



Carolyn Hax All work, little play

Adapted from a recent online discussion.

Dear Carolyn:

How do people work so much? Seriously. Maybe I'm a big baby, because I've had a real job for only 2 1/2 years and in school I did camp and restaurant jobs, but I am baffled by people who work 60 to 80 hours per week.

I work hard and I'm good at my job, even though I hate it, because it's getting me somewhere I want to go. But even 50 hours per week means I don't work out or cook or see my boyfriend. I consider these elements of a life worth living, and I guess I'm just wondering how people make it all fit (with KIDS!?).

I feel like a wimp because I'm so overwhelmed by working hours that seem like they should be reasonable. Is it an age thing? My friends seem similarly overwhelmed, we're 24-25ish.

Bay Area

I don't think it's about age. Maybe you aren't in the 50-hour habit yet, but you can be in the habit and still object.

I, for one, find it appalling/discouraging/soul-sucking the amount of time people spend at work these days. It's bad for health, bad for relationships, bad for kids, bad for pets, bad for neighborhoods, bad for homes and gardens and arts and other expressions of our less linear selves — essentially bad for all the things we "work" for. Meanwhile we're told that Americans are fat and sedentary, drive angry, let TV raise our kids, shoot each other at astonishing rates, don't read enough, and feel alienated? No kidding.

It's worse now that people with jobs — the lucky ones — have absorbed the workloads of people who've lost their jobs.

I don't mean to sound so pessimistic and angry. People can and do resist this cultural acceleration of the assembly line.

But it's hard to leave at 5 when everyone's slogging till 7. Flexible careers offer relief, but those are in high demand. Two-income households can go down to one income, but, in addition to the financial risk, that often means moving — out of the great school district, into a long commute, or even just away from what feels like home. Without independent wealth, opting out can dent the very quality of life we're trying to restore. And many don't want to opt out of jobs — just the mad hours. Entirely different things.

I don't know what the answer is, except for each person to fight for quality-of-life priorities, and hope that, culturally, we come to our senses.

To Bay Area:

I work a lot, too — but it doesn't suck. I love what I do. I think that helps a lot. I'm also friends with many of my co-workers so when the inevitable late nights occur, we order in dinner and usually end up punchy. My employer also helps: They host monthly happy hours and sponsor volunteer opportunities, and we have a gym in the building. In other words, there are some ways to force a little balance.

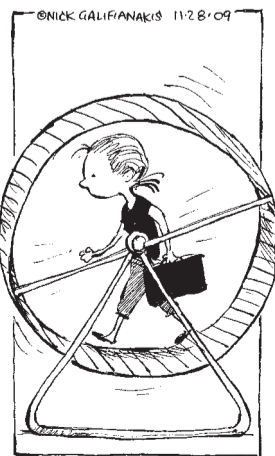
Anonymous

That does help — but it still makes colleagues your de facto family.

There have always been and always will be people who choose long hours. No objection there. It just seems compulsory now, sucking in people who would otherwise be care-giving, library-using, bulb-planting, community-building. That's a society's loss.

