

The Style Invitational

Week CXLVI: Invest Case Scenario



The Vertical Bathtub Company
Manufacturers of fine bathtubs in which you stand while bathing.

The Hammock Barn
Fine hammocks constructed entirely of pork products.

Ye Olde Dental Associates
Tooth care like when grandma was a girl. (Ask about our BYOB anesthesia options.)

This week's contest: Suggest new companies in which it might be unwise to invest, as in the examples above. First-prize winner gets a sad-looking ceramic gorilla squatting on a copy of the Wall Street Journal. No, we don't know what it is supposed to mean, either. But when Margareta Metcalf of the Cordell Collection in Bethesda saw it, she held it for us, perhaps understanding—with the innate genius that professional antique dealers possess—that no one else on Earth would buy it.

First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. U.S. mail entries are no longer accepted. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 18. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and 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. Entries may be edited 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. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Chris Doyle of Forsyth, Mo.

Report 1 from Week CXLIV: But first:

How dumb is the Czar? So dumb he doesn't even realize that Gene Weingarten is shupping his wife. (Bob Dalton, Arlington)

Not bad. It won the emergency "How Dumb Is the Czar?" contest announced two weeks ago when it became apparent to the Czar that he had created a contest no one would win. Week CXLII, the results of which were to have been published today, required you to find funny hidden cabals in the news stories of the day. A daunting task. Too daunting. None of the measly 120 entries produced even a germ of an idea worthy of publication. Fortunately, you proved equally inept as writers of literature, in a good way. Today, the first of two weeks' worth of Opening Lines of Very, Very Bad Novels.

◆ Third Runner-Up: **She awoke early and thought to herself, "Yet another day for me, Jennie Smith, here in Seattle, working as a secretary." She got up, went to the bathroom, reached for her hairbrush and used it, thinking, "I miss Sean, my son whom my husband (Jeff) now has custody of since our messy divorce in February 2001."** (Fred Burggraf, Charlotte Hall, Md.)

◆ Second Runner-Up: **When legendary actress and beauty Angelique Lafayette—great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of General Lafayette of Revolutionary War fame—walked into the boardroom of the corporation she had suddenly inherited when her late lover and CEO, Piers Johnson, had died ignominiously in her bed after explosive lovemaking, there was nothing in her regal manner to suggest her overwhelming urge to urinate all over her expensive gray wool crepe Chanel suit.** (Francesca Kelly, Rome)

◆ First Runner-Up: **It was a bright and sunny night . . .** (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

◆ And the winner of the antique Martha Washington plate: **I've never had a case more complex than the theft of the jade pillbox, nor a twist more shocking than the weepy eleventh-hour confession of the gardener, Mr. Rosebottom, and the strange events that followed in which his son, Elmer, was revealed to have provided the poison that killed Mrs. Dinglewood, with whom he had been having a secret affair for years. But perhaps I should begin at the beginning . . .** (Brian Barrett, Bethesda)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

Tina was depressed. She sat and stared out her window at the window across the street that seemed to reflect her staring out her own window. It made her reflect on her reflection, which, granted, at that distance was not clearly reflected. It was just like her life, she reflected. Always just a faint reflection of itself. This was all Jim's fault. (Shell Benson, Arlington)

For as long as he could recall, Nikolai had been obsessed with the banjo. It was heavy and substantial, yet graceful—ironically, not unlike a wood-and-metal, stringed version of the giant lollipops that had so tormented his dreams these past few weeks. (Rob Doherty, Alexandria)

With the darkness absolute and the silence absolute, Helen of deTROIt felt trapped. She felt like she was confined in a small crate, which she was, literally and metaphorically. The point is, this chick with the fiendishly clever name is stuck in a box, and she's got some things to say. You'll want to listen, trust me. (Mike Cozy, Silver Spring)

It was a rainy and dark night and Wanda was ready to start a new life with her husband and their three loving children, Tyler, Gwen, McKenzie and Sasha . . . (Jeff Kern, Gaithersburg)

A toe. Five toes, a foot. Three feet, a yard. Thirty yards, a neighborhood. A neighborhood where it would all happen. And it all depended on a single toe. A toe that held the fate of all mankind in its grasp, though its lack of opposable thumbs endangered everything. This toe was on the foot of the man who must win the marathon to save the world. (Eryk B. Nice, Ithaca, N.Y.)

Her desire for him became enflamed as she imagined him possessing her totally, carrying her to new heights of erotic pleasure as her body responded by getting all heeby-jeeby. (Eryk B. Nice, Ithaca, N.Y.)

Greg awoke from a fitful sleep to find that his hair had fallen out. Not the hair on his head . . . (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)

Bob sat transfixed by Elizabeth's beauty. Her tiny fondue-colored eyes, the way her hair curled around her neck like the tail of a pig, and her breath that always smelled of walnuts gave him an uncomfortable churning sensation deep in his stomach, as if he urgently had to go to the bathroom. "Is this love?" a little voice, the one that sounded like a fish, asked him, not really expecting a reply. (Bird Waring, New York)

Once upon a time—my, what a trite turn of phrase! It calls to mind those fanciful yet simplistic stories of old—most often a thinly disguised morality tale that causes the reader to groan aloud in anticipation of yet another retread of a worn-out and obvious theme. Well, anyway, once upon a time . . . (Amy Corbett Storch, Washington)

Frank Jolson was as fat as a cheetah is fast. That is to say, if you could come up with some kind of mathematical equation where you could compare speed and weight, like some sort of vector thingy, and you assume that it's not like an old or lame cheetah, then the speed of the cheetah and the weight of Frank Jolson would be pretty close, if not the same, which is to say very much. (Brian Barrett, Bethesda)

Next Week: **Humorphing**



TELL ME ABOUT IT

TELL ME, From F1

that doesn't change anything—unless you now question your husband's trustworthiness, in which case you must talk to him. Otherwise, dragged into present-day context, the whole situation is toxic; left in its proper school-age context, it's just a sad old story that needn't be retold.

Carolyn:

This month I've watched three friends get engaged and had two others discover they are pregnant. Every time, my friends start the "Oh, I'm sure you'll be next" song. Up until now, I've been able to pretty much laugh them off. I'm in a good relationship of two-plus years; I'm 28, he's 26, serious, but no cohabitating.

Well, yesterday, a friend with whom I'd shared my non-engagement jokes finally got the bended knee.

I'm thrilled for her, but I'm baffled by my overwhelming sadness and (ugh) pity for myself. I feel so stupid about how upset I am. My friend calls me every hour with some new marriage tidbit; how petty would I sound if I told her I didn't want to talk about her wedding because I'm seething with jealousy?

—O.G.

Extremely. Confessing your jealousy is fine—talking about it might help. It's the wedding-news blackout that would make you seem pretty lame.

Two reasons. She's your friend, and that means you come through for her full time, not just when she's conveniently as miserable as you are.

And, it's time you came through for you. You'll hardly feel better by plugging your ears and saying NAH-NAH-NAH whenever you hear the "M" word—or by finding lonelier friends or by getting your own (barf) "bended knee." Jealousy of others is never about what they have. It's about what you lack: peace with yourself. Not everyone passes a mansion and says, "Wow, I wish I lived there"—not the ones who are content with the place they call home.

So, other than being assaulted by the "Oh, I'm sure you'll be next" song, which can make a person nostalgic for "La Macarena," what is it about your life that isn't enough? That's what you need to find out.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com, and join Carolyn's live discussion at noon Fridays at www.washingtonpost.com/liveonline.



I'M YOUR FRIEND AND I'M THRILLED FOR YOU,
BUT I NEED YOU TO GAIN 20 POUNDS.

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST