



CAROLYN HAX

She's not a girly-girl. Got a problem with that?

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn:

I'm not a girly-girl, not that there's anything wrong with that. I've never gone for ultra-feminine clothes, I like watching sports and drinking beer, don't do jewelry or flowers, etc. That's just who I am and I'm not being contrary or rebellious. Why would me just being me offend some men? I'm not trying to emasculate them with my awesome map-reading skillz.

Virginia

Being different doesn't usually offend people — it's needing to broadcast that you're different that causes problems. Appearing uncomfortable in your own skin will keep people from warming up to you.

I realize I'm committing a serious advice-columnist crime — using the fact of your approaching me against you — but while your question seems reasonable on its face, your feeling compelled to ask it says, "Look at me, I'm a girl who watches sports and drinks beer!" You're generalizing yourself and others.

It's hard to break a habit of being self-conscious, especially since thinking about the problem makes you even more conscious. However, if self-consciousness is your problem, try this:

When you're about to do/say/wear something, ask yourself who your audience is for this decision. If it's anybody but you, then rethink it and make the choice you'd make if no one were looking.

For Va.:

Just being you, whoever you are, is going to offend someone. If you're secure, you can behave pleasantly toward those people as you skirt your way around them.

Anonymous

Or pants your way around them, in this case. Thanks.

Okay, really?:

It's 2010. Women enjoying sports and beer is not even remotely outside the norm. When I (female, beer-drinker, sports-watcher) have problems with other women of similar tastes, it's because they only want to watch sports and drink beer with men, and not being a "girly" girl is code for "I don't like hanging around other women." Not that this is Virginia's issue, but that kind of defensiveness is familiar.

Anon 2

Carolyn:

I think you were too hard on Virginia. Assuming she's not flaunting the things she naturally likes, the men she offends are probably insecure about their own map-reading skillz.

Anon 3

And:

For Va.:

I'm going to be blunt: Men like "girly girls." I don't mean they want a high-maintenance woman — just a girl who looks nice and likes girly things. We like women who take care of themselves and enjoy things we like, without being just another guy in the room.

Anon 4

I've got a beer-flecked raspberry for this one. "We"? There's just one man, duplicated 3 billion times?

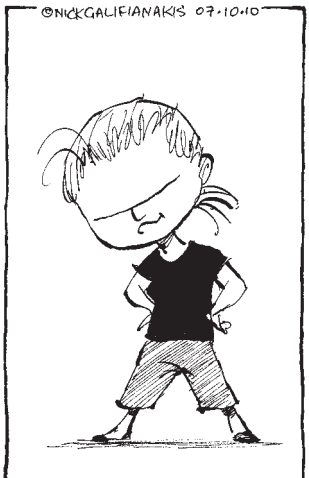
For Va.:

I'm a guy, and it sounds like you rock.

Anon 6

There you go.

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 873

in which we presented a filled-in crossword puzzle grid, minus a few letters from each word. You got to fill in the letters for any of the words yourselves — forming either an existing word or phrase or one you coined — and provide a funny definition. The week's most frequently submitted entry was 44 Across: "Mightier than the sword." Oh gosh, you naughty people, you.



2 winner of the pooping-horse key chain stuck in poop position:

36A: GO FOR IT MS SALAH: Michael's morning mirror mantra. (Randy Lee, Burke)

3 20A: NIXED: What happened to that 18 minutes of tape. (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

4 27A: GONAD: A cheer for Octomom. (Sylvia Betts, Vancouver, B.C.)

### CLUES BUT NO CIGAR: HONORABLE MENTIONS

1A: DREDLUST: How Stella got her groove back. (Christopher Lamora)

1A: DONTLUST: What it took a clubbing to teach Tiger. (Steve Gorman, Falls Church)

1A: DADALUST: Being hot for MoMA. (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich)

17A: PORNBear: Genital Ben. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

19A: SSA: Another gusher needing to be capped. (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

20A: FIXED: What Viagra does. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

20A: NIXTY: Age at which you started saying no when you used to say yes. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

30A: OVULATTE: Breeding grounds. (Beverly Sharp)

30A: OVALCUBE: Symbolic White House downsizing. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

36A: GO FORTH AND DRILL: Energy policy of the religious right. (Stu Solomon, Chapel Hill, N.C.)

40A: MINCES: Tiny critters slaughtered to make pies at Christmastime. (Jeff Contompasis)

42A: BRANEMEN: The guys who belong to Densa. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh)

50A: APTLY: How Tom sought temp.



housing. (Jeff Contompasis)

59A: JINTAO: Who's Hu in China? (Chris Doyle)

59A: BUN TAX: Airline surcharge for large-seated passengers. (Pat Kanz, Ocean Pines, Md.)

