

# The Style Invitational »

## REPORT FROM WEEK 827

in which we asked you to do free work for Washington Post Magazine humor columnist Gene Weingarten, in the form of coming up with stupid questions to ask customer service representatives on the phone. In return, Gene did free work for the Empress, choosing the winner and all the Losers below from a list of her finalists. Gene indeed plans to make some of the calls below.

## THE WINNER OF THE INKER

**To the White House: My 2006 Chrysler Sebring is hesitating when I step on the accelerator. When can I bring it in?** (Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge)

- 2 To Procter & Gamble: I love your Charmin toilet paper, but I hate those rolls that dispense from the underside. Can you tell me where I can buy rolls that dispense from the top of the roll?** (James Noble, Lexington Park)
- 3 To Whole Foods: Can I just come in to your downtown store and buy a cow?** (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)
- 4 To Colgate: Goo goo ga ga ma ma... What, you're not understanding? Then why do your instructions for your Peroxyl Antiseptic Oral Cleanser very clearly say, "Children under 2: Consult a dentist or physician"?** (Les Greenblatt, Ann Arbor, Mich.)

## THE LINES ARE DOWN: HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Ikea: The table I ordered arrived, but all the legs are broken off!** (Beverley Sharp, Washington)

**I bought some Clairol Perfect 10 Hair Color for my wife. She's a wonderful woman, but she's normally a perfect 4. After using your product she's a 5 1/2, 6 tops. Should she use more of the stuff or what?** (Fran Pfeffer and Dave Zarrow, Reston)

**Apple: Wouldn't it have been more practical to invent an Ear Phone?** (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)

**General Mills: I just turned 18 and I was wondering if I have to give up Trix now or do I still count as a kid until I'm 21?** (Adam and Russell Beland, from the South Rim of the Grand Canyon)

**Washington Mutual: Are you still making those home loans that people don't have to pay back?** (David Kleinbard)

**Peterson's TOEFL prep: Not good of the TOEFL practice is being on me! Money of purchase returning please and thanks, mister!** (Mark Hagenau, Derry, N.H.)

**Trojan: I noticed that you offer your product in Regular, Large and Extra Large. I'm not, well, any of those, so I'm just snipping off the end. Is that okay?** (Jim Lubell, Mechanicsville, Md.)

**Speedo: Your swimsuits look great on the young females at our pool, but I worry that I may be checking**

**out a minor. Is there any way you can label the bathing suits to identify the wearer as over 18 and okay to ogle?** (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)

**Crest: "I've been using your Whitening Strips for weeks now, but I look just as black as ever!"** (Kathleen Brasington, Annapolis)

**GlaxoSmithKline: I have six kids named Chesterfield, Winston, Lark, BensonHedges, Doral and Kool. If I name my new baby Nicorette, can I get a free coupon for your products?** (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

**Jiffy Lube: What if I don't want my boyfriend to be in such a hurry?** (Jane Auerbach)

**Rolex: I recently purchased one of your fine timepieces and I just noticed that there is an extra "L" in the logo. Would removing that be covered under the warranty, and if so, can I just take it back to the stand where I bought it to have that done?** (Dan Ramish, Arlington)

**Ivory Liquid: "I've been using your product regularly, but my piano keys are still squishy."** (Jennifer Hart)

**Zest: I have a pound cake recipe that calls for lemon zest, but I'm only finding Aloe Splash and Ocean Energy at my local store. Can I use one of those instead?** (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

**ShamWow: I see these cloths hold 12 times their weight in liquid. So, let's say I run out of gas: How many do you think I would need to soak my neighbor's car's tank dry?** (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

**MPS Group job recruiters: "My wife suffers from MPS, and the Midol is not getting it done. I was hoping you had a stronger product that would make her easier to live with."** (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

**Nike: I just did it. Do you offer carpet cleaning tips?** (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**Playtex: Every morning at 8, I put on one of your 18-Hour Bras, but I have to wake up at 2 a.m. to take it off before it expires. I like the lift and separation, but I need more sleep!** (Jennifer Hart)

**And Last: The Washington Post: I see you have someone who claims she's an Empress. Why don't you release her birth certificate?** (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

**Next Week: Inhuman Puns, or Wry Societies**

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Week 831: A Big To-Do

On Sarah Palin's bucket list: Finally get to all the newspapers.

**A**s if we don't have enough things to have hanging over our heads in our daily lives, it's become the thing to do to create a "bucket list" of goals to accomplish before you kick it. This week, 90-time Loser Larry Yungk — who's already had his picture taken with Angelina Jolie — suggests this week's contest: **Name a "bucket list" item for a well-known real or fictional character.**

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a pen that's a replica of the connected bones of the human finger — a metacarpal and three li'l phalanges. Looks like the middle finger, judging from its attitude. Courtesy of newbie Bridget Goodman of Philadelphia, who brought it down with her to the Loserfest weekend in Baltimore last month.

**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 Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 31. Put "Week 831" 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 will be published Sept. 19. 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 Mike Ostapiej; this week's Honorable Mentions name is by Beverley Sharp.

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*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).*

We'd love to give you this finger.