



CAROLYN HAX

Wife material: Empty words?

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn: I'm in my 20s. I've been in three major relationships, and each one ended with the guy saying, "You're exactly the kind of girl I want to marry someday." What does this mean? Is it just something people say to soften the blow of dumping someone? I'd rather be the kind of girl someone DOES marry rather than the one who gets dumped to make way for the next one, so I'm starting to take offense at hearing this again and again.

You're a cool one — I would have been offended at the first dropping of that makes-dumper-feel-better bull. But as a three-timer, you need to look at yourself as the common denominator, to see whether you're sabotaging yourself.

Do you go for restless men, and present yourself as the sturdy accommodator? This isn't the only possibility, just a common one. And, seductive. Wanting someone to like you is strong motivation to try to please him, to be loving, supportive, hard-working, unflappable — i.e., to morph into Cliche Wife.

Of course, these traits are admirable ones, and so feel like the right thing to do. Where it all goes wrong is when you're pushing your own personality/needs/wishes/quirks aside to present this willfully low-maintenance front. That will leave your mate feeling dissatisfied; healthy people, at least, want to be in a relationship with a full-fledged person, not a spousebot.

Again, this is just one common trap, and it's not necessarily the trap you're in — but it's so common that it's worth considering first, if only to rule it out.

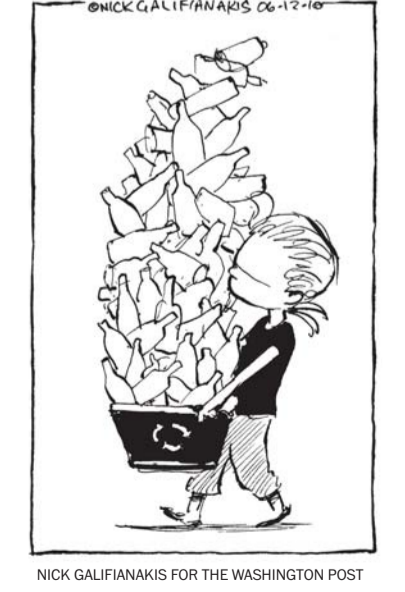
Have a look at www.niaaa.nih.gov for good information on alcohol and what constitutes abuse. The FAQ is very straightforward. Also consider your friend's motives. It's possible s/he was being nosy and presumptuous — after all, who knows how often you empty the bin, or whether you had guests recently or ...? — but it's also possible this friend already had concerns and used the bin as an opening.

Dear Carolyn: One of my friends hates my husband. It's a personality clash; she has never liked him and he knows it. After a recent (rare) social gathering, she sent me a scathing e-mail about how she can't tolerate him. How do I know when I should just "break up" with her over this? There are very few spouses/SOs she deems acceptable. I am also upset because she's spoken her mind, I've politely listened, and I'm very happily married.

Question for you: Why isn't this an easy decision, at this point? If you do want to salvage the friendship, then you can certainly repeat for her the last line of your letter to me.

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

REPORT FROM WEEK 869 in which we asked you to come up with novel clues for any of the words in the actual crossword shown here: So many Losers offered a new clue for every freakin' word; however, we lack the freakin' space to show them. Here are the best. Note that some of these clues require you to read the word creatively; for example, the clue for BETE needs to be read as "Bet E."

THE WINNER OF THE INKER 57 Across: IRONLADY: The ferrous maiden of them all (Dana Austin, Falls Church)

- 2 winner of the Baby Shower "gun" that shoots out "infants": 1 Down: DODO: One mixed-up DOOD (Craig Dykstra, Centerville) 3 22A: AETNA: Latin for "we don't cover that" (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville) 4 44D: PRYNNE: She studied male anatomy and got an A (John Winant, Arlington)

DOWNGRIDDED: HONORABLE MENTIONS

1A: DEADLAST: Either Paul or Ringo (Mike Hammer, Arlington)

Good name for an embalming fluid (Phil Battey, Alexandria; Fred Dawson, Beltsville; Ann Martin, Bracknell, England)

Short-lived boxing glove brand (Kevin Dopart, Washington; Washington; Judith Cottrill, New York)

15A: ONENINTH: Participant in a ménage à trois à trois (Craig Dykstra)

16A: ARNICA: Painting depicting the economic devastation under Gov. Schwarzenegger (Ben Frey, Frederick)