59A: MANTAG: That ritual athletes have of slapping each other on the butt. (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)

61A: AGYNDA: The platform of NOW. (Steve Fahey, Kensington)

62A: STOMPTOE: A basic step in the ox trot. (Chris Doyle)

1D: DOTE: Poison. (Jeff Contompasis)

7D: SHOX: With "Aw," what the student said after "Don't tase me, bro." (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

8D: THRASH MY BIG ZITS: The new in-your-face name for Clearasil. (Howard Walderman)

19D: LEARIER: Newly wary about your children's motives when they suck up to you. (Christopher Lamora)

21D: BEERDED: Foamy around the mouth after too big a swig. (Brendan Williamson, Richmond, a First Offender)

21D: MERRIER: How the widow felt after taking off her corset. (Beverly Sharp)

25D: FLAWS: Anti-profanity ordinances. (Ann Martin, Bracknell, England)

27D: YUGO: What doesn't happen much in your Serbian car. (Ed Gordon, Austin)

28D: THOU BUTT UG: Quaker trash talk. (Howard Walderman)

30D: OBLIVIA: Country whose national flower is the forget-me. (Christopher Lamora)

43D: ASPOTS: What they found on Cleopatra. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

43D: ASSETS: Where the pain hits when the investments tank. (Dan Gordon, Arlington)

44D: PRYOFF: Not the cap you want on your bottle of heart medicine. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Next week: Stat us, or Defacebook

### THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Week 877: Quipped from the headlines

So "subjects," not "citizens," flowed from Tom's pen — I guess that's still shorter than "fat rich white men."

Hardly anyone has time anymore — or at least the inclination — to read long newspaper stories. Gone are the days of leisurely discursions about The Meaning of It All. Now it's about telling The Meaning of It All right up front, preferably getting in a lot of keywords that the automated "bots" of the Google and Yahoo search engines will notice.

We're not asking for the keywords, but we do demand the Soul of Wit (along with said wit). This week: Write a rhyming couplet about some matter in the news, as in the example above from 50-time Loser Anne Paris of Arlington, who suggested this contest way back in the days of Balloon Boy.

Winner gets the Inker, the Style Invitational trophy.

Second place receives an actual pretty good book called "Are You a Miserable Old Bastard?," a collection of curmudgeonly witty quotes, donated by the pre-curmudgeonly Loser Tom Witte.

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, July 19. Put "Week 877" 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 Aug. 7. 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 Craig Dykstra.

## Sportscaster denies being paid by James's camp

GRAY FROM C1

said. He added that CNBC reporter Darren Rovell had reached Gray's agent, who declined to comment.

Gray said he called Rovell, who maintained that he was unable to find a phone number to reach Gray before the piece was posted online. "I screamed at this guy like I've never screamed at anybody before," Gray said.

Gray confirmed that he pitched the concept of buying an hour of network time to James's marketing agent, Maverick Carter, and Ari Emanuel, chief executive of William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, during Game 2 of the recent NBA Finals.

"I brought them the idea, and they were loyal and [showed] a lot of honor when they found a network they wanted to put it on," Gray said. "They said: 'We're not kicking him off. That's not how we operate.'"

ESPN spokesman Mike Soltys said in an interview that when James's representatives approached the network, Gray "was part of the package." The sports channel was "comfortable" with James handpicking his interviewer, Soltys said, because Gray had worked for ESPN, as well as NBC, and "we knew he was equipped to do interviews."

The network was also assured that James would remain for additional interviews, Soltys noted. Most of the questioning was done by Washington Post columnist Michael Wilbon, co-host of ESPN's "Pardon the Interruption," who used his portion of the hour-long special to push James about abandoning his home state and the outside expectations he has created. Robin Roberts of ABC, which includes ESPN, interviewed James after the special for "Good Morning America."

Whatever the behind-the-scenes arrangements, the program did well at the box office, drawing more than 7 million viewers, according to overnight Nielsen ratings of the nation's largest markets. In Cleveland, more than one in four homes were tuned to the 9 p.m. special.

Gray, known for such confrontations as interrogating Pete Rose about his gambling during Game 2 of the 1999 World Series, took an excruciating six minutes on Thursday's program before popping the big question to James. Gray said he discussed his "thought process" with producers beforehand.

Asked about Gray's long, friendly exchanges before asking James which NBA franchise he had chosen — including such softballs as "Did you enjoy this recruiting process?" — Soltys said: "Our expectation was that he would ask several scene-setting questions. He did do more



LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES FOR ESTABROOK GROUP

KID GLOVES? Jim Gray's questioning of LeBron James was criticized as too soft.

of those questions than we had anticipated."

Gray said he essentially agreed to work for free, minus expenses, because James was donating the advertising proceeds — \$2.5 million, as it turned out —

to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. ESPN's Soltys said James's organization sold all the national advertising to such sponsors as McDonald's, Microsoft, Nike and the University of Phoenix.

On WJFK-FM Thursday, Post sports-

writer Mike Wise asked Gray whether he had lined up the University of Phoenix as an advertiser. Gray said he had no relationship with the school other than that "they sponsor some of the programs I happen to be on. . . . I'm not involved in any of those decisions."

CBS Sportsline columnist Gregg Doyel called Gray's interview "awful. I wanted to throw my TV out the window. It was clear they were dragging this thing on. The entire country wanted to know the answer to one question: 'LeBron, where you going?' It was painful."

Wise said Friday that "this production took the cake for staged journalism."

Local coverage of James's decision to leave the Cavaliers, which he joined out of high school at age 18, varied dramatically. New York's Daily News, which had been rooting for James to join the Knicks, ran a banner headline saying "WHO CARES!" The Cleveland Plain Dealer devoted its front page to a photo of James walking away, with an annotation under the headline "Gone": "7 years, \$62 million, no rings."

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### DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



### CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