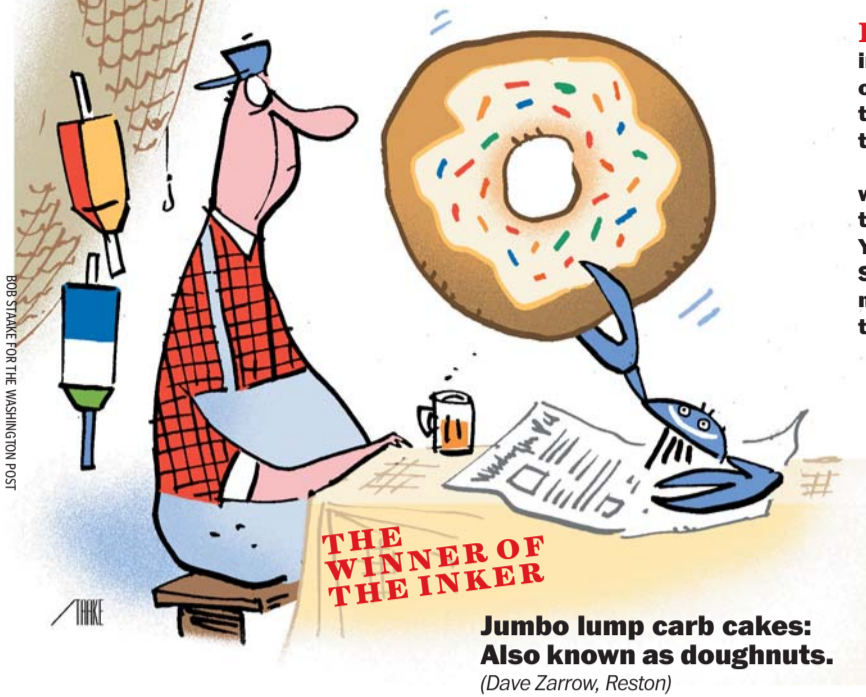
Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www.washingtonpost.com/discussions.

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



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL



Jumbo lump carb cakes: Also known as doughnuts. (Dave Zarrow, Reston)

FARE TOO MIDDLING: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Notdog: Gourmet North Korean sausage. (Kevin Dopart, Washington; Peter Jenkins, Bethesda)

Seven-Lawyer Dip: Chips sold separately. Not intended for intravenous use. Void where prohibited by law. Provided "as is" without any warranty of any kind, expressed or implied... (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)

Poi Pot Pie: A low-cal Cambodian dish. Serves hundreds. (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

Chucky Charms: The cereal that's magically malicious! (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)

Offalafel: A paste of chickpeas and pancreases. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Bunt cake: Made from a light, soft batter. (Kevin Dopart)

Chick in de Van: KFC to go. (Judy Blanchard)

Sole food: Cobbler. (Ron Nessen, Bethesda)

Bean crud: Tofu under a more honest name. (John Shea, Lansdowne, Pa.)

Pecking Duck: Poultry that's perhaps a little undercooked... (Sneha Kannan, Cambridge, Mass.)

Moo Goo Bed Pan: The orderlies switched the trays again! (Larry Meyer, Washington, Va., a First Offender)

Egg Phew Young: A summer dish traditionally made from Easter eggs discovered months later. (Kerry Humphrey, Woodbridge)

Wussabi: Really mild horseradish paste. (May Jampathom, Oakhurst, N.J.)

Shiksabob: Pork, shrimp and cheese on

a skewer. (Judy Blanchard)

Margarrrhea: Tequila mixed with Triple Sec and prune juice. (Dion Black, Washington)

Prime Ribbon: The diet roast beef platter. (Carolyn Eskew, Leesburg, a First Offender)

Spleenda: No-cal giblet substitute. (Judy Blanchard)

Coquilles Saint Joan: Flambeed scallops. (Jane Pacelli, Annandale)

Stir-fly: A popular meal in North Korea. (Rick Haynes)

Dulce de Lecher: Hooters' new dessert item. (Ed Gordon, Georgetown, Tex.)

Belgian Awfuls: A phlegmish dish, similar to Crappes Suzettes. (Michael Fransella, Arlington)

Half-Baked Alaska: A crusty, sweet, insubstantial traditional dish that removes itself prematurely from intense heat. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

Porn Flakes: With a surprise in every box. (Jeff Seigle, Vienna)

Mike Like'n Ike: That famous fruity flavor is coming out in new rainbow

REPORT FROM WEEK 841

in which we asked you to alter slightly the name of a food or dish and describe the result: Those who tend to find the invite a bit too abstruse and highbrow get a break this week. A lot of the names submitted (often by many people) were funny in a juvenile way but gained nothing from their descriptions. That menu includes such specials as Yucky Charms, Drool Whip, Siime-Jims, Shredded What, Shrimp Skippy, Bad Thai, Bananas Fester, flunk steak, meat loathe, buffalo wangs and fatzo ball soup. For this they went to graduate school, a lot of these people.

