CD

CAROLYN HAX

Sister-in-law's

myopia about

miscarriage

is hurtful

It's been a pretty crappy year in

general for my husband and me, one

of the main crappy things being three

consecutive miscarriages, which now

My sister-in-law (husband's sis) just

wonderful, we're so happy to have a

also has some rather, um, particular

problem-free pregnancy and delivery.

cute little niece. However. "Marv"

child-carrying/hirthing process.

Essentially, she thinks there's no

anything related to pregnancy and

babies, and that women should just

high-and-mighty attitude that's hard

but not all three, and she likes to talk

about pregnancy and childbirth. A lot.

As does her husband (who now also

subject will come up a lot, and I need

some help quelling my inner desire to

throat-punch them when they go on

and on about how nothing can go

wrong in pregnancy that can't be

women who see doctors are only

know about, but their general

want to scream.

fixed with faith and extra broccoli;

causing themselves more problems;

etc. I know it's unfair to expect them

to know about something they don't

opinions toward this subject make me

Wait a minute — there's nothing

unfair about expecting them to have

a clue that their one experience

egocentric, not adults.

doesn't apply categorically to the

experience of every other person on

Earth. We expect toddlers to be that

Next time they start blathering

on, there is absolutely nothing wrong with saving, as calmly as

Wanting to throat-punch SIL

fancies himself an expert). So this

She knows about one of our losses,

reason to ever see a doctor for

pray, eat healthy and trust their

really condescending,

to explain.

bodies and all will work out. It's a

thanks to her easy-shmeasy,

have us going to embarrassing

had a baby in January. Great,

doctors and doing embarrassing

Adapted from a recent online

discussion:

things.

Dear Carolyn:

views on the whole

The Washington Post

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

REPORT FROM WEEK 859

in which we asked you to tell us jokes in any of four given forms: "If they can ____, why can't they ___?"; "You can ___, but you can't ___"; "It's not the ___, it's the ___"; or "If you ___, they will ___."

> () the winner of the Loser key chain custom-made in Thailand: You can rest in a courtroom, but you can't court in a restroom. – L. Craig (John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)

You can love your fellow man in Virginia, but you can't send Out invitations. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

If they can create a thin, pocket-size, touch-screen-enabled e-mailer/Internet browser/game machine/organizer/ cellphone, why can't they create a cancel button in an elevator? (Ari Unikoski, Tel Aviv)

BUT THEY COULDN'T: HONORABLE MENTIONS

IF THEY CAN put a man on the moon, WHY CAN'T THEY put a man on the moon? (Bruce Alter. on vacation in Port St. Lucie. Fla.)

If they can train puppies to

can't they train yuppies to

use the newspaper, why

(Beverley Sharp, Washington)

use the newspaper?

If they can make a microwave oven, why can't they make a microwave chiller? (I want a cold one NOW!) (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

If they can reenact Civil War battles, why can't they reenact witch dunkings? Oh, and the witches should wear flimsy T-shirts. (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)

If they can create plastics that won't break down in a landfill for centuries, why can't they use them to make a garden hose that lasts more than two summers? (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

If they can have Winter Olympics curling, why can't they have Summer Olympics shuffleboard? (Jeff Contompasis)

If they can tell me I didn't need to dial 1 for a call to a different area code, why can't they just ignore the freaking 1 and put through the freaking call? (Elden Carnahan. Laurel)

If they can put a man on the moon, why can't they put a man on "The View"? (Barry Koch. Catlett. Va.)

If they can make a phone that lets you look up movie times and buy tickets, why can't they automatically silence the phone during the movie? (Joe Neff, Warrington, Pa.)

If they can call the theory of

evolution a fallacy by finding a single unexplained fact, why can't they do the same for religion? (Kevin Dopart, Washington

YOU CAN turn words like "calendar" and "friend" into verbs. BUT YOU CAN'T illiterate me into doing it. (Russell Beland)

You can put your best foot forward, but you can't get anywhere unless you also put your worst foot forward. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

You can win the Nobel Peace Prize without doing anything. but you can't win the **Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes without** entering. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

You can live by the Bible, but you can't die by the Bible. unless it's maybe it's one of those big Gutenberg Bibles with the metal clasps. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

You can pet your mate, but you can't mate your pet. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

You can call it a tea party, but you can't drink anything but Kool-Aid. (Larry Yungk)

You can avoid contradictions, but you can't avoid contradictions. (Jav Shuck, Minneapolis)

You can take my committee chair, videotape me smoking a crack pipe, give me a field sobriety test after a traffic stop and censure me for awarding a city contract to my girlfriend, but you can't

Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

Online discussion Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the

Olnev

It's not the heat, it's the high atmosphere that elevates the vapor pressure to the extent

It's not the view of Russia from Alaska, it's the . . . well, everything else. (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

IF YOU leave me now, and take away the biggest part of me. THEY WILL probably ask you what you're going to do with my butt. (Randy Lee, Burke)

If you walk out of a bathroom with Nutella all over vour fingers, they will not get the ioke. Even when you lick it off. Trust me on this. (Kevin Dopart)

If you text your entry while trying to drive, th (Kevin Dopart)

And Last: It's not the number of entries you submit to the Empress. it's the submission to the Empress in your entries. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo., who includes an embarrassingly bad suck-up poem to the Empress with his entries

Next Week: Ten, anyone? or

every freaking week)

The X Games

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2010

Week 863: It's Post time

Tiny Woods x Pleasant Prince = Tiger's Cub Scout Dublin x Odysseus = Bloomsday Alcindor x Bravo Whiskey = Abdul-TheBar

ne of our oldest and most ridiculously popular contests: Below is a list of 100 of the almost 400 horses eligible for this year's Triple Crown races. This week: "Breed" any two of them and name the "foal," as in the examples above. Your personal stable of entries cannot exceed 25. As in real life. the names cannot be longer than 18 characters, including spaces and symbols.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style



A Little Warm Extraextraordinary Fenway Faithful Ace of Aces Alcindor **First Dude** Ashore Get a Grip Aspire **Guys Reward** Awesome Act Hear Ye Hear Ye **Backtalk** Homeboykris **Beethoven** Ice Box In the Paint Biloxi Black Snowflake Interactif Blind Luck Johore **Boisterous** Kollege **Bravo Whiskey** Launch N Relaunch **Bulls and Bears Leaving New York Call Shot** Lethal Combination Canthavehim **Liquidity Event Catch Twenty Two** Lookin at Lucky **Chief Counsel Make History Clear Alternative** Make Music for Me **Close to the Edge** Marble Arch **Colonel Mustard** Convevance Crisp **D' Funnybone Deep Darkness Delong Road Discreetly Mine Down With Dixie Drive Home** Dryfly Dublin Enclosure Endorsement Preamble

Excessive Passion

Marching Tune Moojab Mr. Saturdaynight **Nacho Friend** Nextdoorneighbor No Shenanigans Noah's Dream Odysseus **One Nation Overcommunication Party at My Place Pleasant Prince**

Privilaged

Prizefighting **Psychic Income** Radiohead **Raging Wit** Rule **Saw Perfection** Scuba Diver She Be Wild **Shrimp Dancer** Silenced So Elite **Spangled Star** Spicer **Stay Put** Super Saver Switch **The Director The Program** Thousand Excuses **Tiny Woods Toboggan Slide** Trackman **Twirling Candy** Utopian Walking the Beach Who's Up Winaholic **Winslow Homer** Worldly Worth a Buck Wow Wow Wow

Ziggy's Stardust

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, April 12. Put "Weel 863" 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 to be published Derby Day, May 1. 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 subhead is by Kevin Dopart. The list of horses is taken from the full one at BloodHorse.com

take my dignity. – M.B., Washington (Stephen Dudzik, IT'S NOT the subtle feeling of rejection, IT'S the mace. (Barry Koch)

water content in the that evaporative cooling is ineffective. Also, you should take your hand out of the toaster oven. (Tim Livengood, Columbia, whose only previous ink was another geeky entry in 2003)

can manage, that it's wonderful they had such a great childbirth experience — but that people with infertility, or who have lost a child or wife in childbirth might find their views offensive, since they're suggesting these are the victims' fault.

Since they'll likely just reiterate their prayer-and-broccoli views, prep yourself by reading "Birth: The Surprising History of How We Are Born," by Tina Cassidy. Said history includes some shocking bits on how the tail of fashion has wagged the childbirth dog - not just back in the day but even now. (Be warned: The book describes many a birth gone wrong.) Suggest they read it, too, since they wouldn't want to build a worldview on one pregnancy, right?

I suggest this despite having little hope that calm reasoning will get vou anywhere with these relatives. But it will give you a clear and concise precursor to your saying, next time, "I'd prefer we talk about something else. How about those Caps?"

It sounds as if you're predisposed to just staying quiet through their blather, and I can understand why. But what they're saying is offensive, no different from other categories of offense where people don't think twice about speaking up. So do speak up, please.

