

By Pat Myers and Gene Weingarten

The Invitational Week 3: Send Us the Bill — our ‘joint legislation’ contest

The Traficant-DeLay-Akaka Roadside Port-A-Pot Act (*Carole and Stephanie Dix, 1993*)

The Moore-Greene-Salazar-Good Act mandates fresh leafy veggies to school lunch programs. (*Pia Palamidessi, 2021*)

The Johnson-Sevier-Lee-Lee-King bill to establish the key rule for ending a filibuster. (*Doug Hamilton, 2013*)

It’s one of the first and most popular contests The Invitational’s ever done – and a game that’s been played among congressional staffers forever. These days, it’s just about the only way to make our elected leaders do *anything*, let alone create bipartisan legislation: **Combine two or more names from the list below of the new members of the 118th Congress to “co-sponsor” a bill based on their combined last names**, as in the classic Style Invitational examples above.

We’re just playing with the sounds of their names, not referring to the sens and reps themselves. (If Rep. Santos doesn’t last eight more days, you can play him anyway.)

Lots of promising subjects this time – Bean! Fry! Ogles! Self!

The Czar and Empress implore you, from long experience: A pun that is clear to you, because you thought of it, is not necessarily clear to anyone else in the world. Before you send in your entry, ask someone else to read it out loud and, without help, tell you what phrase you had in mind.

Here are this year’s new names, [from this Wikipedia page](#); it includes not just brand-new members but also those who are now in different districts, or have moved from the House to the Senate. Even though Jennifer McClellan is sure to win the special election next month in Virginia, she misses the deadline.

Alford; Balint (rhymes with gallant); Bean; Brecheen; Britt; Budd; Budzinski; Burlison; Caraveo; Casar (ka-SHR); Chavez-DeRemer (Ch- as in chair; de-Reamer); Ciscomani; Collins; Crane; Crockett; Davis; De La Cruz; Deluzio; Duarte; D’Esposito; Edwards; Ezell (EE-zell); Fetterman; Foushee (Foo-shee); Frost; Fry; Garcia; Gluesenkamp Perez; Goldman; Hageman (Hay-guh-man); Houchin (How-chin); Hoyle; Hunt; Ivey; Jackson; Jackson; James; Kamlager-Dove; Kean; Kiggans; Kiley; LaLota; Landsman; Langworthy; Lawler; Lee; Lee; Luna; Luttrell; Magaziner; McCormick; McGarvey; Menendez; Miller; Mills; Molinaro; Moran; Moskowitz; Moylan (Delegate of Guam); Mullin; Mullin; Nickel; Nunn; Ogles; Pettersen; Ramirez; Ricketts; Salinas; Santos; Schmitt; Scholten (skoal-ten); Self; Sorensen; Strong; Sykes; Thanedar (TAN-e-dar); Tokuda; Vance; Van Orden; Vasquez; Welch; Williams; Zinke (zinky).

[CLICK HERE FOR THIS WEEK'S ENTRY FORM.](#)

Deadline is midnight Friday, Jan. 27. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Feb. 2.



The winner receives – just perhaps apropos of this week’s contest – an excellent pair of socks that make your feet look like the claws of some creepy reptile, or perhaps a dinosaur, as seen on the Empress’s feet above. They’ll fit any size adult foot. They even have scales on the bottom. If your feet already look like this, we don’t need photographic evidence, thanks.

✓ [Subscribed](#)

Letter RIP: The winning & losing obit poems from Week 1

In Week 1 of The [No Longer Style] Invitational, we asked for short poems commemorating those souls who hadn’t made it to 2023. The Czar and Empress ~~shed tears of utter relief~~ were pleased to receive many hundreds of poems from almost as many entrants as we’d get for poetry contests at The Washington Post, with subjects ranging from the Queen of England to Marlon Bundo, Mike Pence’s pet rabbit (sorry, no ink for either this week).

Third runner-up:

Jerry Lee Lewis (1935-2022)

When Jerry Lee Lewis burst onto the scene,
He helped rock-and-roll to awaken.
But when he showed up with a bride of thirteen,

A whole lotta heads started shakin'.
Let's hope he's at peace in the heavenly choir,
Surrounded by angels, not great balls of fire.
(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

Second runner-up:

Dorothy Pitman Hughes (1938-2022), pioneering feminist
Without her we would not have gotten Ms.,
A magazine that proudly isn't Hs.
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

First runner-up:

Andre Leon Talley (1948-2022), flamboyant critic and stylist
This glamorous gent, upon entering heaven,
Was dressed from the nines all the way to eleven.
Saint Peter remarked, "You are early, I see."
"Alas, yes," said Andre, "but fashionably!"
(Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.)

And the winner of the 45-rpm records featuring Walter Brennan and Sen. Everett Dirksen:

25 Russian billionaires
Fell through windows, tumbled down stairs.
Slipped on a boat and said their last prayers.
Smacked their heads or plunged off cliffs,
A clumsy lot, these oligarch stiffs.
They forgot Vlad's rule for the elite:
Wealth means nothing if you're not discreet.
Your splendid leader must be exalted
Or – oops! – you might become quite asphalted.
(Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.)

Share

Nearly Departed: Honorable Mentions

Pelé (1940-2022)
Of Pelé, it's said that his moves were pure magic
(A view shared by legions of goalies he tricked).
Alas, his last feint was ironically tragic:
Instead of the ball, it's the bucket he kicked.
(Bob Kruger, Rockville, Md.)

