



CAROLYN HAX

He's not that into her; how clear should he make that?

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn: I am having fun with my girlfriend but am well aware she's not marriage material for me...

Anonymous

Why is she good enough to date but not good enough to marry?

Carolyn: She's just... fine. I like seeing her about twice a week, but have no desire to spend more time around her than I do already...

Anonymous again

Thanks, that makes sense. It's easy to argue that as long as you were upfront with her about your intentions...

Unfortunately, that argument is based on the premise that we are in control of our feelings and always able to act in our own best interests.

What often happens is that one half of the noncommitted couple starts to fall, noticeably and hard, for the other half, who remains coolly detached.

But if she is visibly falling for you, and she either has tried to pull away but can't — or, worse, if she's saying all the right noncommittal things but is clearly pining — then it's cruel to keep taking actions that lead her on.

There does seem to be one more possibility — that you're uneasy solely because "girls" sometimes say they're fine with dating casually when they "don't mean it."

Dear Carolyn: I'm a college junior. My mom calls me several times a day. I would feel guilty not picking up because she's a wonderful person, she raised me, and is helping me pay for college...

College

How often would you like to talk to your mom? Forget "normal" — go with what gives you pleasure, be it the pleasure of talking to your mom, or the pleasure of making her happy.

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 875

In which we asked for real or fictional "Learn From My Fail" life lessons in 30 words or fewer: Unless the Loser — this week, we mean that in both the uppercase and lowercase senses — insisted that the fail actually happened, we assume that nobody would be that dumb.

THE WINNER OF THE INKER: If you and your best friend decide to get matching tattoos, don't go first.

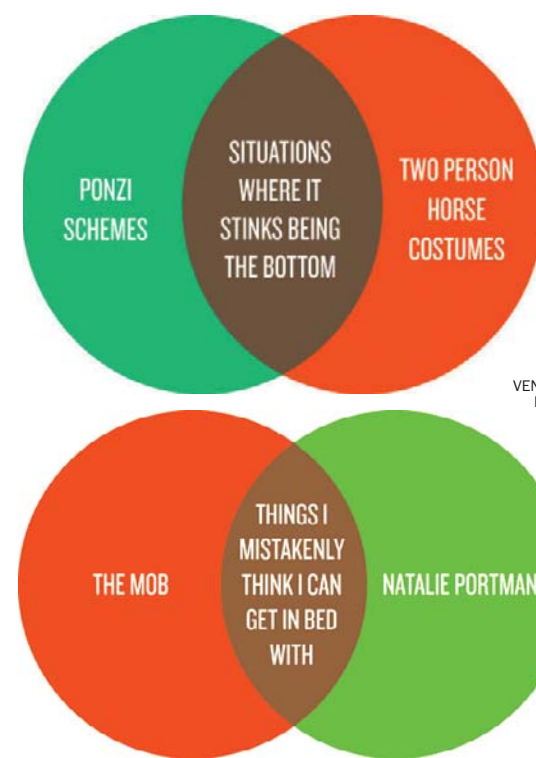
- 2 the winner of "The Art of the Bonsai Potato": Even if the traffic reporter on the radio says "back up on the Beltway," it's best not to do it.
3 Ask questions — don't answer them.
4 A bank teller won't fall for "I come from the future where guns are invisible" when you try to rob her.

PASSING FAILS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Slipping your finger in through the leg hole is not best way to check a diaper.
Dudes in a Liverpool pub tend not to agree that soccer players are a bunch of sissies who could never play real, American football.
Priests don't think it's funny if you do a spit take at communion.
The five-second rule does not apply to hypodermic needles.
The first shot of water coming out of that hose that's been lying in the sun all day will not cool down Mom.

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

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



VENN DIAGRAMS BY FRANK CHIMERO

Week 879: Say Venn

It's time for a little graphic humor. This week: Express some sentiment in the form of a Venn diagram, as in the ones here by graphic artist Frank Chimero, a.k.a. Frank Sparrow.

Winner gets the Inker, the Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a little bag of "Shark Poo" from Naples, Fla.; some "Seagull Poop" from nearby Fort Myers...

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.

Area students show and spur tales at Conner

ART REVIEW FROM C1

The Post last fall.) Equally fine were photographs by her Corcoran colleague Jenny Yang, which document the liquor store that her family owns in south Baltimore.

But I was especially keen on a project called Camper Contemporary by Calder Brannock, a 25-year-old from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.

Brannock presents an offer to his peers: If they put themselves in his hands, he will take them on a one-day excursion to an interesting site that should serve as artistic inspiration.

In Katie Miller's images, the babies are far more creepy than cute.

the world's smallest gallery, a 1967 Yellowstone trailer that he's refitted with white walls and hardwood floors, like a 98-square-foot fragment of a deluxe Chelsea space.

At the moment it's parked in the Conner courtyard, where it presents the products of five artists' excursions with Brannock to places in the District, Pennsylvania and Virginia, to explore sites linked to the flight and death of John Wilkes Booth.

Others are tending to it. Out of all of the "Academy" projects, Brannock's was selected for inclusion in the Pulse art fair in Miami in December as part of its Pulse Presents program.

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ACADEMY

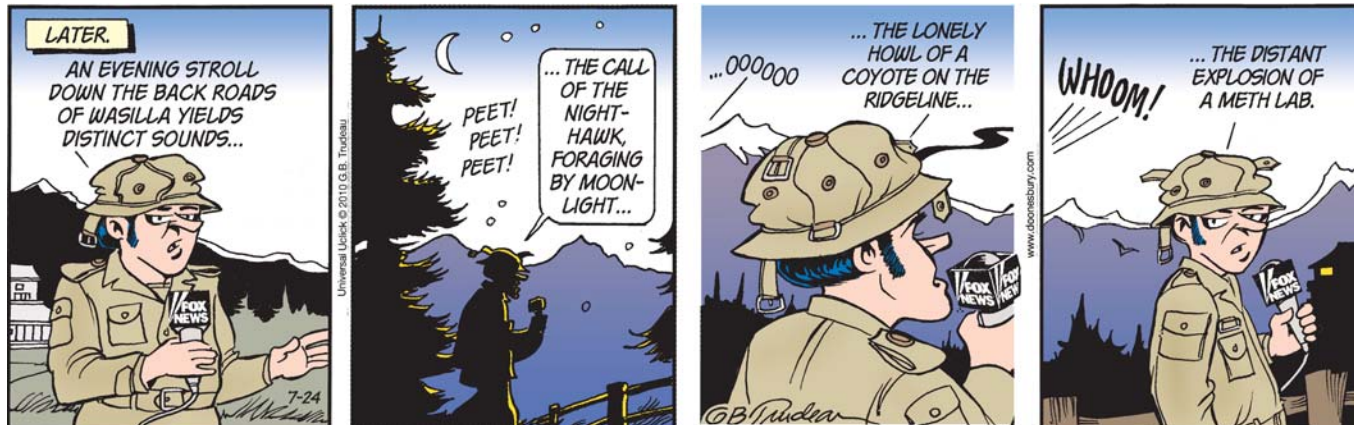
continues through Aug. 21 at Conner Contemporary Art, 1358 Florida Ave. NE. Free and open Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 202-588-8750 or visit www.connercontemporary.com.



COPYRIGHT CALDER BRANNOCK/CONNER CONTEMPORARY ART

MOVABLE TREATS: Calder Brannock's Camper Contemporary project shows art in a renovated 1967 Yellowstone trailer.

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

