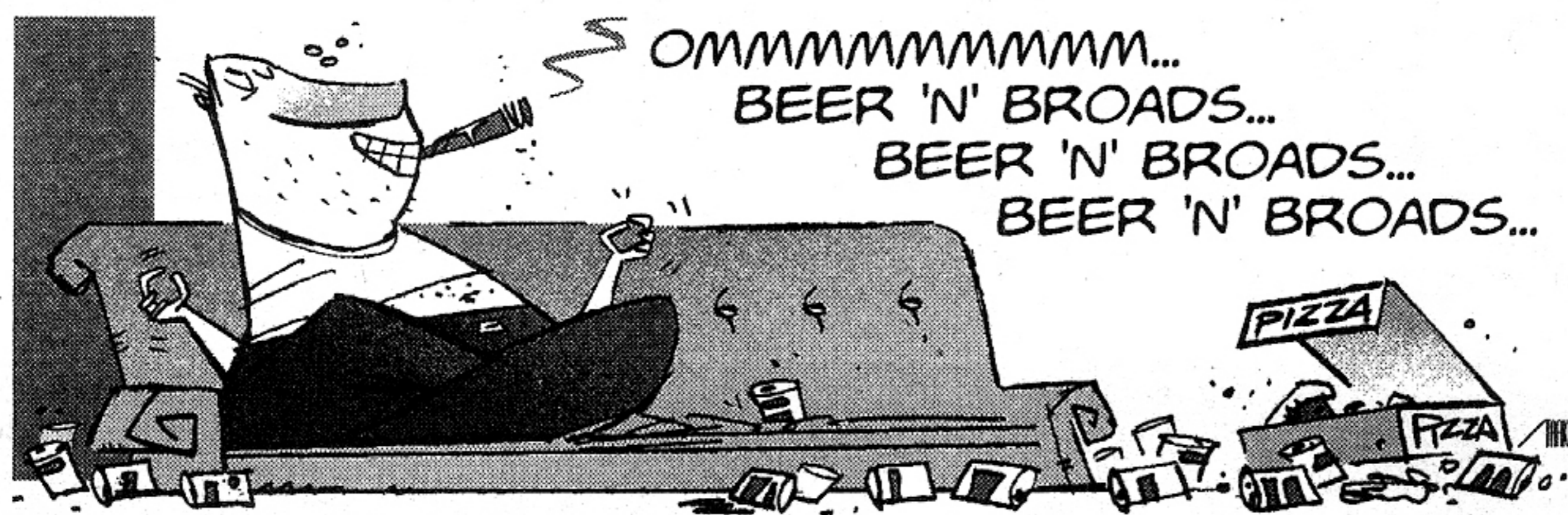


The Style Invitational

WEEK III: THE "STY"LE INVITATIONAL



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

"Man"tra—Beer and breads. Beer and breads. Beer and breads.

"Metro"nome—That repetitive woman's voice that admonishes you to stand clear of the doors.

"Gal"axy—A bevy of female film stars.

Ex"clam"ation—The phlegmy sound one makes when startled while drinking liquid.

"Cop"ulation—Sex with handcuffs.

Mans"laugh"ter—Accidentally killing someone by giving him a noogie.

Okay, "we" are back. You voted for The Czar of The Style Invitational over The Uncle of The Style Invitational. But the voting was closer than we'd hoped, and we are humbled. Therefore The Czar has decided to make a fundamental change in the contest. Starting next week, he will permit The Uncle to choose one winner a week: The single entry that best typifies The Uncle's philosophy of humor, which is a rejection of cynicism in favor of nice, pleasant, family-style, nonaggressive, life-affirming, G-rated, aw-shucks, vanilla-tofu-flavored jokes. This single entry will be labeled "The Uncle's Pick," and it will represent the very best in humor for the new, non-jaded, non-confrontational millennium. The Uncle will, of course, always explain the joke, for those who might not get it. (You don't have to specify which entries are for The Uncle: He will find them, whether they're intended for his eyes, or not.) The Uncle's Pick will win a special "The Uncle Loves Me" T-shirt.

We came up with **this week's contest** recently when arriving at the final line of a story on Page A1 of The Post. The last item on the page was "arse-" and then the story jumped, and as we were leafing to the new page, our imagination, as you can imagine, was working overtime, and by the time we got to ". . .nal" inside, this contest took shape.

