



CAROLYN HAX

Grad school rejection doesn't mean failure

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Hi, Carolyn: I was not accepted into the grad program I had applied to. While I understand that only 12 people were accepted, I can't shake the feeling of being a complete failure. I know I'm still young (24) and have plenty of time to get where I want to be. I just feel like I'm wasting time.

Also, I'm stuck at an entry-level job with no hope of moving up in a field that doesn't interest me. I've applied for other jobs online in a more interesting field with no success.

What do I do? I'm trying to look to the bright side but am having trouble finding it.

Bummed

First, I'm sorry you didn't get into the program you wanted.

Second, I'm sorry to all the other people who didn't get into that grad program, because only 12 of you did, which means a certain school just dispensed a whole lot more bad news than good.

Third, welcome, Bummed and everyone else, to the biggest club in the world: Rejects! Everybody becomes one at some point. You know the "It's a Wonderful Life" conceit, that every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings? Well, every time you hear a "ding," an applicant just got smoked.

Since you've crossed over to the other side, here's the welcome packet (a fat envelope!), with the basic steps for ding recovery:

1. Grieve. Have your ding dinner with your friends, or go get a massage, or go to the gym every day for the next two weeks, or whatever cheers you up.

2. Get over your narrow self. Whatever it was you wanted — be it a job or a date or a program — there are others to be had. Other jobs, other people, other programs. If you applied only to this program, then widen your sights.

3. Realize there's no such thing as wasted time, unless you choose to treat it as such. Even if you're just boxing up widgets so you can feed, clothe and shelter yourself, that's not wasting time — that's surviving. Give yourself credit for that much. And then, build on it: You don't want just to survive, you want to _____

Whatever you can do toward _____ is your main concern now, and keeps this time from being wasted, as you continue boxing widgets.

For Bummed: A lot of grad programs really look toward work experience when deciding whom to accept, so try to switch over to the field you're interested in. This will give you a better glimpse at the industry, too, before you drop all that cash (and time) on grad school.

Anonymous

I.e., passive job-hunting won't cut it. Thanks.

To Bummed: This is the perfect situation for some informational interviews. Research a company that has your dream job. Ask your friends if anyone has a contact there, or find a connection from his/her online bio (you can always open with "I read your article on blah blah..."). E-mail that contact and ask for an informational interview so you can learn about the skill and education requirements.

Anonymous

Excellent. One more thing: Given "Bummed's" age and the current job famine, "entry level" isn't a personal slight.

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 871

In which we asked you to change a movie title by one letter (or transpose two nearby letters) and describe the new film. Of the more than 3,000 titles submitted, there were a bunch with funny names but not much to say about them, or were just sent by too many people; these included "Pilates of the Caribbean," "James and the Giant Pesach," "Lice in Wonderland," "Oy Story" and "DoD Gay Afternoon." Lots of people offered "The Princess Bribe": The Sarah Ferguson story. We'll print some more honorable mentions in future weeks, space permitting.



Four Weldings and a Funeral: A man attaches a set of rocket engines to his Chevy and momentarily achieves his dream of driving a flying car. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, a First Offender)

2 the winner of the "Afghanistan Smiling Faces" T-shirt: **Golfdinger:** Elin Nordegren offers tips on club selection when addressing a difficult lie. (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

3 The Blair Itch Project: Amateur filmmakers realize that before shooting in the woods, they should have learned what poison ivy looks like. (Deborah Gilbert, Rixeyville, Va., a First Offender)

4 Watch Me if You Can: Betty White plays an octogenarian pole dancer. (Judith Cottrill, New York)

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BOB STANKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE KIN OF COMEDY: HONORABLE MENTIONS

An American in Parts: Texas Chainsaw Massacre 7. (Gary Crockett)

The Best Years of Our Lives: D-Day vets reminisce about their days "training" in British pubs. (Randy Lee, Burke)

Bob & Carol & Ted & Lice: Swinging suburbanites get more than they bargained for from sleeping around with the neighbors. (Michael Duffy, Washington)

Bore on the Fourth of July: Behind the scenes at the annual concert on the Capitol lawn. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Bleak Fast at Tiffany's: An exposé of anorexia, still starring Audrey Hepburn. (Ann Martin, Bracknell, England)

The Bother From Another Planet: ALF, the Movie. (Todd Carton, Wheaton)

The Dork Knight: The adventures of a Renaissance festival groupie. (Bernard Brink, Cleveland, Mo.)

Flying Down to Riot: Military commandos high-tail it to a Central American country for a fun weekend of overthrowing the government. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

The 400 Blobs: A schoolful of obese children take revenge on Michelle Obama. (Bruce Carlson, Alexandria)

C.G.I. Jane: In James Cameron's remake, Demi Moore still has a shaved head but now she's 10 feet

tall and blue. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

The Hurt Licker: A child suffers embarrassment when his mom does far more than merely kiss his boo-boo. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

It's a Wonderful File: An angel shows Daniel Ellsberg that we'd still be fighting in Vietnam if he hadn't released the Pentagon Papers. (Judy Kramer, Alexandria, a First Offender)

Married to the OMB: Peter Orszag needs a vacation. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Once Is Now Enough: The Viagra generation faces the sad truth. (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)

Liar Lair: The history of the U.S. Capitol. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Mr. MyGoo: An executive's extreme nearsightedness leads to one disaster after another. (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

Moonstuck: An impudent teenager meets his match when he tangles with automatic car window. (Beverley Sharp, Washington)

10 Dalmatians: Cruella wins. (Craig Dykstra)

Return of the Secaucus Semen: A New Jersey sperm donor attempts to track down his many progeny. (Jeff Loren, Manassas)

Norma Rat: A busybody spoils a

good thing for textile factory management. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

The Molar Express: A boy and his friends take a magical train trip to visit the Tooth Fairy. (Marbury Wethered, Greenbelt)

Cents of a Woman: The story of the courageous souls who solved women's inequality by putting Susan B. Anthony and Sacagawea on some coins nobody uses. (Nick Dyer, Harrisonburg, Va., a First Offender)

The Sixth Tense: "I will have been seeing dead people." (Christopher Jones, Vienna)

Slamdog Millionaire: The Michael Vick saga. (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)

Sooth Pacific: "Verily, whenas there be a dame, fain would there be nought like it." (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Uh: Old guy ties balloons to his house but can't remember why. (John Winant, Arlington)

Gall-E: The Jim Nabors story. (Michael Duffy)

And last: Midnight Empress: The sad moral tale of a poop-joke columnist who forsakes family and friends for her career. (Vic Krysko, Surat Thani, Thailand)

Next Week: Har monikers, or Funny, init?



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

TODAY AT THE FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

The 44th annual Folklife Festival returns to the Mall with a full schedule of concerts, demonstrations, discussions and food. This year, the free celebration features Mexico, Asian-Pacific American identity and a behind-the-scenes look at Smithsonian projects. For information, call 202-633-1000 or visit www.festival.si.edu.

SMITHSONIAN INSIDE OUT

- 11 a.m.** My Smithsonian: Museum Directors
- 11:45 a.m.** Working Together: Repatriation at the Smithsonian
- 12:30 p.m.** Research and Outreach: Community Voices
- 1:15 p.m.** Safe and Sound: Safeguarding Languages
- 2 p.m.** Tools for the 21st Century: Global Earth Observatories
- 2:45 p.m.** Tales From the Vaults: Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations
- 3:30 p.m.** Expeditions and Explorations: Smithsonian Photographers
- 4:15 p.m.** Beyond the Mall: The Cultural Research Center
- 5 p.m.** What's My Line?: Mysteries of the Universe Across Disciplines

MEXICO

- EL SALÓN DE MÉXICO**
- 11 a.m.** Chinelos de Atlaltlahucan
- Noon** Grupo de Fandango de Artesa Los Quilamos
- 1 p.m.** Cardencheros de Saporiz
- 2 p.m.** Hamac Cazfim
- 3 p.m.** Chinelos de Atlaltlahucan
- 4 p.m.** Encuentro: Los Tios and Los Verdaderos Caporales

LA FONDA

- 11 a.m.** Cardencheros de Saporiz
- Noon** Palo Volantín Ceremony
- 1 p.m.** Mariachi Tradicional Los Tios
- 2 p.m.** Los Verdaderos Caporales de Apatzingán
- 3 p.m.** Trío Santa Quilama
- 4 p.m.** Palo Volantín Ceremony
- 4:45 p.m.** Comcáac Music Traditions

LA COCINA

- 11 a.m.** Jalisco-Style Cooking: Shrimp
- Noon** Candymaking: Dulces de Santa Cruz Acapulca
- 1 p.m.** Morelos-Style Cooking: Mole
- 2 p.m.** Bolim: Téenek Ceremonial Tamal
- 3 p.m.** Xochimilco-Style Cooking: Tlaxcales
- 4 p.m.** Wixárika Cooking
- 4:45 p.m.** Mayan Cooking: Atole