2 the winner of "The Pop-Up Book of Celebrity Meltdowns": Reader's Digest Condensed Milk: When you're yearning for something white and treacly. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

3 Cheatis: Breakfast of Champions With Asterisks. (Mark Richardson, Washington)

4 Steak Tata: Raw ground udders. (Tom Murphy, Bowie)

colors (not available in all states). (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

Fellini Alfredo: Pasta with dream sauce. (Rick Haynes)

Faux gras: Spam. (Patrick Mattimore, Gex, France)

Hostess Hos: A guilty pleasure. (Craig Dykstra)

Kid Knee Pie: One of Jeffrey Dahmer's favorite desserts. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Prize Nobel Peas: Grown in the White House garden. You can pick them even before they're ripe. (Dan Ward, Springfield, a First Offender)

Lemon harargue pie: "You didn't beat the egg whites long enough, and the oven's too hot, and you're slopping the filling out the sides..." (Lois Douthitt, Arlington)

Limbaugher cheese: So vile you just listen to a wedge of it and gag. (G. Smith, New York)

Honeycrips: Apples the whole gang will enjoy. (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)

Next Week: Ask Backwards, or Inquisition

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 845: Reologisms

In the several neologism contests we've had in the past few months, we've added to the Loserly Lexicon literally hundreds of new words and their definitions. But amid the thousands of entries that didn't see ink, there were a lot of good ideas for words that came with, well, less-than-great definitions.

On this page is a list of 50 genuine Loser-created neologisms. This week: Write a description for any of them. It might include an example, or its use in a sentence. Because you're not also coming up with the word itself, the best-written definitions will win out over what are likely to be many similar ideas.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — just too late for Christmas, in the Invite holiday tradition — two pretty star-shaped ornaments that look like papier-mâché but are in fact éléphant-dung-mâché, donated by Loser in Remission Randy Lee.

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 Loser 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, Dec. 7. Put "Week 845" 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. 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 Kevin Dopart. This week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Chris Doyle.

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

50 genuine Loser-created neologisms!

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Orbituary Overbeering Phoneupsmanship Pillsbury Coughboy Pimposity Prigmatic Scar de la Renta Theoretical Threaty

It's not all wine and roses for Virginia socialites Tareq and Michaela Salahi

CRASHERS FROM CI

both passenger doors advertise "America's Polo Cup."

They met in 1999 at a Christmas party in Margenau's home.

"Tareq was very aggressive about trying to get engaged," Rachel Harshman, who owns a horse farm near Middleburg and was formerly friends with Michaela, said Friday.

The Salahis eventually staged a self-described "wedding of the century," on Oct. 5, 2002, at the Cathedral of St. Matthew The Apostle in downtown Washington.

According a video posted on YouTube, the wedding and the reception (the latter held at the winery) featured "28 Bridesmaids, 28 Groomsman, 8 Flower Girls... a 36 piece Big-Band during dinner & dancing... 186 catering food servers... 36,000 square feet of tenting... 50 Bar tenders... 46 Chefs... 15 Official photographers... 8 Video cameras with full film crew/sound team... one camera man standing on a Construction Crane 300 feet above the Cathedral."

The couple was featured in DC Style magazine during its short-lived run a few years ago. They are posed at mid-distance in a stylish, high-ceiling bar. He's wearing black slacks with a white tuxedo top, hands in pockets. She is next to him in a tight, short dress, turned away, both hands pressed against a wall, head tilted forward, lips pursed into a pout, left leg arched up on tiptoe.

