



CAROLYN HAX

Set boyfriend straight on his misguided puppy love

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Hi Carolyn: I went to a party last night and arrived separately from my boyfriend. He showed up with his 8-month-old puppy, Fanny, who can be very hyper. I asked my boyfriend if he had asked the hostess whether he could bring Fanny, and he said he hadn't. The hostess has two pet rabbits who, although caged, probably did not appreciate having a dog around.

Moreover, this is not the first time he's showed up with Fanny unannounced. Every time he does it, I say, "You really should ask first," but he doesn't seem to agree with me on this as an etiquette must. I've never brought up this issue independently from an incident, as in, "Listen. You really cannot bring around a puppy unannounced. It is rude." But now I'm wondering if I should.

For what it's worth, the puppy is often well-behaved, but she's a puppy and can also be hyper or needy. BF is blinded by love for this dog, and our friends have been too nice to call him out on it, although a couple of them have told me they would have appreciated a heads-up. What should I do in this situation?

Dogtown, USA

Tell him exactly as you proposed to here, in the exact words: "Listen. You really cannot bring around a puppy unannounced. It is rude." List the reasons: general nuisance, potential mess/allergies/dog fears. You can also add that it's not fair to the dog, either; she has to be stressed by all the activity of a party. Then, please realize your boyfriend's head is made of granite. And that, with the exception of your boyfriend, you're all a bit "too nice."

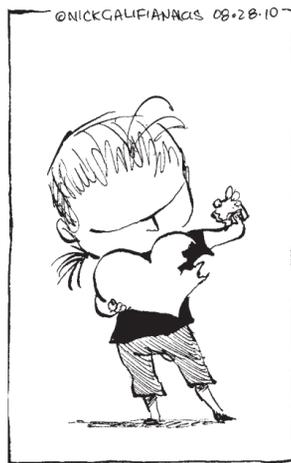
Dear Carolyn: I was dating a friend who was about six months out of a really long-term relationship. When we got together, he said he was ready to date again, but he just wanted to take it easy because he didn't want to get his heart broken again. Things were going well; he's a super-sweet guy and would always sign things xoxo, and tell me I was his favorite person, he missed me, etc. We broke up this week because he said he just wasn't ready for another serious relationship. That I can understand, but I just don't understand why he would say things if he didn't mean them. If you don't have those feelings, don't say them — no one's forcing you to!

Sad in D.C.

He could very well have meant them at the time. Feelings aren't linear. The semi-recent breakup, his friendship with you, the newness of dating you, the wanting to feel "normal" again and subsequent over-compensation — all of these things have their own push and pull, and sometimes all that pushing and pulling just feels like too much. You can feel ready and discover you aren't; you can feel infatuated and discover it's fleeting; you can feel urges for companionship that morph into cravings to be alone. I'm sorry you got swept into a current, and I'm sorry it didn't take you anywhere.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www.washingtonpost.com/discussions.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

REPORT FROM WEEK 880

This year's version of the contest with which The Style Invitational is most associated, reprinted on Web sites ranging from ArboristSite.com to the Adult Gamer, not to mention even more sites that label it, obviously wrongly, "the Mensa Invitational": This time, we asked you to take a word or multi-word term beginning with Q, R or S and add, drop or substitute a letter, or transpose two adjacent letters:



Defrigerator: Start saving energy now with this special offer from Pepeco! (Lennie Magida, Potomac)

- 2** winner of not only the Inflatable Tongue but also the Lady Anti Monkey Butt powder: **Republican:** "Government can't solve your problems — elect us so we can prove it." (Evan Hadley, Potomac, a First Offender)
- 3** Quinceañera: A teen's party with piñatas, dungeons and dragons. (Christopher Lamora, who just moved to Guatemala)
- 4** Quickstand: The one-nighter that sinks a marriage. (Craig Dykstra, Centerville)

Buick-tempered: Unexcitable. (Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)

Crapacity: The size of one's attic. (Chris Doyle, from Krarhayit, Turkey)

Refiance: To replace your subprime boyfriend when your interest starts to vary. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Rococoa: Haute chocolate (Nick Curtis, Alexandria)

Quartersack: On the Redskins, it's the player who lines up behind the center and takes the snap. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Po'journ: An inexpensive vacation. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Regurgitata: A nursing baby's spit-up. (Dave Komornik, Danville, Va.)

Squatrain: A four-line ode of bathroom humor. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

Bardines: The crush of patrons at dollar-beer night. (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)

Rheengineering: Making radical change in a school system. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Goux: A dark sauce lately served up on the Gulf Coast. (Mark Richardson, Washington)

Sox-change operation: Moving from Chicago to Boston. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)



Online discussion Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

'QUITE A 'RATION OF 'S': HONORABLE MENTIONS



BOB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Spaghetti: Little Italy. (Lois Douthitt, Arlington)

Urn-of-the-mill: Non-premium coffee. (Edmund Conti)

Hicksa: She's not just gentle, she's from West Virginia. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Podium phosphate: A polite term for the fertilizer dished out on the campaign trail. (Bob Klahn, Wilmington, Del.)

Stripsteas: Afternoon shows at a gentlemen's club. (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

Renaissance: When you fit into those tight jeans again. (Drew Bennett)

Rudeo: A trash-talk contest. (Pam Sweeney)

Retograd: Someone who moves back in with Mom and Dad after college. (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

Satisfaction: "Of course it was good for me too. It was fantastic. Really, I mean it." (Malcolm Fleschner, Palo Alto, Calif.)

Hillelagh: A Jewish club. (Stephen Dudzik)

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Not this week, honey

No new contest this week — it's the first break that the Empress has given the Obsessive Losers since February 2008. Four weeks from now, we'll run some results of previous contests. And remember that the deadline for last week's contest isn't until Aug. 30 at midnight. The revised title for next week's contest and this week's honorable-mentions subhead are both by Tom Witte.

Vapid City: An even duller town in South Dakota. (Les Greenblatt, Ann Arbor, Mich.)

Racksack: A brassiere. (Chris Doyle)

Prevenge: Do unto others first. (Lois Douthitt)

Snotstorm: A bad winter cold. (Mae Scanlan)

Soberiquet: A fake name used at an AA meeting. (Tom Witte)

Star raving mad: Mel Gibson, again. (Bob Klahn)

St. Louis: Gateway to the Worst. (Craig Dykstra)

Shequel: Wife No. 2. (Kevin Dopart)

Sister-in-la: The woman who stands next to you in the choir. (Tom Witte)

Socket wench: What the cretins at the auto shop called the new female mechanic. (Dave Komornik)

Sofari: A hunting expedition for the remote. (Kevin Dopart)

Savings and loam: A place to bury your treasure. (Lois Douthitt)

Sayonada: So long, and thanks for nothing. (Mae Scanlan)

Next week: What's in a name, or 'Wh'hin

Obamas follow in Clintons' footsteps on the Vineyard

VINEYARD FROM C1

the sea. Thomas Wallace, the owner of Wallace & Co. Sotheby's International Realty, which oversaw the rental of the home to the Obamas, would not discuss financial details but said that unlike the Clintons, who, he said, got their place as a "freebie" from individuals who offered up their homes, "every room is paid for."

"There are no favors," Wallace said. "Perceived or otherwise." And although an especially brutal economic environment had led many critics of the president to second-guess his decision to decamp to the Vineyard's elite corners ("Obama Heads to Martha's Vineyard as New Jobless Claims Hit 500,000," read a FoxNation headline), do we really want the leader of the free world chilling on the Jersey Shore? Plus, Wallace said that for his island, at least, presidential visits were entirely good for business.

"The presidential visits have the obvious effect of putting the neighborhood on the map," said Wallace, who dropped that he, too, had been at the golf club on Friday where Obama and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg had shot a round of golf. As they came off the links, he said, the two seemed to have "certainly looked like they were having a good time." The White House reporters who have pined for sightings of the president have had a harder time observing the allure of the island. ("12:45 p.m." read a pool report filed by Wall Street Journal reporter Elizabeth Williamson on Friday. "We're at the Vineyard Golf Club in Edgartown for guess what. We are holding at the club entrance. Today's schedule so far mirrors a day on the island last year — quick bike, drop off the family and head to the links. However, this year the pool bus toilet works. So far. Foursome names to follow shortly.")

Left with no news to report, the media have pondered the Vineyard's appeal since Clinton made it his getaway mainstay. Last year, when Obama announced that he, like Clinton, would be headed to the island, the New York Times' Web site hosted a digital forum called "Why Democrats Love Martha's Vineyard." Some answers focused on the Democratic tilt of the island or its laid-back vibe. Others were more ambitious in their interpretations. ("The Vineyard was the perfect vacation spot for Bill Clinton, who regarded himself as America's first black president," offered Alan Dershowitz. "So it stands to reason that it will be the perfect spot for Barack Obama, who is, in fact, America's first black president.")

Maybe there are some other very good reasons. For starters, the terrain is safe. As in secure. The Obamas' rented farmhouse is situated on the part of the island

not easily reached by main roads and, therefore, offers the Secret Service, who have traded in their black suits for khakis, plenty of room for a security perimeter.

Politically it's safe, too. It's Democratic country. It is part of blue-state Massachusetts, where various Kennedys have properties on the island and on the nearby mainland. The island doesn't have much in the way of exclusionary, "need-not-apply" country club baggage that other attractive golfing locales might, allowing a black president to invite a Jewish mayor out for a round of golf. It even boasts a proud history of diversity, with generations of black families in Oak Bluffs, where the president played some basketball and dined with his wife. And despite the island's more recent incarnation as a tony retreat for artists, entertainers, politicians and journalists, Martha's Vineyard has a year-round population of about 18,000 and authentic remnants of its rough whaling-port past. (In "Moby-Dick," both Flask, "a native of Tisbury, in Martha's Vineyard," and Tashtego, "an unmixed Indian from Gay-Head," were members of the Pequod's crew.)

Plus, the island's secluded roads and the location of the 30-acre Blue Heron Farm, set far off the road on the southern bay, afford a very private family a whole



HITTING THE LINKS: President Obama, with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, has barely ventured out in public on his Martha's Vineyard vacation other than to play golf.

STEVEN SENNE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

lot of privacy. Whereas the Clintons delightfully caused a stir when they descended on the town, the Obamas have barely ventured out. And when the president has, the purpose has usually been to swing some clubs — again.

"Potus is golfing with Mayor Bloomberg today," Williamson, the Journal reporter, wrote in a subsequent Friday pool report to her colleagues. "And they prefaced their game with a 15-minute discussion of the economy in the clubhouse

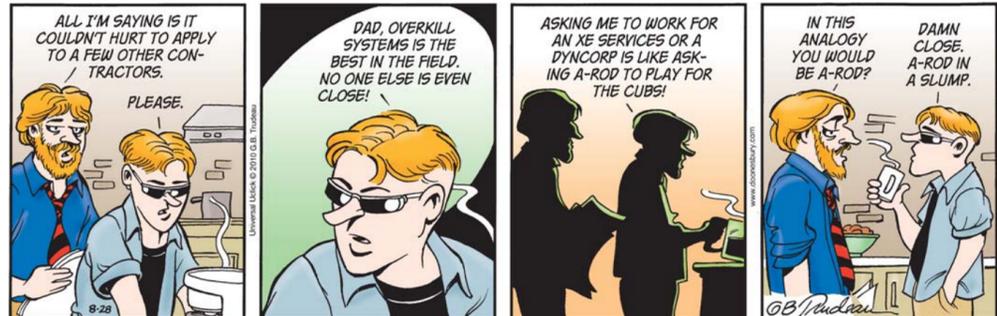
at the Vineyard Golf Club. Seeking more details. CBS's Mark Knoller, hailed by many including the WH for his command of presidential data, says the two men have not golfed together before."

Perhaps the time has come for the whole presidential entourage to escape the island. Until next year.

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Staff writer Scott Wilson, reporting from Martha's Vineyard, contributed to this report.

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

