



CAROLYN HAX

Does a couple 'own' their wedding vows?

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn: We were married in April. Our minister gave us a stack of old vows, photocopied from books, from which to draft our own vows. None of them was usable. We did the usual love, honor and cherish — but we added a part about being friends and partners, and we agonized for a ridiculous amount of time over which word should go where, editing until we both agreed the vows were perfect.

Last month we went to another wedding at our church and they used the vows we wrote — verbatim. I was in shock. I am PO'd at the minister for giving our personal vows to another couple. He didn't give us any vows that had been used this century, so I guess it's a compliment, and I don't know what I want. An acknowledgement? A promise not to give "our" vows to anyone else? Should I let it go? I don't know why I felt so violated. I haven't gone back to church since.

Vows

I get why you feel violated, I do — but this is kind of like when you introduce your best friend to your brother, and they go on to spend much less time with you now that they're spending their time together. You feel kind of robbed and angry, right? But, at the same time, you've brought real joy to people.

Your words, emotions, beliefs are being embraced by people on one of the most significant days of their lives. There is something cool about that. I suppose I could make an argument for your having your names on the handouts, so you get proper credit — but there's something even cooler about being the unnamed agent behind all of these loving pronouncements.

If none of this is persuasive, then just go back to the minister and ask to have your vows removed from the stack of handouts.

Dear Carolyn: I am anti-big/expensive weddings. I had a small wedding, borrowed my dress, let my sister choose what she wanted to wear as my maid of honor. Reception was at my parents' house, catered by family and friends.

Imagine my surprise when my daughter announces she wants a lavish destination wedding, with all the obnoxious bells and whistles. And guess who she expects to pay?

This led to a huge row. Other than setting guidelines of what her dad and I would be willing to pay, how can I get her to understand how... WRONG she is!?

Where did I go wrong?

Don't. "Getting" an adult to understand is a setup for failure even more spectacular than an overblown wedding. And don't venture even close to the "I walked a mile to my wedding through the snow barefoot and uphill both ways" zone — it's a relationship black hole.

That doesn't mean you can't voice objections to line items when necessary. For example, saying, "No, Muffy, it is not acceptable to print 'Cash gifts preferred' on the invitation," is a moral obligation to society. But otherwise, just set reasonable financial limits, stick to them and hope she gets priced out of her own fatuity.

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 tellem@washpost.com.



NICK GALIFIANAKIS 09-25-10

NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

'QUITE A 'RATION OF 'S': MORE HONORABLE MENTIONS FROM WEEK 880

We had no new contest four weeks ago, so this week we offer some more detritus from previous contests. For Week 880, we asked you to take an existing word beginning with Q, R or S, change it by one letter, and define the new word:

Skedaddie: A deadbeat father. (Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia)

Breverend: Everyone's favorite sermon-giver. (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)

Qualification: A lie on one's resumé. (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

Quirk-change artist: A psychiatrist. (Bob Klahn, Wilmington, Del.)

Rehoarsal: Tom Waits's warmup. (Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

Rodeo Dive: A house in Beverly Hills worth less than a million bucks. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Rotundra: A vast, unfurnished foyer of a McMansion. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Sabotagging: Posting incriminating photos on your "friend's" Facebook page. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

Scrotching: "Searching for pocket change." (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Straycation: A weekend in Vegas that you really hope stays in Vegas. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Strop throat: What Sweeney Todd's customers suffered from. (Craig Dykstra)

Ratatpouille: A French dish combining tomatoes, garlic, onions, zucchini and the expectorant of a disgruntled sous-chef. (Malcolm Fleschner, Palo Alto, Calif.)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

LIM PICKINGS: MORE LIMERICKS FROM WEEK 882

And you can see even more limericks based on words beginning with dr- at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational.

A druidic magician named Matt Makes a nun disappear just like that. Then he opens a trap Holding rodents, and zap! Pulls a habit right out of a rat. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Direct from the bar Pa came slinking; Ma noticed his breath was still stinking. When she said he was drunk, He declared, "That is bunk! "It was I who was doing the drinking!" (Erik Wennstrom, Bloomington, Ind.)

I'm shocked that the public ignores What goes on in our furniture stores, Where chests get caressed, Kings and queens stand undressed, And there's regular droppings of drawers. (Chris Doyle)

John Cleese, from his very first role, Knew the way to America's soul: Though a joke may be crude, Obnoxious and rude, In a posh British accent, it's droll. (David Smith, Santa Cruz, Calif.)

When feeding your baby a nibble, The chances are great he will dribble. Although he might scowl, Just wipe with a towel. And if that won't work, maybe a bib'll. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

His daughter is dead, the poor lamb; When his wife says, "I'm sorry, I am — Now, dear, pour me a drink So I don't have to think," Rhett says, "Frankly, I don't give a dram." (Ann Martin, Bracknell, England)

The princess, allergic to hay, Has been sniffing and sneezing since May. Now she's wooed by a knight With a potion that might Have isolve on Dristan all day. (Chris Doyle)

An acrobat, cream of the crop, Karl Wallenda rose fast to the top — This aerial king Had the world on a string. Life was good to the very last drop. (Chris Doyle)

