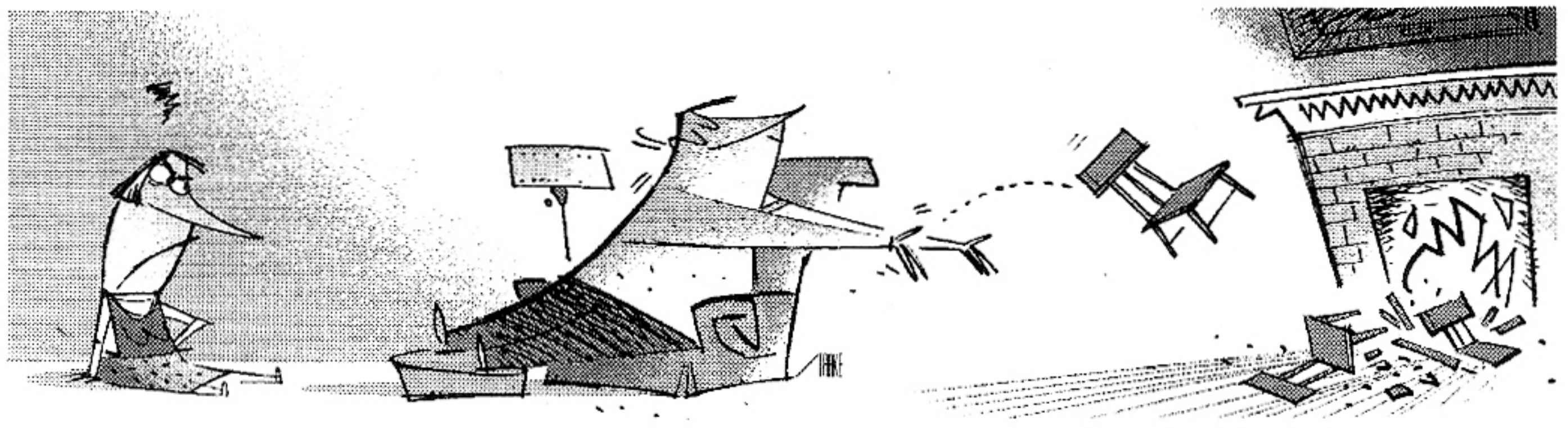


The Style Invitational

Week LVI: Operation Overkill

Problem: **Can't score with the chicks**
Solution: **Run for President of the United States**

Problem: **Acne**
Solution: **Belt sander**



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Problem: **High cost of firewood**
Solution: **Burn furniture**

Problem: **You can't find an adequate way to express your outrage at the failure of society to make basic urban infrastructure function effectively.**
Solution: **Send men to the moon.**

This week's contest was proposed by Bob Sorensen of Herndon after reading an account in The Post of a man who cut off his hand in a tragic miter-saw accident; in an apparent effort to relieve the pain, the man proceeded to use a pneumatic hammer to drive a dozen nails into his head. To Bob, this suggested a natural contest: Present a problem, and then propose a solution that goes just a little too far, as in the examples above. First-prize winner gets the First Ladies Coloring Book, c. 1970, featuring oddly identical likenesses of all first ladies from Martha to Pat. This is worth \$20.

First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. The Uncle's Pick wins the shockingly ugly "The Uncle Loves Me" T-shirt. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312; by e-mail to losers@washpost.com; or by U.S. mail to The Style Invitational, Week LVI, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Deadline is Monday, Feb. 26. 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 subject 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 four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes.

REPORT FROM WEEK LII,

in which we asked you to disclose the nature of Ginger, the super-secret invention that is said to be on the verge of completely changing urban life as we know it. But first, we present a special feature seen only twice before in the history of this contest: an interview with the Czar. Most questions below were submitted by regular Style Invitational entrants.

1. Is The Style Invitational run by the Jews?

The Style Invitational answers to a board of directors consisting of one Irish American, one Amerasian, one African American, one Jew, one Presbyterian, one Lutheran, an Indo-European, a Druid, a Wiccan, a Polynesian-Cypriot and an Aleutian Islander with an eating disorder. This panel approves all winning entries after a rigorous screening process to detect cultural biases and assure gender neutrality, ethnic sensitivity, geographic and socioeconomic diversity, and respect for the differently abled.

2. No, seriously.

Yes, The Style Invitational is run by the Jews.

3. What the heck kind of a name is "Boisfeuillet," anyway?

Boisfeuillet "Bo" Jones is the publisher of The Washington Post. We see nothing unusual about his name.

4. What is the current state of humor in America?

West Virginia. Followed closely by Arkansas.

5. Are you bothered by recent comments from The Post ombudsman in an online chat, in which he said that he is not "a fan" of The Style Invitational and that it "cheapens and degrades the newspaper"?

No. He is right. It does cheapen and degrade the newspaper. We just happen to think that is a good thing.

6. He also said of The Style Invitational that he does not understand "why it is allowed because I think it does the paper absolutely no good." Does it do any good, and if so, what?

It keeps the ombudsman busy, so he doesn't notice all the other really gratuitous, reader-unfriendly things Post reporters and editors do, such as making fun of people in their obituaries. Our favorite was a recent article that described the deceased as "a surly old cow."

7. Why haven't you deposited my bribe of 12/13/00 yet? Some of us need to balance our checkbooks.

Sorry.

8. Do you have any shocking news you wish to announce?

Yes. Starting next week, The Czar is leaving on a secret three-month assignment. In his place, the contest will be run by a committee of two: the Auxiliary Czar, who is female, and the Uberczar, who is not. They are both, however, Jews. The Czar wishes you to extend to them all the fawning sycophancy that he is accustomed to. The Czar also wishes to announce that during this period he will become an ordinary contestant, sending in entries from a remote location under an assumed name not known to the committee of two. Further, he declares that he will, upon his return, publicly disclose his success rate at being selected for publication by the contest he created and has ruled dictatorially for the last seven years.

9. Wow.

Precisely.

10. For you to be doing this stupid Q and A, the results of the Ginger contest must have been really, really bad. How bad were they?

This bad: The best entry, the winner of the Republican flag, is Ervin Stembol of Alexandria for this:

Nuh-uh. This time, I'm not telling anyone until I patent it.
(Al Gore, Arlington)

11. Wow.

Precisely.

Next Week: Give Us a Clue