REPORT FROM WEEK 839

In which we asked you to make up "portmanteau words," or a word in which two existing words overlap by two or more letters. The words had to start with A, B, C or D. Frequently submitted: Abracadabracassiere: The Wonderbra. And many, many variations on "balloony" to describe the Heene family.



Buttheadbutt: A Limbaugh-Olbermann shouting match. (Patricia Casey, McLean)

2 the winner of the super-secret CIA, NSA and DIA coffee mugs: Disasterisk: A footnote in Metro's annual report. (Elise Jacobs, Silver Spring)

3 Algebrassiere: 36A + 10K = 36D. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

4 Anecdoddering: Losing your place halfway through a story 'bout the good old days. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

PORTMANTEAUVERFLOW: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Crapplause: A polite but unenthusiastic expression of approval. (Dion E. Black, Washington, a First Offender)

Audibleed: The sound-level setting at a heavy-metal concert. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

Bimboudoir: The back seat of the car. (Michael Seaton, Bowie)

Accidenture: Putting one's foot in one's mouth. (Craig Dykstra)

Detroitus: What's left of a once-great city. (Craig Dykstra)

Beersatz: Miller Lite. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Circumspectorate: To spit when no one's looking. (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

Artifactory: A place that makes "ancient" objects. (Ron Averyt, Severn)

Coffeeble: A decaf latte with skim milk. (Larry Yungk)

B-fatulence: a low note tooted on a bassoon. (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)

Beggarrison: A platoon stationed at the Metro exit. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Allegrope: A quick move at the cellist. (Larry Miller, Rockville)

Alcohollday: Rehab. (Sneha Kannan, Cambridge, Mass.)

Benignominious: What a little white lie is. (Jay Shuck,

Minneapolis)

Continuendo: Gossip. (Kevin Dopart)

Argumenstrual: I have no idea what this means, dear. (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)

Blasphemousse: Cool Whip. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Academythology: Get a degree, you'll get a job. (Jim Noble, Lexington Park)

Bygonerds: People who knew how to use a slide rule. (Grace Gray, Bethesda, a First Offender)

Asinineeten: How to describe the doofball who's dating your daughter. (Carl Zirkle, Frederick, a First Offender)

Buxomniscient: Never failing to notice any blouse within eye range. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Diaperiscope: A finger dipped into the Huggie to see if it needs changing. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Bootstrapsallion: John Edwards. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

Correctum: A hemorrhoid operation. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

Corrode: The senior circuit for rusty riders. (Dave Prevar)

Charlatanned: Bottle-bronzed. (Christopher Lamora)

Debutantalizer: That fetching young thing at the country

club.

 (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Agitaters: Protesters at a town hall meeting in Idaho. (Christopher Lamora)

Ancestorment: Thanksgiving dinner with the extended family. (Steve Offutt, Arlington)

Atrophy wife: Future ex-wife. (Jeff Contampasis, Ashburn)

Butterance: The audible aftermath of dinner at Ben's Chili Bowl. (Morris Davis, Gainesville)

Bar mitzvamoose: A Jewish boy who forsakes religious training at the age of 13 years and 1 day. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Bias: Glenn Beck. (Kevin Dopart)

Don Juannabe: A wishful wastrel. (Tom Witte)

And Last: Bloodsportmanteau: Taking this contest way too seriously. (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

See more portmanteau words in the online version of this column: washingtonpost.com/style/investigational.

Next Week: Frittering away the neurons, or Phrases we're going through

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



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 843: Prefrains

Hey, who left these golf clubs over here? Whose woods these are I think I know . . .

Here's a (possibly) new contest for the Invite, suggested by Hall of Fame Loser Kevin Dopart, whose name, according to the Losers' own official statistics, happens to anagram to "Deviant Pork": Provide a sentence or two of lead-in to the first line of a well-known book, poem or (don't worry, you can play, too) song, as in the example above. We're going to be somewhat flexible on what constitutes the first line of a song; if there's an introductory verse that nobody sings, for example, we might be willing to ignore it.



WWW.COOLSTUFF.COM

BELAND TO WORLD: JUST STICK IT! Voodoo Doll Toothpick Holder.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — just in time for the canapes at your most formal holiday party — the Voodoo Doll Toothpick Holder pictured here, thanks to 1,382-time Loser (is that redundant or what?) Russell Beland and his son Adam, who has five blots of ink himself.

This just in: One of last week's First Offenders has decided that we should no longer call him Alexander Ring. He wants us to call him Ring Alexander. We will (since the latter is his name), but only if he calls us Empress The. 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 Monday, Nov. 23. Put "Week 843" 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 Dec. 12. 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 Dave Prevar; this week's honorable-mentions name is by Tom Witte. For his contest idea, Kevin wins a can of Pu-Erh organic tea, donated by Les Greenblatt.

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CAROLYN HAX

Only one rule: Honesty

Adapted from a recent online discussion.

Hi, Carolyn:
I always find one social situation a puzzler. When a guy asks for my number, and I'm not interested, how do I politely say no? And these are cases where I am finding guys to be jerks or too pushy, not where nice guys are just trying to get to know me. I'm assertive in many areas of my life, but this is where the people-pleasing "good girl" in me sometimes butts in and confuses me.

D.C.

"I'm sorry, I don't want to share my number." For some reason, a rejection in nine words sounds less brutal than a rejection in one. It's also a plain, unequivocal and honest answer, where it can be so tempting to fudge: "I don't give out my number," or "I'm seeing someone."

If your unequivocal and honest answer is not good enough for the pushy, then you can say, "I haven't changed my mind" — but do excuse yourself from the conversation at that point. Refusing to take "no" for an answer often signals a refusal to respect boundaries. Admittedly, it still has some advocates, who call it "persistence," but since it bugs you, you'd best make that clear by not sticking around to defend or negotiate your "no."

Re: D.C.'s quandary:
I always find myself getting bitter when people ask questions like this and find it hard to resist making snarky comments ("Oh, gosh, it must be terrible to have



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

guys beating down your door!). I mean, not once has a guy in a bar ever asked for my number. Any advice on dealing with this kind of bitterness?

Anonymous

Stop internalizing other people's experiences? Sure, some people seem to get more than their share of cosmic handouts, but most people have their pros leavened by cons. D.C., for example, gets attention — but also gets dogged by guilt. The rich person you envy may be lonely, have rotten parents, be a chronic malcontent. The current beauty could

be a past ugly duckling . . . and you never know when clearly visible peace and contentment came only after a trip through the gantlet that you weren't around to see.

Having a realistic view of others both stems from and contributes to a realistic view of yourself. And a good feel for your own strengths, along with some acceptance of your weaknesses, is one of the best ways to keep you from resenting everyone who has a strength you wish you had.

There's also some other perspective to be had here: Some people are more attractive than others and get hit on all the time — a liability of its own, to be wanted always for what you look like instead of what you are — and some get hit on a lot because they're approachable.

It's not the end of the romantic world if you come across as less than approachable. It may just mean that bars aren't your place to meet people; you need to rely on the other 95 percent of human gathering places to get your prospects.

To change what you think, it might help just to change what you do.

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

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

DANCE REVIEW

Stepping into lively territory

A step-dancing show is nothing if not demanding. Of its performers, it requires a laser-sharp focus and precision, with each movement sequence so fast and furious that even the smallest error can set in motion a domino chain of rhythmic disaster. And the audience members better be ready to work, too, as it's their job to energize the dancers with boisterous cheers and do call-and-response exercises with gusto. At Step Afrika! its lively performance Thursday at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, both parties held up their end of the bargain.

All the works on the program were well rehearsed, and most, particularly "Ke Nako" and "Shhhhh!", were sleekly structured. The dancers zipped in and out of different lines and formations while slapping, clapping and stomping out intricate rhythms with ease.

Some dances, especially "The Pledge Scene/1989," lost momentum when they incorporated dialogue, which came off as strained and unnatural. And this work's plot was full of head-scratchers: Dancers, who play bumbling fraternity wannabes, suddenly and inexplicably drop the clumsy act to become virtuoso performers. And despite its '80s setting, it incorporates references to Facebook and Twitter.

In "Wade Suite," the central character is a preacher who seems to be using dance as a way to converse with God. Here, Step Afrika! dialed down the sass and swagger to delve into a more spiritual and introspective realm, proving that this usually upbeat, feisty movement style has the potential to tell a broad spectrum of stories. For this piece, the dancers were joined onstage by the High Point High School Concert Choir, which sang with striking maturity and gave a soulful performance that added a critical layer of emotion.

— Sarah Halzack

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



WASHINGTONPOST.COM

Sound and sense at the Phillips Collection

Composer Tristan Murail's style is perfectly suited to the Argento Chamber Ensemble. The musicians known for reinterpreting Western music took their cues from Murail's exploration of custom-designed sounds. Read a review of Thursday's performance at voices.washingtonpost.com/the-classical-beat.