



CAROLYN HAX

Beer at a baby shower: It leaves a bitter taste

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn:
Two of my adult children and I are hosting a baby shower for my third child and her husband. They are big sports fans, so the shower is planned for late morning at a location that will allow guests, if they wish, to join the parents-to-be at a nearby sporting event afterward. It is a coed shower and with four children (10 and under) attending.

Now my son-in-law is planning to bring a cooler of beer because, he claims, it will be a "draw" for the guys. I have not yet heard a reaction from one of my co-host children, but the other child and I are really having a problem with this for several reasons.

1. Beer just is not appropriate for a baby shower, and the guests should not be expecting it will be served. We specifically decided not to serve alcohol.
2. It is just rude to bring your own refreshments to a party someone else is hosting (unless asked to), especially when you are the guests of honor.
3. Anyone who can't make it through a two-hour party, particularly one on a Sunday morning, without some beer has a drinking problem. That's not getting into any potential liability issues.

So what to do? The co-host child who let us know about this today has tried to talk them out of bringing it, with no luck in changing their minds.

Baby shower brewhaha

You, the top parent, need to veto the cooler.

I don't agree that beer is necessarily inappropriate for baby showers (it's the host's call, with input from the guest(s) of honor). But I agree it's inappropriate for this one. A beer with a meal, okay. A beer at a ballgame, okay. A cooler of beer at an evening barbecue, okay. Multiple beers before noon at a baby shower because, hey, more than one person in one place is a party? Uh, no.

Starting a day of drinking before noon isn't the example you want the grandkids to see. Talk to your daughter, though — Mr. Beer's wife. Make it clear you won't budge.

Dear Carolyn:
My fiancée's father and stepmother (SM) are coming to visit us in a few weeks. SM likes to drink a few beers every night, then becomes a little nasty to her husband and my fiancée. My fiancée and I drink rarely and don't keep beer in the house, so my question is whether we need to have beer ready for the SM or if we can politely ask her to not drink while she stays with us.

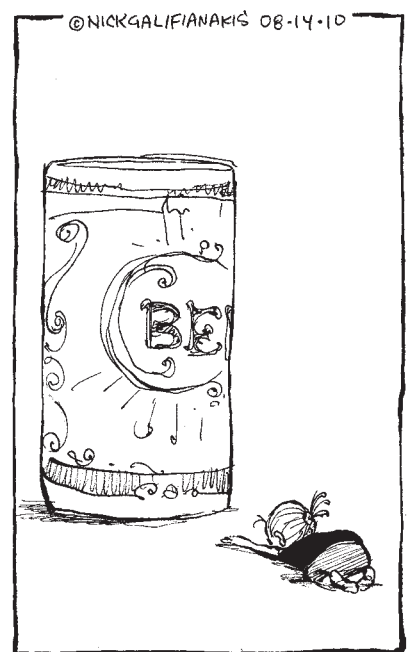
Minneapolis

You can, of course — your house. But that's not the issue. The issue is whether you anticipate and are ready to accept any consequences. Will cutting off SM strain your husband's relationship with his dad, for example? Will the stepmother just BHO? Will she play nice during the visit, and then seek payback later? Will your fiancée talk to his dad first, or are you planning an ambush?

You and your fiancée need to establish your priorities together, and make the beer decision accordingly. Then, you stick by each other from there.

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 878

in which we asked for some not very sensible ways to make our nation more secure: Many, many people suggested, instead of having see-through scanners in airports, that clothes simply be banned during air travel, while many others suggested prohibiting only shoes and underwear. And one person after another volunteered his dog for bomb-sniffing, since Spike was already so effective at sniffing crotches.



Assign GOP senators as flight marshals. They won't let ANYTHING happen. (Jon Graft, Centreville)

- 2 winner of the "Hello Losers" sign: Shut down the Taliban's heroin business by replacing Franklin's face with Muhammad's on \$100 bills. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)
- 3 Hire good-looking women to stand around the airport saying in a loud voice, "Hey, are there any guys out there who can help me cut open this cardboard box?" (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)
- 4 Place a "top cap" tightly over Washington, and pump mud down into it until that stuff stops coming out. (Tom Murphy, Bowie)

MILDLY THREATENING: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Instead of one huge, expensive wall along our southern border, we build a small, individual wall around each American xenophobe who feels he needs protection. I'm sure we can find some guys in the Home Depot parking lot who can knock these out really cheaply. (Cy Gardner, Arlington)

