



CAROLYN HAX

## Plan to get rid of unused (but valued) things upsets hubby

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Hi, Carolyn:

My husband and I have been married for five years. I really don't like keeping non-utilitarian stuff around or things we don't really use, even though we don't have too much "stuff" between us. I think we can always do with less, which brings me to my current problem.

My husband is pretty upset that I'm trying to donate my wedding gown and sell some camping gear. I've tried reminding him that I always intended to donate my gown, and he's never once used the camping gear I bought him. I'd love to camp with him but have given up on coaxing him outdoors or believing he'll go someday.

How can I make this purge easier for him when I'm set on getting rid of this stuff?

St. Paul, Minn.

Keep it. Hanging on to two things that mean a lot to him isn't going to undermine in any serious way your commitment to streamlining. Seriously — is it really worth upsetting him over two things?

If it becomes a tug-of-war over every months-old magazine, or if he makes liberal use of the "sentimental value" tag, then you have grounds to make it in to a bigger issue of principle. Short of that, though, you have a guy with a couple of sentimental attachments — both about you, even — and you're digging in to get your way regardless. Some of it's even his! Back off and give him one sacred place for his stuff.

Hi, Carolyn:

A close relative, "Jane," has gained a lot of weight recently. She had always had a nice figure. I have always been overweight, and Jane has always been loving and supportive of me.

At a family gathering a few months ago, an elderly female relative made some rude remarks to Jane about her weight gain, and even grabbed her. Jane was understandably upset.

We are due to attend a family reunion soon, and Jane and I both have expressed our hope that this same relative will keep her comments and her hands to herself. Would it be wrong for me to call this woman and ask her not to do this again? She is rather old, but not senile. She's never had a weight problem, and, like too many people, she thinks fat people need to be told they are fat (as if they didn't already know).

I don't want to open up a can of worms. I'd just like to enjoy the family reunion without wondering what she might do or say to hurt Jane's feelings.

Anonymous

I appreciate your concern and compassion for Jane, but if Jane is an adult in good emotional health, then it's really up to Jane to handle any nasty old bats.

In fact, I'm more concerned about how invested you are in Jane's feelings than I am about Jane's feelings. Would worrying about Jane really affect your ability to enjoy your reunion? A preemptive call feels to me like having someone else's feelings for them.

What would be appropriate is expressing your outrage to the relative if (and only if) she bothers Jane again.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays at [www.washingtonpost.com/discussions](http://www.washingtonpost.com/discussions).

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or [tellme@washpost.com](mailto:tellme@washpost.com).



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

### REPORT FROM WEEK 891

In which we asked you to create word-palindrome sentences — that is, sentences in which the first and last word were the same, the second and next-to-last, etc. To make things a weensy bit easier, and to allow for more humor, we allowed the mirroring words to be homophones of each other, as in "way" and "weigh," or even more creative sound-alikes, such as the one for "Miss Tennessee" below. We also decided that "a sentence" could be as many sentences as we liked. We knew this would be a killer contest. On the other hand, we also knew that we had had many killer contests in the past — and we're not dead yet. Once again, the Losers get it done, backward and forward. Also not surprisingly, they showed great interest in the texting adventures of quarterback Brett Favre.

**Quoth Raven: "Nevermore!" ... BLAM! ... Nevermore Raven quoth.** (Peter Jenkins, Bethesda)

**2 "You have two mothers. The telling test: telling the mothers to halve you."** — Solomon (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

**3 Burning with desire ended badly: ended desire, with burning.** (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)

**4 Ew, junk mail. Of male junk??! Ewwwww.** — Brett Favre's text-receiver Jenn Sterger (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

### EITHER WAY, THEY LOSE: HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Miss Tennessee? I see a 10, miss!** (Beverley Sharp, Washington)

**Boy drops by, says: "Girl, size matters." Sighs girl. Says "Bye!" Drops boy.** (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

**"Americans' all-out war wore out all Americans."** — 22nd-century Afghan historian (Gary Crockett)

**Sign you're asking her pointlessly: her asking your sign.** (Elwood Fitzner)

**Home, childhood of comfort and security ... then, confident and successful, not frustrated and scared ... then (mom and dad proud!) graduation ... then college ... then graduation (proud dad and mom!) ... then, scared and frustrated, not successful and confident ... then, security and comfort of childhood home.** (Lennie Magida, Potomac)

**"Hello, please apologize. You can, no? Say, 'No can.' You apologize, please? Hello??"** — Ginni Thomas (Kevin Dopart)

**"Can a lone, kindly Marine kindly loan a can?" — Jon Stewart rally participant in a long potty line.** (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

**I waives the rules and rules the waves, aye! — Capt. Jack Sparrow** (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

**A man, a fridge: Amana.** (Chris Doyle)

**Is stuff you're texting as effective as texting your stuff is?** — B. Favre (Elwood Fitzner)

**I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, I think I ... Can I think? Aiiiiii ...** — The Little Engine Who Got Distracted by a Moment of Existential Awareness and Plummeted Down a Mountain (Mike Connaghan, Alexandria)

**Tie a knot, not a tie.** — Naval Recruitment Command (Kevin Dopart)

**Often as not, making love well means, well, "love-making" not as often.** (Chris Doyle)

**Circularly logical was I because I was logical circularly.** (Craig Dykstra)

**"Diner," "Psycho," "Jaws," "Duck Soup," "Grease," "Meatballs," "Shampoo," "Big": great movies. Great big shampoo meatballs, grease soup, duck jaws: psycho diner.** (Kevin Dopart)

**Why am I celebrating? I am why!** — D. Trump (Beverley Sharp)

**Gaga, meet my meat. Gaga?** — Brett Favre, sent from my iPhone (Ken Gallant, Conway, Ark.)

**Next week: Get a move on, or Goggle Maps**

**ONLINE DISCUSSION** Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at [washingtonpost.com/styleconversational](http://washingtonpost.com/styleconversational).