It's a glamorous image. But Harshman, who says the couple owe her tens of thousands of dollars, said she had noted something odd when she had first met Michaela in the 1990s. At the time, she said, Michaela was working jobs in retail and living with her parents in a simple condominium in Oakton. The family was not wealthy, Harshman says. One night out with friends, Harshman said, she was surprised when Michaela casually mentioned that she was a model. "I said, 'You never mentioned this to me before.'" Later, Harshman said, "it grew into 'supermodel.' I

ignored it half the time."

Last year Michaela, now 44, told a Post reporter that she had been a Washington Redskins cheerleader, and she has been photographed at several alumni events. But the cheerleaders' director of marketing, Melanie Coburn, wrote in an e-mail: "We have no record of her being a member of the Washington Redskins Cheerleaders."

Nor could the Washington Redskins Cheerleaders Alumni Association find any record of her, said Terri Crane-Lamb, president of the association.

One former cheerleader, Connie McKee, said Michaela came to alumni events, but no one remembered her being on the squad. McKee and Crane-Lamb noticed Michaela attending WRCAA events. "I remember Terri and I talking: 'What's the deal? Does anyone remember her?'"

Tareq Salahi, 40, a polo player and wine expert, was also running up a sizable number of detractors.

He got involved in the Courage Cup, a polo match launched in 2004 by Greg Ball, a former Air Force officer. Salahi was later one of the board members who sided with Ball in a bitter feud (involving e-mails blasted to hundreds of area polo fans) over who controlled the event — Ball, or the two women he asked to run it in 2006 while he pursued a state legislature seat in New York.

A Post investigation later found



WHERE'S CAMILLA?: The Salahis mingle with Prince Charles, one of the many celebrities the couple has taken pictures with.

that as much as \$10,000 in ticket sales to the Poolesville, Md., match — though widely advertised as benefiting polo training for underprivileged kids — ended up in a political action campaign started by Ball, and eventually into his campaign treasury.

Salahi then launched America's Polo Cup in 2007.

He and the event were sued for more than \$300,000 by Market Salamander, a high-profile catering operation in Middleburg in 2008, alleging nonpayment of services for a Polo Cup event that was widely canned. (The Salahis countersued.)

Market Salamander officials did not return calls Friday.

This spring, the organization hosted a United States-Italy polo match, with performances by Huey Lewis and the News and fireworks to benefit the Journey

for the Cure Foundation, a Salahi-run charity that said it raised money for childhood diseases.

But the next week, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services sent out an official caution noting that the foundation had, as of three days after the event, "not registered with or been granted the appropriate exempt status by the Commissioner as required by law."

The organization's Web site now lists a federal tax ID number. It was not immediately clear whether the warning from the state has been resolved.

On Wednesday, the day after the state dinner, Michaela Salahi came into Georgetown's Roche Salon. She had been there the week before, a visit that was filmed for possible inclusion in "The Real Housewives of Washington," a potential reality show

planned for Bravo.

On her second visit, she was excited about the White House event.

"She was telling me all about the dinner," Dennis Roche said. "She was, like, it was really great. She said they didn't get home until 5. Then she came back in here."

As to how she got into the event, "she alluded to me is that she had White House clearance," Roche said. "I took that to mean, if she had White House clearance, she had an invitation."

Diane Weiss, tasting room manager at Oasis, said Secret Service agents came to the winery Friday, seeking the couple. She quoted one agent as saying: "We're not here to arrest them today. We're just looking to talk to them. It's very imperative that we talk to them." (The Warren County Report newspaper first reported the Secret Service's visit to the winery on its Web site.)

She said the agents spoke to Tareq's parents. His father briefly got on the telephone with The Post before handing it back to Weiss. Corinne Salahi was not immediately available. "She's a very private person," Weiss said. "She prefers not to be talking to anybody."

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Staff writers Cindy Boren, Michael Cotterman, Wil Haygood, James Hohmann, David Montgomery, Dan Morse and Ian Shapira, and staff researchers Meg Smith and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU

