

UP SHIT CREEK AGAIN / CALIFORNIA HERE I FAIL TO COME

You recently printed a letter from a woman who **had** planned a beautiful, catered wedding. She was **outraged** because 17 guests who **had replied "yes" never bothered to come**, and four people **showed up** who **had not been invited** at all. My eyes immediately **skipped** to the signature line, and **just as I suspected**, the wedding was a Southern California **affair**.

Let me make one thing **perfectly clear**: an **RSVP** from a Southern California resident means nothing. When I lived in New York, I **gave** frequent formal dinner parties. I **never once had a guest respond "yes" and then fail to show up**. Here in Los Angeles, I cooked for a week for a big holiday party, and seven of my 12 dinner guests, **all of whom had** RSVP'd "yes," **left me stranded** up shit creek.

One guest "didn't **feel like driving**," another "remembered she had to go to the movies" with her mother, a third said she had to **do laundry**, and **others** simply failed to show up and never **bothered calling in** their **regrets**. New Yorkers **have a reputation for being hard-boiled**, but at least they **have decent manners** and **keep their word**. The inhabitants of Southern California are **slobs**. – **Had It** in L. A.

WORDS OF DUBIOUS WISDOM

I doubt that **good manners** are geographical. **In my experience**, there are slobs on both coasts. My advice to any hostess who wants an **accurate head count** is, **use the phone** if people don't respond. If they say yes and **fail to show up**, **be sure never to** invite them again.