### MUSIC REVIEW

## Pro Musica Hebraica: Vivid delight and distress

BY JOE BANNO

Czech composer Karel Berman survived internments at Auschwitz, Dachau and Theresienstadt, as well as a bout of typhoid and a Nazi death march, before restarting his life and enjoying a half-century of composing and singing leading roles for the Prague National Theatre Opera. But to hear the richly sung and vividly characterized performance that bass Robert Pomakov and pianist Dianne Werner gave Berman's spiky, often playful, Czech-language song-cycle, "Poupata" ("Birds"), at a Pro Musica Hebraica-sponsored recital at the Terrace Theater on Thursday, it's hard to imagine such a life-affirming score was written during the darkest days of the composer's imprisonment.

Likewise, Paul Ben-Haim's confidently projected and faith-affirming Hebrew song-cycle, "Melodies from the East" (its melismatic writing nicely evoking cantorial singing in Pomakov's performance) didn't suggest a piece written at the height of the Holocaust, by a composer who fled the Nazis for a life in pre-Israeli Palestine. Ben-Haim's atmospheric mix of ancient melodies and harmonies with accessibly consonant Neo-Classicism proved attractive, too, in another of his wartime compositions, the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, played with earthy gusto by the Canadian-based ARC Ensemble.

The ARC players gave a reading of febrile intensity to Walter Braunfels's extraordinary F-sharp-minor String Quintet, written during the war while the part-Jewish composer braved Nazi censure to live in internal exile along the Swiss border. This work, unlike the others on the program, revealed the composer's anguish, with an enthralling mix of Straussian tumult, Shostakovich-like bleakness and extreme, Mahlerian mood swings that riveted the audience's attention.

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JUAN PELEGRIN Y VALERA

**SOLID FOOTING: Jose Barrios's troupe fused flamenco, funk and jazz at GALA Hispanic Theatre.**

### DANCE REVIEW

## Jose Barrios and Company step lively in GALA festival

Jose Barrios and Company's new work "Por Si Acaso Amance (If It Should Dawn)" knocks your socks off. It received a well-deserved standing ovation Thursday at GALA Hispanic Theatre. The air was electrified.

This is new flamenco, also known as fusion flamenco, which began in the 1970s as a movement to incorporate new elements. The style may not be new, but it is invigorating to see it done so exceptionally well.

"Por Si" fuses flamenco, funk and jazz in an 89-minute, no-intermission shot of adrenaline. There are nine parts built on flamenco categories, with the whole loosely based on the idea of enjoying life. "Before day breaks, let us laugh, cry, and let loose our senses," Barrios writes in the program.

Humor is very much part of the overall feel of the piece. Barrios is a cheeky guy with a wide grin, loud hand-clapping and

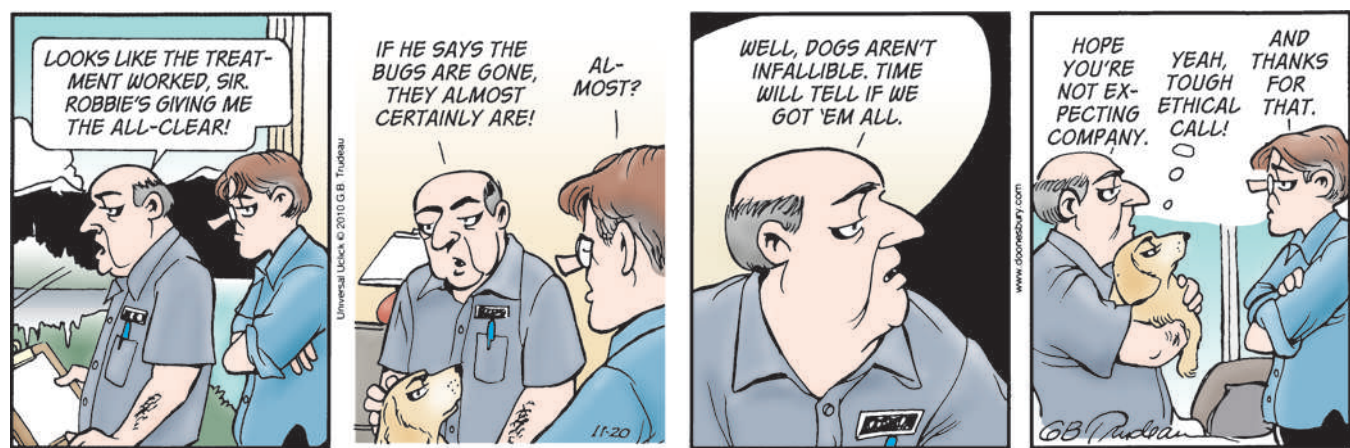
a big personality. He is also a supreme technician whose mop of long, sweat-drenched hair sprays the front row when he does his showy triple pirouettes. He instigates a flamenco version of musical chairs with dancer Raquel Villegas and singer David Vazquez, whom he then goads into pretending to dance. Vazquez pulls off this bit of buffoonery with the same artistry it took Charlie Chaplin to pretend to be a simpleton.

To stand out in a group this talented is hard. Yet Diego Villegas (flute, saxophone, harmonica) and his melodic adventures were impossible to ignore, as was the intense musicality of singer Juan Debel, who sounds like a Gypsy and looks like Frank Sinatra.

Jose Barrios and Company performs Saturday night as part of GALA Hispanic Theatre's sixth annual Flamenco Festival.

— Pamela Squires

### DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



### CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