Next week: Rekindling the spork, or Hybrids



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

IMOGEN QUEST BY OLIVIA WALCH

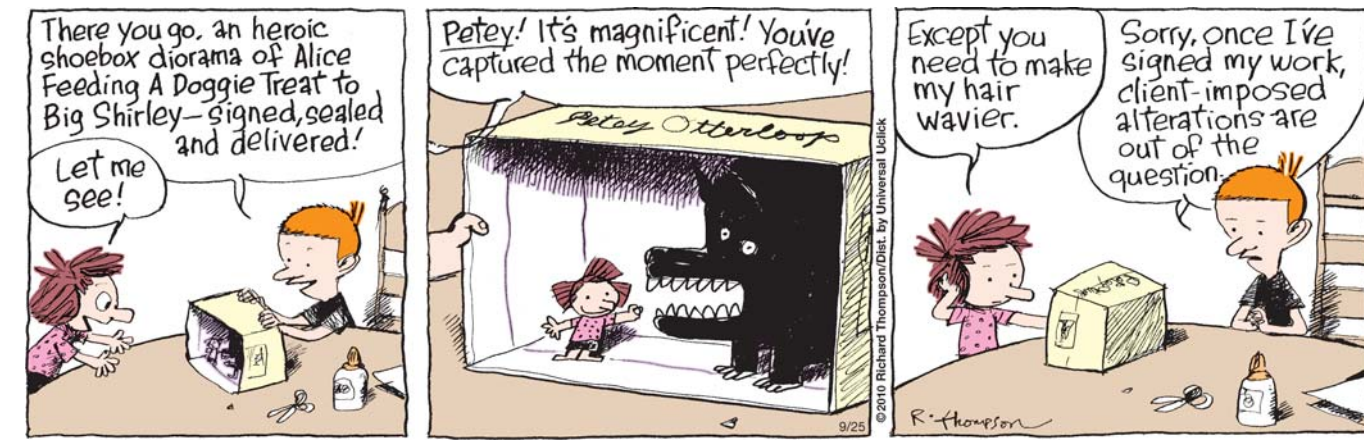
Winner of The Post's "America's Next Great Cartoonist" contest.



DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON



TO THE END OF OUR 'QUEST'

Catch it while you can: The Post's contest-winning comic "Imogen Quest" ends its month-long run in Sunday's Style & Arts. Separation anxiety can be allayed by visiting the Comic Riffs blog (washingtonpost.com/comicriffs), where fans can find a profile of the artist, Olivia Walch (left), and her comments on her creative process.

As always, we welcome reader feedback on this or any other feature on our comics pages. Call our comics hotline at 202-334-4775, e-mail comics@washpost.com or write to: Comics Feedback, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071.



JAHU CHIKWENDU/THE WASHINGTON POST

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 887: Plus-Fours

- She said, "Never, you cad"
- He snatched up a cleaver
- But then it got tricky
- And through each passing year
- They came back in one piece
- Displaying a broom

People sure like limericks, it turns out: We received more than 1,000 entries for Week 882's contest, and many people seemed eager for another challenge. Here's one we've never done before. This week: Write a limerick whose third or fourth line is one of those listed above. Remember that, in the smallest nutshell into which we can oversimplify it, Lines 1, 2 and 5 of the limerick must each contain the meter "o-hickory-dickory-dock" and must rhyme with one another; and that Lines 3 and 4 must contain "o-dickory-dock" and rhyme with each other.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins a cheap plastic figurine of a grinning swami that was a promotion for the movie "The Love Guru," which went on to win Golden Raspberry Awards for Worst Movie, Worst Actor (Mike Myers) and Worst Screenplay. Donated by Style editor and Invitational fan Lynn Medford.

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 In). 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, Oct. 4. Put "Week 887" 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 Oct. 23. 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 Jeff Contompasis. The honorable-mention subheads are by Tom Witte (Week 880) and Beverly Sharp and Craig Dykstra (Week 882); Craig also suggested the new contest.

Ray Charles library opens its doors

BY SANDY COHEN

LOS ANGELES — On what would have been his 80th birthday this week, Ray Charles joined the likes of presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan with his own namesake library in Southern California.

The Ray Charles Memorial Library officially opened its doors Thursday night. Housed in the studio and office building that Charles built in South Los Angeles in the early 1960s, the library features interactive exhibits about the musician's life and career.

Charles's friends and colleagues — including Quincy Jones, B.B. King, producer Jimmy Jam and filmmaker Taylor Hackford — welcome visitors via video to each section of the library, which is more like an interactive museum. Touch screens invite guests to explore Charles's most memorable recordings, while exhibits feature some of his Grammy Awards, stage costumes, old contracts and ever-present sunglasses.

"Ray spent more time in this building than any other in the world," said Tony Gumina, head of the Ray Charles Marketing Group. "In this building, Ray Charles had 20/20 vision." His recording studio and a closet full of his clothes remain on the second floor of the building, which was declared a cultural and historic landmark by the city in 2004.

A collection of previously unreleased Charles recordings, including a country collaboration with Johnny Cash, is due out next month.

Hackford, who directed the 2004 biopic "Ray," called Charles "one of the greatest musicians this country has ever produced." Hackford and former "Raelette" singer Mable John were among those celebrating the library's grand opening.

The facility is a product of Charles's charitable foundation, which he established in 1986 to serve the hearing-impaired. When he died in 2004 at age 73, he left all of his intellectual property and \$50 million in cash to continue the foundation's efforts.

The library will be open exclusively to schoolchildren by invitation only. Officials plan to extend access to the public next year.

— Associated Press