Make it illegal to purchase tactical nuclear weapons without a background check. (Except for those bought at nuclear-weapon shows.) (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

Secure all nuclear material in those plastic clamshells. (Dion Black, Washington)

Avoid the risks of future evil-geniuses inventing Earth-destroying weapons by ensuring that our education system remains crappy. (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

Put EVERYONE into witness protection. (Mike Connaghan, Alexandria)

Let the terrorists win. Then maybe they'll stop. — N. Chamberlain, London, 1938 (Ken Gallant, Conway, Ark.)

Add a bunch of new boxes and lines to the DHS organization chart. (Michael Reinemer, Alexandria)

To deter attacks by

submarine, fill the Gulf of Mexico with some kind of black sticky stuff that will mess up periscopes. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Require all threats to be idle. (Andy Wolodkin, Frostburg, Md.)

Install an electric dog fence along our southern border and require every Mexican to wear a special collar. — T. Tancred (Joshua Kaplowitz, Arlington)

Require every nation to have one, and only one, nuclear weapon. (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)

Ask suspicious people who won the 2006 World Cup. If they know, they're foreigners and should be thrown in jail. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

Eradicate testosterone. (Judy Blanchard)

Open some bombing ranges, like shooting ranges, so that suicide bombers can take live practice runs. (Gary Pasternack, Baltimore)

Manufacture lousy fertilizer. (Jim Reagan, Herndon)

Recruit executives from AIG and Lehman Brothers to infiltrate terror groups and manage their investments. (Gary Crockett)

In Arizona, just arrest

everyone — that way, there's no profiling — and then release anyone who doesn't look like an illegal immigrant. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)

Let's keep an eye on people who grow perfect hydrangea bushes. Because, just, grrrrrr. (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

How tragic it is when a child or grandmother is felled by a stray bullet in a gang shooting. We must act now: mandatory marksmanship classes for all gang members. (Ward Kay, Vienna)

To fight germ warfare, finally start enforcing those "Employee Must Wash Hands" signs — no more doing it yourself. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

Protect the nation from natural disasters by tasking the Department of Homeland Security to go down to Brazil, find that damn butterfly and kill it before it can flap its wings again. (Tom Murphy)

Next week: Say Venn, or Warning: Graphic Depictions of Sets

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 882: Limerixicon VII

Drosophila melanogaster? I wouldn't put anything past her. She's a fly that makes doots in the flesh of your fruits — A master of household disaster.

It's the Doggerel Days of August: time for our annual visit to the unending quest of Chris J. Strolin and his Omnificent English Dictionary in Limerick Form, in which he and his contributors have been working assiduously since 2004 to present a limerick for every meaning for every word in the language, from A- to Ab-to . . . **This week: Supply a humorous limerick prominently featuring any English word, name or term beginning with the letters dr-**, as in the example above by Pulitzer Prize-winning Entomological Versifier Gene Weingarten of Washington (the fruit fly is pronounced "droSOPHila," by the way). See www.oedilf.com for our rules on limerick rhyme and meter. Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. The second-place limerickist receives a pair of Handerpants, little tighty-whitely briefs for your hands that, in inexplicable good taste, lack an actual fly for the middle finger. Donated by Craig Dykstra and modeled here by the hands of Loser Back in the Day Kelli Midgley.



White gloves, always demure: This week's runner-up prize.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Luser 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, Aug. 23. Put "Week 882" 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 Sept. 11. 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 Roy Ashley. "Doggerel Days of August" is by Nan Reiner.

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

Clyde's hopes to deliver a new rhythm to the night

CLYDE'S FROM C1

niche that needs filling.

"If you come into town and you want to do some partying, that's the one thing that's missing down here," he says, sipping decaf in a rear booth at Old Ebbitt. "We're doing everything we possibly can to make it a premier venue — somewhere that artists would like to play and that people downtown would enjoy going to."

That means throwing plenty of Clyde's financial muscle into the venture. Once Borders moves out — the store closes Saturday — acoustic engineers will lay out plans to rebuild the retail space into a 500-person-capacity concert space where the sound won't bleed into the dining room they're planning overhead. The venue will have terraced seating, a balcony bar, and plenty of food and drink prepared by the restaurant upstairs.