20A: PIXEL: A fairy dust mite (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)

27A: ISBAD: The administration's Twitter report on the economy (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

32A: AHM: The difference between a micro-mini and a belt (Kevin Dopart)

End of an agnostic's prayer (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Strom Thurmond's answer to "Are you Strom Thurmond?" (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

33A: SPIRAL: An Agnew-Gore ticket (William Bradford, Washington)

36A: GOFORTHEJUGULAR: Don't let them kid you about your name, Ular — have another drink (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

39A: OEO: Elmer Fudd's favowit cookie (many entrants)

41A: BETE: Gamble on the last SAT answer (Kevin Dopart)

42A: BRACELET: Kate Moss's hula hoop. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)



CROSSWORD BY PAULA GAMACHE

- Baby-tooth straightener (Ann Martin) 48A: ATLAS: Google Earth 0.0 (Ari Unikoski, Tel Aviv) 50A: AUTRY: Go for the gold (many entrants) 55A: STONER: The patron saint of work (Tom Panther, Springfield, a First Offender) One who believes the movie "JFK" was nonfiction (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington) 57A: IRONLADY: Elin Nordegren (Barry Blechman, Washington, a First Offender) 61A: ANGELA: Farrah, unquestionably (Malcolm Fleschner, Palo Alto, Calif.) 1D: DODO: Aeneas's stupider girlfriend (Ann Martin) 4D: DNA: Abbrev. for "Daddy's now authenticated" (Beverly Sharp, Washington) 5D: LIMPID: Driver's license after it's been through the wash (many entrants) 6D: ANAIS: "And what is the only acceptable grade, young man?" (Craig Dykstra)

7D: STAX: What comes before "T. Spend" in Pelosi's to-do list — J. Boehner, Ohio (Kevin Dopart)

8D: THREEPIECESUITS: Bikinis for conjoined twins (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.; Vytas V. Vergeer, Washington, a First Offender)

9D: MAT: What Arizona is setting out on the border, embossed with "Unwelcome" (Jim Noble, Lexington Park)

11D: ONMEDS: Fight song for the Mayo Clinic football team (Howard Walderman)

12D: RIBTICKLER: Adam's obstetrician (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

13D: ICANRELATE: Incestuous pickup line (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)

23D: CAMO: For hiding in plane sight (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

27D with 27A: IAGO-ISBAD: The CliffsNotes of the CliffsNotes for "Othello" (Craig Dykstra)

29D: BEFORELONG: John Silver's prepubescent years (Randy Lee, Burke)

43D: ASANET: Role of a bra in strip poker (Pam Sweeney)

44D: PRYNNE: Impuritan (Dudley Thompson)

47D: GROPE: Costume for a plus-size stripper (many entrants)

49D: SEAL: Eskimos eat this and blubber — and so would you (Jim Noble)

53D: IDEO: Converts a hut into a hideout (Jeff Contompasis)

54D: NYSE: Where to get broker (Kevin Dopart)

58D: LOL: What Bill Gates does on the way to the bank (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

Next Week: Let's play Nopardy, or One-hit wonderers

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 873: Back to Square 1A

45 Down: POSTA: A newspaper that's sometimes saucy, sometimes cheesy, but almost always filling, especially for the price.

Four weeks ago we presented you with a completed grid of a crossword and asked you to come up with novel clues for its words, many of which appear in today's results. While devoting his typical absurd amount of time on that Invite, Craig Dykstra came up with an idea for another contest:

The grid that appears today is the same one by Paula Gamache that we printed four weeks ago — but with most of the boxes shaded in. This week: Replace the shaded letters in any of the words with your own letters to come up with a different word or phrase — either an existing word or one you make up — and define it humorously, as in the example above. It doesn't matter if the grid no longer works as a crossword. Label your word with the grid number it starts with, e.g., "42 Across," or else it gets tossed. Maximum number of entries: 25 — the Empress needs a break and you, sir or madam, need a life.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a prize that the Empress wishes had come in time for the foal-naming contests: It's one of those novelty key chains with a little rubbery animal (in this case a horse) that you squeeze to make "poop," then unsqueeze to make unpoop. Well, in true Loserly fashion, this horse suffered some injury and is permanently stuck in the poop mode. Donated by the well-contained Loser Drew Bennett.

