

## The Style Invitational

By the Empress

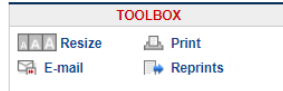
### Week 740: Give Us a Hint

Saturday, November 17, 2007

There's often a huge difference between Being Smart, in the academic sense, and Having the Slightest Clue, in the real-world sense, especially when it comes to understanding what we don't want to know. This week: **Offer clues in various situations that something isn't working out well.** A marriage proposal, college application, campaigning for public office, dental exam, anything you like. It shouldn't be an example of someone blowing his chances; it's about being told you've blown them.



(Bob Staake For The Washington Post)



Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a [battery-operated mini-fan](#) whose blades have electronic chips in them to produce lighted letters. You can program it to display the words of your choice in bright red, perfectly clear letters as the fan goes around. And thanks to its donor, Kevin Dopart of Washington, it's already programmed to say: HEY LOSER!/AN INVITE FAN/ IS BETTER THAN AN INKER.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called that week) 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, Nov. 26. Put "Week 740" 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 Dec. 15. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. This week's contest was suggested by Russell Beland. The revised title for next week's contest is by Beverley Sharp of Washington. This week's Honorable Mentions name was submitted by both Tom Witte and Roy Ashley.

Advertisement

#### Report From Week 736

in which we asked you to come up with automotive questions likely to make NPR's Car Guys crack up, and maybe read them on the air (we also let you ask questions of Miss Manners and Ask Amy). A vast fleet of Losers wondered if there wasn't some scam in this "tire rotation" thing, since the tires seemed to be rotating fine by themselves. And many Ford Escort owners were puzzled by the friendly but ineffective "Escort service" they received when they called that number in the sports section.

**4. My son just got his license and wants a V-8 Mustang. I'm afraid he'll drive too fast, trying to impress girls. Should we have him neutered first?** (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

**3. My 1999 Ford Taurus doesn't run properly at night. See, I drive a lot for my job, and from 8:30 a.m. until 5, the car runs fine. But then I park it outside a tavern at 5:30, and when I come out a few hours later, it's dark and my car veers all over the road. Please help.** (Chris Rollins, Cumberland, Md.)

**2. winner of the Anti Monkey Butt Powder: When I drive into a parking lot and set my car on "Park," it just sits there, even if there are several empty places very close by. What am I doing wrong?** (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

#### And the Winner of the Inker

**When I get my 2004 Mustang up to about 85 miles an hour, I hear a high-pitched whining off to my right that persists until I wind down to 60. What can I do to shut her up?** (Chris Rollins)

#### Not Firing on All Cylinders

**I plan to drive to the top of Pikes Peak this summer. Is there a training regimen I can put my car through so it'll be prepared for the altitude?** (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

**I have one of those "I am proud of my honor roll student" bumper stickers on my 2005 Caravan, but my son has just informed me that he will be getting a C in history this quarter. My wife has suggested selling the van, while I prefer to park it in the garage and drive a rental until our son regains his honor roll status. We welcome your opinion in this matter.** (Chris Rollins)

**How do I mount my .50-caliber machine gun on top of my Hummer so that my CD player doesn't skip when I shoot?** (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

**Yeah, I've got a 12-cylinder Lamborghini Murcielago. The LP640, with the 6496cc**

engine with the 88mm x 87mm bore and stroke and the 11.0:1 compression ratio. You know, the one with the 272-mm clutch. Anyway, what I'm wondering is: What are all those little gauges and lights and thingamabobs on the dash for? *(Russell Beland, Springfield)*

CONTINUED [1](#) [2](#) [Next >](#)

## The Style Invitational

By the Empress

Page 2 of 2 < [Back](#)

### Week 740: Give Us a Hint

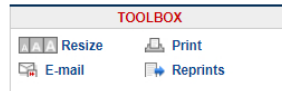
**This has bugged me since I was a kid: Fred Flintstone's car was a foot-powered vehicle, with a cab resting above two cylindrical rollers. My question is: How did it turn corners?** (*Brendan Beary, Great Mills*)



(Bob Staake For The Washington Post)

**The image from my backup camera is obscured by something that looks like a paw or small hand. Is this a problem with the camera or a problem with the screen?** (*Ben Aronin, Washington*)

**If I've locked my keys in my 2007 Toyota Solara convertible and it's about to rain, is there a manual way to get the top up before it storms?** (*Miranda Longstreth, Washington*)



**I took my car into the dealer, and they said I need my exhaust system flushed, brake disks rotated, power steering grommet tightened and headlights re-bored. My question: Should I get the undercoating package, too?** (*Russ Taylor*)

**My big brother and his girlfriend like to park down the street and make out. Me and my buddy want to shake them up by whacking the bumper real hard to make the air bags pop out. Will we need, like, a couple of railroad ties, or will a full shopping cart do the trick?** (*Steve Fahey, Kensington*)

**My "check engine" light went out while I was driving to work in heavy traffic, after it'd been on for two months. What kind of bulb should I buy to replace the one that went out and how do I put it in?** (*Jonathan Gettleman, Ashburn*)

**Please settle this argument: I always save on gas by never letting the tank go less than half-full, while my wife runs it down near the E. This way I can fill it up for only \$15, while it costs my wife \$30. She says it doesn't matter, 'cause she makes up for it by avoiding jackrabbit starts and stops. Who's right?** (*Steve Fahey*)

**What would possess Jay Shuck of Minneapolis to mistake the CLEARLY MARKED engine coolant reservoir in a 2000 Honda Civic for the windshield wiper fluid container?** (*Jay Shuck's wife, Minneapolis*)

**Dear Click and Clack: Do you know of any cars where the clutch and accelerator pedals aren't so close together? Sincerely, L. Craig, Boise** (*Ehwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.*)

**Hey, is this the Terry Gross show?** (*Tom and Ray Magliozzi, Greater Boston*)

#### To Miss Manners & Ask Amy

**When breaking up with a girlfriend by text message, is it okay to abbreviate words using "text speak," or would that come across as rude and insensitive? I mean, if you're really in a hurry.** (*Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.*)

**My psychotic boyfriend mailed me his severed left ear after a bad argument. We've now broken up. Am I required to return the ear?** (*Jay Shuck*)

**Dear Amy: The letter from "Miffed in Topeka" could have been written by me, except I've never been to Kansas, and I'm not a woman, and I don't work in an office, and my son is not on drugs, and my boss isn't hitting on me, my best friend isn't gay, and I don't have a crush on my rabbi (I'm not even Jewish). But your answer really helped me a lot. Thanks!** (*Chris Rollins*)

Next Week: No River, No Woods, or Taking Off on the Holidays

< [Back](#) 1 2