CUENTACIENTOS

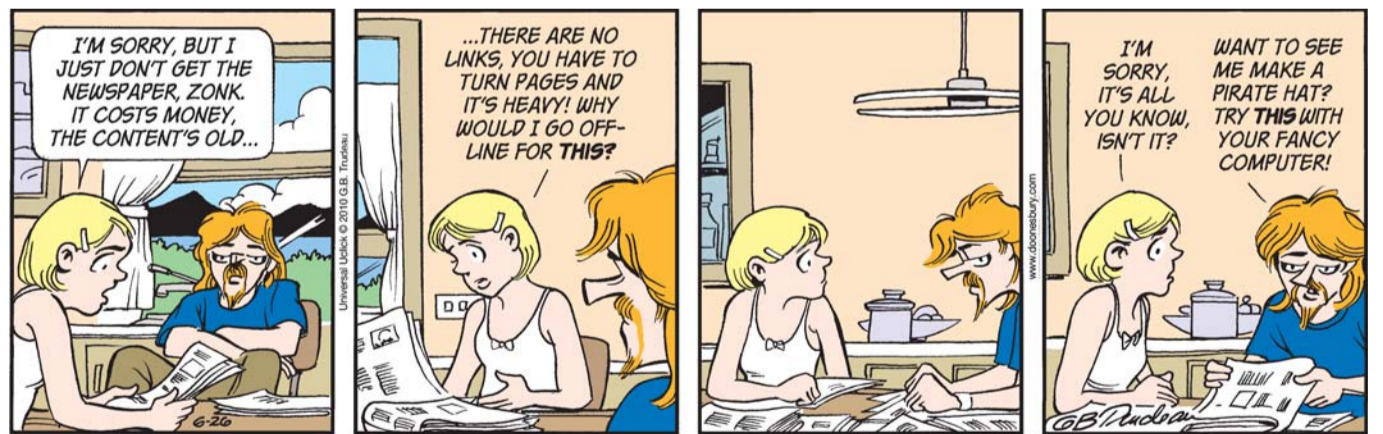
- 11 a.m.** Protection of Wixárika Ceremonial Centers
- Noon** Mexico's Linguistic Diversity
- 1 p.m.** Fiesta Traditions
- 2 p.m.** Culture and Natural Resources
- 3 p.m.** Craft Traditions and Natural Materials
- 4 p.m.** The Jaranero Movement
- 4:45 p.m.** Conversation With Grupo de Fandango

ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICANS

- ASIAN FUSIONS**
- 11 a.m.** String Instruments: Chinese American
- 11:45 a.m.** String Instruments: Japanese American
- 12:30 p.m.** Percussion and Performance: Sikh

- 1:15 p.m.** Percussion and Performance: Burmese American
- 2 p.m.** String Instruments: Making Connections
- 3:30 p.m.** Percussion and Performance: Making Connections
- 5 p.m.** Teachings
- TALKSTORY**
- 11 a.m.** Immigration Stories: How We Got Here
- 11:45 a.m.** Deaf APAs: Culture Within a Culture
- 12:30 p.m.** Immigration to the D.C. Area
- 1:15 p.m.** FAQs: Where Are APAs in the Suburbs?
- 2 p.m.** Smithsonian Institution's APA Program
- 2:45 p.m.** Helping the Homeland Through Business
- 3:30 p.m.** Path to Empowerment: National APA Organizations
- 4:15 p.m.** Learning the Japanese Language

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON



Week 875: Fail Us

If it can't fit in the microwave, it's probably too big for a snack anyway.

Seriously Overenthusiastic Loser Jeff Contompasis recently showed us a bare-bones Web site called Learn From My Fail, in which people post unedited (i.e., mostly illiterate) little life lessons they gleaned from various stupid things they allegedly did.

This week: Give us a funny Learn From My Fail-type lesson, 30 words or fewer, true or not, in your own words or attributed to a famous personage. Unlike those at learnfrommyfail.com (it's up to you whether you actually post it there), yours should NOT be spelled and punctuated as if you had played hooky during all of second, third, fourth and fifth grades.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives "The Art of the Bonsai Potato," a guide to achieving "Zen without the wait" by putting a potato (not included) on a plastic tray (included) and letting the spud sprout artistically. Donated by Loser Since Year 1 Sarah W. Gaymon.

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 Tuesday, July 6. Put "Week 875" 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 24. 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 Mark Eckenwiler.



JACQUELYN MARTIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

AIR DANCERS: A Mexican festival's "Danza del Bixón Tiw" goes airborne.

- 1:15 p.m.** Sikh Cooking
- 2 p.m.** Cold Dishes: Making Connections
- 3:30 p.m.** North and South Indian Cooking
- 5 p.m.** Dessert

SPECIAL HAITIAN EVENT

- 6 p.m.** Evening Concert: "A Tribute to Haiti" featuring Boukman Eksperyans, with special guest Tines Salvant