



CAROLYN HAX

## Living together can keep couples from growing fully

While I'm away, readers give the advice:

On living together before marriage:

So often I observe — when a young couple has been living together — one partner is far more interested in marriage than the other, but they are both too insecure to break up after investing several years in the relationship. (Not to mention the daunting task of disentangling their finances, furniture, pets etc.)

The years they lived together were the years they couldn't/shouldn't have been independent: learning to know themselves, to stand on their own two feet and meet other people. I find it heartbreaking to perform these weddings, but haven't had a lot of luck talking couples out of them.

Bottom line: The lack of courage and money to live independently gives birth to a lot of short-term marriages. Having comfort and companionship like marriage, without the commitment, short-circuits a lot of growing up.

The Reverend Mrs. E.

On who pays for dates:

I never let a guy pay for a date, always insisting on paying my own way. So that if I wanted to get him to bed, I never felt like I was being paid to, and he could know it was because I really liked him and wanted it as much as he did. This was my young, hormone-driven self choosing. Who knew?

No regrets. I took control of my own life, my own sexual expression, and was never under any pressure to conform to dating expectations. I can honestly say I never had a bad date.

Had bad relationships, good ones, and a bad marriage, but wound up with one of those amazing, life-long loves that shakes the earth and digs down deep. I make more money than he does, and he does our taxes and laundry, and cooks for me when I'm late from work. I'll take what I got over a few free meals.

On being the one who does all the work to organize things for friends:

I'm also the guy who keeps up with people. I'm 42, and I have some friends I've known since sixth grade, some I've known since 11th grade, some I've known since college, some I've known since I taught at a little school in Honduras after college, some I've known since graduate school.

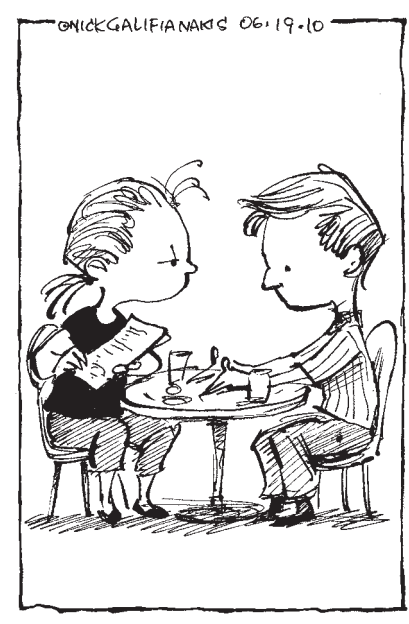
And I'm the one who takes the lead. I don't resent it. All these many friendships mean a lot to me, and they mean a lot to my friends. I don't mind being the one who makes the call or writes a note or tracks somebody down. My friends feel appreciated to hear from me, and that makes me feel good.

My wife tells me it's a kind of gift, even if it's only a small one. Everybody has gifts; some are showy and some are mundane. This is one of mine, the need and drive to keep up friendships, even when the friends are far away and wrapped up with their own lives and can't do it on their own. And I love my friends, all of them. That's reason enough to keep doing this; it isn't a chore, it's a joy.

D.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or [tellme@washpost.com](mailto:tellme@washpost.com).

**ONLINE DISCUSSION** Carolyn Hax's weekly Web chat is at noon Fridays at [www.washingtonpost.com/discussions](http://www.washingtonpost.com/discussions).



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

# THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## REPORT FROM WEEK 870

In which we printed a list of phrases that were entries for the Week 865 Googlenope contest (i.e., they couldn't be found on Google at the time) and asked you to provide questions that the 'nopes might answer:



**A. "Tattoos your mom will love":**

**Q. Daddy, what are you going to get me during your next custody weekend?** (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

## QUIZ NOS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

● **"The ruly and grunted mob":** What do they become when you slip Valium into their tea bags? (Russell Beland)

How would you describe the crowd reacting to PBS's cancellation of "Bill Moyers' Journal"? (Roy Ashley, Washington)

What's the nickname for the Canadian Mafia? (Randy Lee, Burke)

● **"Dick Cheney at his cuddliest":** What do you call a guy who shoots you in the face? (Craig Dykstra, Centerville; Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

What will the former veep's tombstone say? (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)

In terms of warm fuzzies, what ranks between wolverine attack and holistic colonoscopy? (Russell Beland)

● **"Tattoos your mom will love":** What are your med school diploma and law degree engraved on your biceps? (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

What include "If you can read this, you're too close"? (Larry Flynn, Greenbelt)

● **"More awesome than a meal of road-kill possum":** What did West Virginia reject as its state motto in favor of "Montani Semper Liberi"? (Pam Sweeney, Kevin Dopart, Washington)

What's a meal of road-kill possum with a side of armadillo on the half-shell? (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

What was the reaction of Bill Clinton to his first taste of British cuisine at Oxford? (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

● **"My condolence card to Bernie Madoff":** What's that origami middle finger? (Mark Richardson, Washington)

Happy Adoptive Grandparents' Day! Come on, is there anything Hallmark doesn't have a product for? (Russell Beland)

2 the winner of the Obama bobbletorso:

**A. "The ruly and grunted mob"**

**Q. What was the benefit of secondhand smoke at the NORML rally?** (Cheryl Davis, Arlington)

3 **"Larry King workout DVD":**

**What includes the segments "Pulling Up Your Suspenders," "Tossing Softball Questions" and "Tying the Knot"?** (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

4 **"E. Coli Puns":**

**Which distinguished gentleman escorted Sam and Ella to the Bad Word play?** (Pie Snelson, Silver Spring)

● **"A Luddite visionary":**

**Who invented the steam calculator?** (Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)

What do the more gracious Apple partisans call Bill Gates? (Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia)

● **"Tildes, umlauts and schwas":** What did Victor Borge save for his randier late-night shows? (Leighanne Mazure, Forest Hills, N.Y.)

What on the menu tips you off that this might not be a very authentic Chinese restaurant? (Mike Peck, Alexandria)

What law firm should you contact if you have been diacritically injured? (Mike Gips, Bethesda)

● **"Avoid these potty training missteps":** What article advises parents not to teach toddlers the mnemonic "First you sit, then you . . ." (Cheryl Davis)

What advice includes not to tell your child, "If you don't give the Poop Monster his pound, he'll come and take it out of you?" (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

What did Gov. Schwarzenegger tell his chief of protocol while planning a big gala? (Randy Lee)

● **"Larry King workout DVD":** What is "Sweating With the Oldie"? (Lawrence McGuire)

Where, for once, might you hear Larry King say something that could make someone sweat? (Kevin Dopart)

Next Week: Remarquees, or Nutflix

**Online discussion** Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at [washingtonpost.com/styleconversational](http://washingtonpost.com/styleconversational).

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Week 874: Stat us

Apple martini Slurpees and some sort of glop that appeared to be muskrat with ziti. Late New Year's resolution: Never accept a dinner invite from Lady Gaga again!

For the three of you out there who aren't yet familiar with Facebook: Everyone with a Facebook account can post a "status line" — basically a short announcement that's broadcast to the person's "friends" who see it on their "news feed." Facebook users often use their status lines to say what they're doing today, what they just did, when they'll be away from home in case any burglars are reading this, etc. But many people also use their status lines for various wry observations and words of (dubious) wisdom: One of the most off-the-wall Facebook puns is our own Bob Staake, who entertains his 2,442 friends with such pronouncements as "A riding lawnmower: One of 50,000 household items that can't be wrapped in a tortilla — easily, I mean."

Bob is so enamored of Facebook that he offers this week's contest:

Write a funny Facebook status line — anywhere up to 420 characters (or 30 words, to be safe if you don't want to count) but far shorter passages are welcome — that incorporates at least seven of the 50 words and phrases listed below, as in Bob's example above. You may make the word plural or change its tense, and may also change capitalization. You don't get ink just for fitting in dozens of words on the list; you get ink for being funny and clever. You don't have to use your line as your Facebook status, or even have a Facebook account, but if you do, both the Empress and Bob will be happy to accept your friend request.

The words: glop; rash; Lady Gaga; swerve; tapas; BP; ginormous; museum; dental; frisky; wireless; infomercial; asparagus; tuba; goalie; hyperventilate; pineapple; squishy; projectile; dinner; tea bag; harpsichord; Cuisinart; New Yorker cartoon; Metro; muskrat; vacation; Lindsay; strewn; ziti; zit; Secretariat; Tupperware; apple; escalator; trophy; Slurpee; effete; acid-free; parental control; venison; fastball; martini; status; otter; bicuspid; Fenty; anagram; chronic; Santa.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives an idiotic little diorama consisting of a cardboard presidential desk at which sits an egg-shaped stone. It is called Prez BaRock. Ho ho! Passed along by Style's Christian Hettinger.

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](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, June 28. Put "Week 874" 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 17. 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 Beverly Sharp; this week's honorable-mentions subhead was sent by both Chris Doyle and Tom Witte.

## DANCE REVIEW

# Ballet Memphis adds Southern sensations at Kennedy Center

BY SARAH KAUFMAN

There's a Southern thing going on at the Kennedy Center's Ballet Across America series this week. It's a fascinating thing, too. Following the success of North Carolina Dance Theatre's bluegrass romp on the opening-night program, Ballet Memphis told us something quieter, more troubling but just as vibrantly alive with Trey McIntyre's "In Dreams," performed Thursday night at the Opera House.

"In Dreams," choreographed in 2007, is a small work: two men and three women dressed in black, a tribute to Roy Orbison, to whose songs they dance. The lighting is low and intimate, as in some nighttime haunt. The dancing is clear, expansive and uncluttered. Orbison's magnificent voice fills in the rest of the picture, flooding the stage, washing over the seats with his distinctive emotional fullness. It delivers the potent surprise that North Carolina's pairing of bluegrass and ballet did. Orbison and ballet: Who'd have imagined that one could refresh the other, and both would emerge tinged with even deeper feeling?