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 Inks). 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 21. Put "Week 873" 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 July 10. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. Both the revised title for next week's results and this week's honorable-mentions subhead are by Kevin Dopart.

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

Coolheadedness on parade at Mt. Rainier Elementary School

PARADE FROM CI

own food. The number of peace days for the year are posted throughout the building and updated daily during afternoon announcements. As Reed talks, three first-graders step quietly into her office to sign the principal's wall, covered in green construction paper with a blue peace sign in the middle, as a reward for good behavior. This trip is for doing good work, but "once I came for integrity," says Jayden Thompson, 7. "I was quiet and doing good when the teacher wasn't looking." Reed has been an educator in Prince George's County for 22 years. "We take the time to react to violence. We don't take the time to prevent it. And it does take time," she says. And an early start. Reed says she's had two suspensions this year — both sixth-graders. One was for the theft of a teacher's cellphone and another was because a student brought a knifelike weapon to class. The school lost

peace days for both infractions. Boys, especially, are under incredible pressure to be cool, says Reed, and you have to prepare them to make the right decisions when no one is there to help them choose. "I wouldn't say secondary is too late, but it's a very powerful thing when you have a little boy say, I signed the wall for integrity," Reed says. As she talks, laughter wafts through her window from afternoon field-day activities, such as water-balloon fights, an activity she says that many other schools wouldn't even try. "It's increased our sense of play. We don't question the children's respect for us or ours for them." Language arts specialist Mary Hara-way, who has been at Mount Rainier for 22 years, waves along the parade route. "I came when the school was not peaceful," she says. "There was a lot of fighting. I was threatened by one boy who said he was going to kill me." Now, she says she's

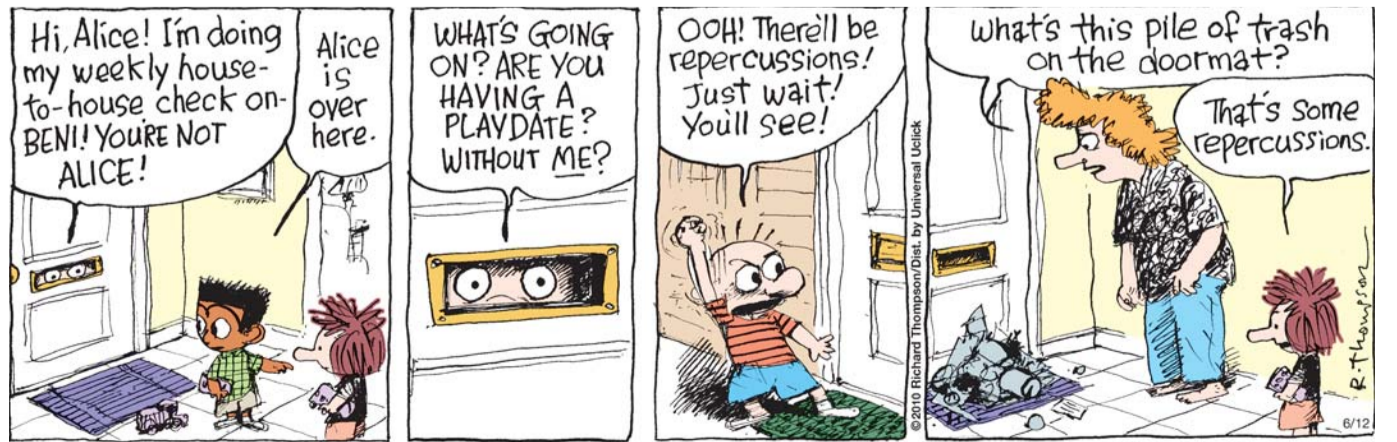
already 10 years past eligible retirement age. "I love these kids! I get to teach all day without interruption." Julianna Thomas, 16, a flag girl in the Northwestern band, used to attend Mount Rainier and marched in the Peace Parade every year. Those days were "so exciting," she says. To earn the parade, "everyone tried to have a really good day. ... Other schools are more hostile." As the parade winds down, students, parents, teachers and onlookers mingle in front of the school and snap those last photos. Some kids are still carrying their pinwheels. Teachers are packing up the dove for next year. And leftover from field day are the chalk remnants of a tick-tack-toe game scribbled across the red bricks on the side of the school. A smattering of X's. And peace signs instead of O's.

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DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON



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