Meyer envisions a "more adult" music club with a general focus on singer-songwriters. He hopes to book country acts and gospel artists. He hopes to curate free lunchtime concerts. He hopes to host local up-and-comers and marquee veterans. And, somehow, he plans to book it all himself.

He'll be entering a very competitive market. Meyer is eyeballing the type of talent that will put him nose to nose with the Birchmere in Alexandria and Rams Head Tavern in Annapolis. By late 2011, the field may be even more crowded. Next year, concert promoter Live Nation hopes to open its Fillmore Silver Spring venue, while the Birchmere is moving ahead with plans to launch a new nightclub in College Park. (Live Nation and Birchmere reps declined to comment for this article.)

"The only people who say [the Washington area] is becoming crowded with nightclubs are the people who own nightclubs," Meyer says. "Whenever I build a restaurant, people ask me, 'Who do you want as your neighbor?' . . . The best thing for me is another really good restaurant. . . . It keeps me on my toes."

Says 9:30 Club owner Seth Hurwitz in an e-mail: "The more clubs there are helping bands develop, the better it is for the music business, of which we are obviously a part."

Meyer's biggest challenge will likely be learning to book talent from scratch. "It's going to be extremely difficult," says Gary Bongiovanni, editor of Pollstar, the trade magazine that tracks the concert industry.

"There's a certain trust factor that exists between talent sellers and talent buyers. It's more than money. Before a CAA or a William Morris sells an artist to you to put in your club, they need to trust you. . . . If you're a complete unknown, you'll have a hard time getting them take your calls, let alone accept your offers."

When it comes to networking, Meyer is still getting his feet wet but plans to dive in next spring. He'll be heading to the South by Southwest music festival in Austin, where he hopes to curate a showcase of artists and fill his Rolodex in the process.

And although Meyer has no experience courting singers to his stage, he's confident about getting fans in his seats next year.

"My experience is just making people comfortable and happy. . . . I think I'm pretty good at that," Meyer says. "It's not like I'm a patent attorney opening a music club. There isn't a total disconnect there."

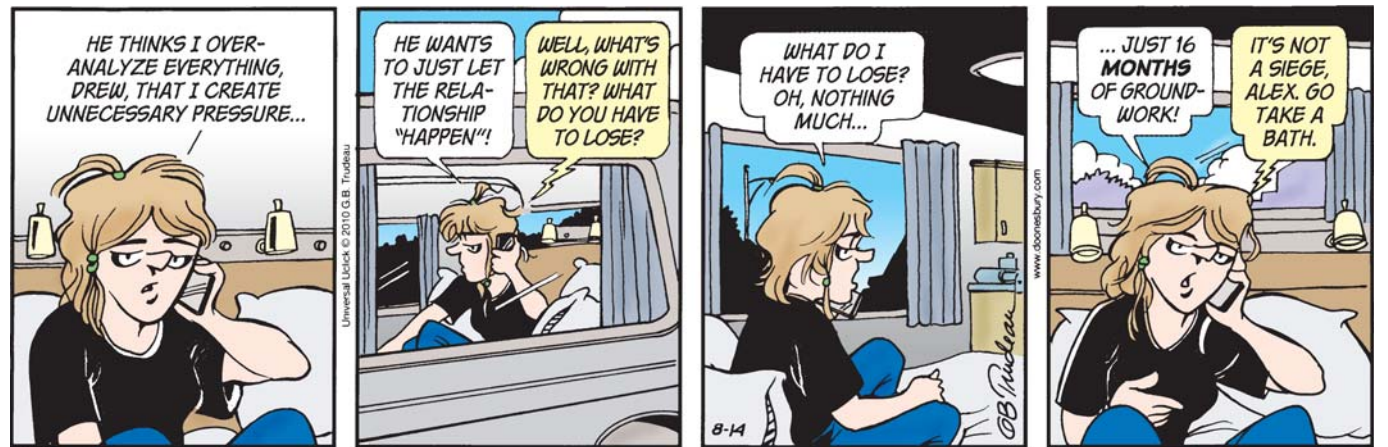
richardsc@washpost.com

SOUND BITES: Acoustic engineers are preparing to transform the space into a home for singer-songwriters. Lunchtime concerts could be among the offerings.



NICK KIRKPATRICK/THE WASHINGTON POST

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