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.

ONICK GALIFIANAKIS 04.03.10

NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

'Master Class,' making the most of a different diva

THEATER REVIEW FROM C1

Where Caldwell made for a dizzvingly ravenous Callas — in her delivery of the pair of autobiographical monologues woven into the play, you could feel an almost diseased need for attention – Daly's portrayal is less tightly wound, a bit more turned inward. Caldwell took Callas's fury over her ravaged voice and her insecurities about her appearance and used it to assert her primacy over the eager next generation parading before her.

As each young opera singer marched onto the stage to sing and to bear her withering verdict, Caldwell seemed to be rendering an even harsher judgment on herself. It was if, at some level, Callas were waiting all evening to have her darkest shames exposed: the shambles of her personal life, her shortsighted exploitation of her gifts.

Daly's Callas is just as much the priceless put-down artist. You can tell how much McNally loved her, because all the best moments of "Master Class" belong to the opera star's fiendish tongue. An audience hangs on the skillful pauses Daly and her capable director, Stephen Wadsworth, build in, as Callas prepares to castigate a student or recall the inferior work of a rival soprano. (She even attacks members of the audience.) Mentioning Joan Sutherland, for instance, Daly resignedly holds a beat, as if to ponder how gingerly to characterize a person with an insurmountable handicap. "She did her best," she says, finally.

The twist in Daly's Callas is that she's a little less the monster, a little more fragile her bluster more easily challenged. When the last student, Sharon (Laquita Mitchell) finally stands up to her, the table-turning doesn't come across quite as explosively as in the past. That isn't a deficiency, just a difference: Daly's Callas expresses a vulnerability compatible with a softer outer shell.

If "Master Class" is little more than a vehicle for Callas to unleash her ego for a healthy run around the stage, what's wrong with that? It's an ego trip well worth the ride. The play, inspired by a series of master classes that the alwayscontroversial Callas, who died in 1977 at age 53, conducted at Juilliard, is structured as one. Three young singers, played by the accomplished Mitchell, Ta'u Pupu'a and Alexandra Silber, take their turns before Callas and the accompanist at the piano (a winningly deferential Jeremy Cohen), ostensibly to learn. If they listen closely, they will get valuable advice, particularly as it addresses Callas's concerns about the Achilles' heel of so many opera



EVY MAGES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

WITHER FORECAST: Laquita Mitchell and Tyne Daly in "Master Class."

singers: an inability to act. Or as she might put it, a failure to be Norma or Lady Macbeth or Tosca.

But the audience is here for another sort of immersion. "This isn't about me," Daly declares disingenuously, early in the play. Some people earn the right to be narcissistic holy terrors, and perhaps what's so watchable about Callas cutting a singer to ribbons is knowing that over a turbulent career, she's given and given to the

point of psychic exhaustion – that she asks far less of these singers than what she demanded of herself.

The visage of the versatile Daly, who, among other things, starred in TV's trailblazing female cop drama "Cagney & Lacey" and played Momma Rose in a celebrated Broadway revival of "Gypsy," does not, in the abstract, invite immediate comparisons with the glamorous soprano. The transformation, then, is impressive.

Dressed by Martin Pakledinaz in what seems a tribute to Chanel, and wearing dark hair pulled back — in a wig by the superb Paul Huntley, Daly's got the look. (And as Callas instructs us, one absolutely must have a "look" or as the "Gypsy" strippers sing, "You gotta have a gimmick.")

Wadsworth, an experienced opera director who's staged Molière at the Shakespeare Theatre Company, has come up with an effective way to theatricalize Callas's memory-driven monologues: the platform on which designer Thomas Lynch places the piano divides and recedes for Daly's spoken arias. Even if they are probably important to an understanding of Callas's life, these interludes remain less dramatically vigorous than when the star mixes it up with the singers – and us.

A fringe benefit of experiencing the three McNally plays, which continue in repertory, could be inadvertent: All the opera talk stimulates an appetite for the real thing. After three nights of rapturous characterizations of "La Sonnambula" and "Norma," those more partial to theater than opera will be persuaded to cross the border more often

marksp@washpost.com

MASTER CLASS

by Terrence McNally. Directed by Stephen Wadsworth. Lighting, David Lander; sound, Jon Gottlieb, With Clinton Brandhagen, About two hours. Through April 18 at the Kennedy Center. Visit www.kennedy-center.org or call 202-467-4600.

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