McIntyre distorts ballet steps for emotional effect, substituting broken angles and flat feet where you expect long lines, but he preserves a silky, stylized elegance, even in the sudden collapses and shudders. There was an especially poignant duet to "Crying," danced by Steven McMahon and Jane Rehm, where falling backward was the silent response to Orbison's anguish. Rehm melts into McMahon's arms as if her bones had dissolved; later, when McMahon throws himself backward into empty space, it's as if an undertow has seized him.

The two other works on the program were large-scale and more traditional: Ballet Arizona performed Artistic Director Ib Andersen's "Diversions," accompanied by Benjamin Britten's Divisions for Piano (Left Hand) and Orchestra, Op. 21. "Divisions," which premiered in March, is a piece for 20 dancers that hewed closely to the musical contours. (Why left hand? Because Britten wrote it for a pianist who'd lost his right one in World War I. And that, right there, is the warmest human thing about it.)

Pacific Northwest Ballet closed with "3 Movements," Benjamin Millepied's 2008 work for 16 dancers, which uses Steve Reich's Three Movements for Orchestra. No surprises here: Though the musical scores are vastly different, the choices don't diverge from ballet norms,

## With "In Dreams," Trey McIntyre distorts ballet steps for emotional effect.

nor did the choreography.

The pronounced detachment of Andersen's dancers, as well as his steps, brought to mind diluted Balanchine with a bit of Jerome Robbins tossed in. (Not surprising, given Andersen's dance career with New York City Ballet.) This was a straightforward response of visual patterns to the music, and if you love the Britten, it may have been satisfying. I found it less so.

Millepied's piece was as relentless as Andersen's was measured. With half the cast and every other step removed, there

might be a ballet there. There was certainly energy and drive, the kind of scattered eagerness of interns on Capitol Hill, which is what the dancers resembled — the women in tidy summer shifts, the men in belted trousers and ties.

Both works missed an opportunity to leave a lasting mark in this regional showcase, where, after all, we'll have seen nine troupes by the time it concludes on Sunday. Where "Divisions" and "3 Movements" were designed to impress, and showed off the technical strengths of each company, they didn't speak to what's unique about themselves and where they come from. "In Dreams" did.

Particularly now, Memphians are living the ragged emotions to which Orbison gave voice. Ballet may be an art of refinement and privilege, but it exists in

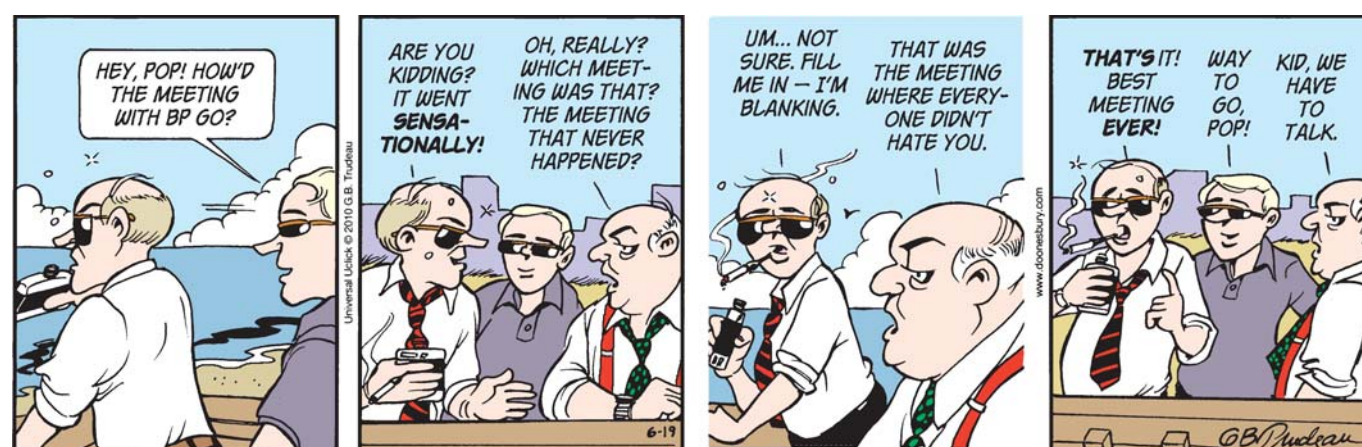
the everyday, and one can't help but make connections between stage and reality. For me, the connection between "In Dreams" and life fused into a single line of understanding — Tennessee, struggling in the recession; the deep South, devastated by the BP disaster in the gulf. The ache and darkness Ballet Memphis put onstage was more than a dance, it was an echo of human experience.

[kaufmans@washpost.com](mailto:kaufmans@washpost.com)

### BALLET ACROSS AMERICA

Ballet Memphis, Ballet Arizona and Pacific Northwest Ballet perform Saturday afternoon and evening. Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Tulsa Ballet and the Jeffrey Ballet perform Sunday afternoon. At the Kennedy Center Opera House, [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org), 202-467-4600.

## DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



## CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