The contest: Choose any word and emphasize a single part of it, as though you were saying the word out loud with "air quotes" around the key part. Then redefine the word, as in the examples above. (You cannot alter the spelling of the word.)

The first-prize winner gets a magnificent Hairshirt, along with a matching Guilt Sweatband and Guilt Tote Bag, all generously donated to The Style Invitational by Carl Segal, president of the Hirsute Hairshirt Co. of Columbia. These exquisitely uncomfortable but nicely tailored raw burlap shirts (and accessories) look like hell and smell like turpentine. They come with a little booklet on how to use them to atone for sins (Put them on, for example, when telephoning your mother, whom you have not seen in way too long.)

We hereby highly recommend the Hirsute Hairshirt as a thoughtful gift for that special person in your life for Lent, Ramadan or Yom Kippur. They're worth \$50.

First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up, and the Uncle's Pick, win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-Shirt. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com, or by U.S. mail to The Style Invitational, Week III, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20871. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and a daytime or evening telephone number. E-mail entries must include the week number in the message field. Contests will be judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Editors reserve the right to edit entries for taste or content. Results will be published in three weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes.

Report from Weeks I and II, in which several candidates, who have since met with tragic accidents, vied to be the editor of The Style Invitational. They each proposed contests, and each received many entries. No first-prize winners were awarded, but several merited mention:

◆ For the contest proposed by the would-be Senior Account Executive of The Style Invitational: Create a verse that extols the virtues of some big Post advertiser while unfairly criticizing its competitors:

The clothes at Nordstrom and at Sears

Fit bigger gals: no sveltes-wear.

I need a place for smaller rears.

Why the Hecht shop elsewhere?

(Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

To find size 4, not 27

Is my prayer to the mall-store

goddess.

To find myself a fashion heaven

With clothes that fit my bodice.

I feel that Hecht's will disappoint,

Its stock seems drab and dated.

And Bloomie's ain't my kind of joint

My clothes needs there? Unsated.

So with coupons for the three-day sale

From Washington Post (plus mailer),

For prices far below retail

I head for Lord & Taylor.

(Jay Snyder, Chantilly)

◆ For the contest proposed by the would-be Bubba of The Style Invitational: Things that a woman or a foreigner would be better at than a Real American Man.

Performing at the Winter Olympics

Opening Ceremonies (Gwen Runion, Leonardtown, Md.)

Having foreign babies. (Ed Mickolus, Dunn Loring)

Getting drunk off of one beer. (Marsh Holmes, Alexandria)

Incomprehensible yammering. (Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

Riding the No. 7 train in New York (John Rocker, Atlanta; Meg Sullivan, Potomac; Ken Kaufman, Derwood)

Making completely sure the traffic light is really green and is going to stay

really green before proceeding through the intersection.

(Elliott Jaffa, Arlington)

◆ For the contest proposed by the Mother Superior of The Style Invitational, in which you answer the question: What does God look like?

God looks like Art Buchwald, who is just like God in that a lot of people don't understand that he's trying to be funny.

(Bill Moulden, Frederick)

◆ And finally, for the contest proposed by El Jefe of The Style Invitational, who wrote entirely in Spanish. The contest called for people to come up with a game even more boring than soccer.

We received a number of responses, some in Spanish, some in French and some in Italian, but the best came en masse from members of Ms. Price's Spanish 3 class at Patuxent High School in Calvert County. We translated for you. We are certain these are fine young Americans, but we hereby urge Ms. Price to make sure they take their medication daily.

Fleaball: This is a Canadian game in which the object is to pick as many fleas as you can off a fat bloodhound. You have 10 minutes. Each flea is worth one point. Because it's played in Canada, there are no fleas and everyone loses.

(Cesar Kaumeyer, Mario Keirle, and Richard Eschelman)

Treeball: This game is played in a 70,000-seat stadium. There are two teams of nine people, but only eight can play at the same time. Each team receives seeds and water. The object is to grow a tree 50 feet tall. (E.D. Catterton, Jesus Roach and Charles Schrupf)

Bigball: This is a variation on golf, except the ball is bigger than the hole. No one ever leaves the first green.

(Angela Clark, Brad Turner and Isabel Hiben)