Sidney Poitier (1927-2022)

There's less heat in the night, less sun on the raisin;
The ranks of the greats just got thinner,
But the worms in the graveyard, their luck they are praisin';
They guessed who'll be coming to dinner.

(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

**John Y. Brown Jr. (1933-2022), businessman who built up KFC
and Jule Campbell (1926-2022), mastermind of Sports Illustrated's swimsuit issue**

For him, it was a fast food joint; for her, a magazine;
They offered up the bounties men most prize.
To schoolboys, grizzled geezers, and all ages in between:
A major dose of legs and breasts and thighs.

(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Mikhail Gorbachev (1931-2022)

Soviet-shmoviet,
Mikhail S. Gorbachev
Pushed perestroika — what
Hopes we all had!
One thing he missed in his
Counterhegemony:
Should have disposed of a
Weasel named Vlad.

(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Magawa, bomb-sniffing rodent

For a bit of banana or similar chow, a
Small creature can sniff where a land mine is at.
One was said to clear fields in under an hour,
And Cambodian farmers still marvel at that.
With his passing, the country now grieves for Magawa.
So who was this master of smelling? A rat.

(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Man who got sucked under a swimming pool in Israel

The story I have to relate
Concerns Klil Kimhi's cruel fate:
A dip in a pool
On a sinkhole's not cool —
Going swimmingly's not always great.

(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

Angela Lansbury (1925-2022)

The world will never be the same:

We've lost our awesome Auntie Mame.

Her long career was one of note;

But now she's gone. (That's all she wrote.)

(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Unwise summer reveler

After drinking all day on the fifth of July,

Texan Pablo Ruiz was a hold-my-beer guy

Who, by lighting a firework on top of his head,

Came up with a mind-blowing way to be dead.

(Chris Doyle)

Fred Franzia, wine magnate (1943-2022)

A fine merlot? A pinot gris? An earthy cabernet?

For Fred, these weren't the kinds of wines he set out to purvey.

The Central Valley climate meant his vineyards couldn't yield,

The high-end grapes most favored by the "experts" in the field.

But here among us heathen, he knew he'd have better luck,

By mass-producing Charles Shaw – best known as Two-Buck Chuck.

Today, we fans salute him, in his place beside the Lord,

By raising up a plastic cup of swill we can afford.

(Mark Raffman)

Gallagher (1946-2022)

See-through tarp's what I prefer

Dodging pulp from Gallagher.

Time to put it in the attic;

God took out *His* Sledge-o-Matic.

(Nan Reiner)

Dwayne Hickman (1934–2022), 1950s-'60s TV actor

The scene: 1950s America. It was great;

A fountain drink for two was called a date;

On TV, young Dwayne tried to thrill us

With wisdom gleaned from life by Dobie Gillis,

For times were simpler then, and more restrained,

And realism had to be contained.

So Dwayne portrayed a "normal" adolescent:

In love, confused—but never once tumescent.

(David Franks, Washington County, Ark.)

Kirstie Alley (1951-2022)

When the beers were on you, you earned many a Cheer!

Now you're crossing the bar, and it's you on the bier.

(Duncan Stevens)

Dwayne Hickman (

Diane Hegarty (1942-2022), co-founder of the Church of Satan

Is Satan, as his church proclaims, not real,

But more a metaphorical-type deal?

Or does he – horns and all – in fact exist

And feel a little peeved he's been dismissed?

I'd love to ask Diane if I knew how:

The odds are good she has the answer now.

(Melissa Balmain)

Foolish young mountain climber in Arizona

Standing on a rocky shelf, he

Slipped and took his final selfie.

(Chris Doyle)

Barbara Walters (1929-2022)

No more Barbara Walters

And all of us are blue.

She made it on "20/20"

But not through 2022.

(Kevin Ahern, Corvallis, Ore.)

Richard Leakey (1944-2022)

Richard Leakey and his family tree

All pursued anthropology.

Now his bones are in the ground

In the future to be found.

(Pia Palamidessi, Cumberland, Md.)

Ray Liotta (1954-2022) and James Caan (1940-2022)

Both gone! Good Lord, and holy moly!

That takes the cake, plus the cannoli!

Say, two at once—it seems suspicious ...

Might you be sleeping with the fishes?

Did someone give you concrete shoes?

An offer did you guys refuse?

If someone got revenge, I'm told,

For worms, their dish is best served cold.

(Duncan Stevens)

✓ **Subscribed**

Meat Loaf (1947-2022)

Meat Loaf died and many found

That headline quite distressing.

He might still be with us if his name

Was "Salad, Hold the Dressing."

(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)

Gaylord Perry (1938-2022), pitcher notorious for his spitball

I. In heaven's ballpark, Gaylord Perry glares in from the mound;

The batter waits in silent trepidation.

For all celestial players know the wily hurler's found

The secret to eternal salivation.

(Mark Raffman)

II. The spitballer had a very long run

And outraged baseball snobs.

But cheating to win – was that any fun?

No doubt he'd answer, "Gobs."

(Pam Shermeyer)

Ken Starr (1946-2022)

He just got the news: a friend told Bill Clinton

Fate caught up with his nemesis Starr;

A light in the eye of the ex-Prez is glintin'

As he quietly lights a cigar.

(Duncan Stevens)

And Last: The Style Invitational (1993-2022)

Abracadabra, the

Style Invitational

Died, but it rose from the

Dead in a flash.

One might describe it as
Reincarnational;
Now, like the phoenix, it's
Kicking some ash.
(Alex Steelsmith, Kailua, Hawaii)

The headline "Letter RIP" is by Dave Prevar; Sam Aaron wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Banter and share humor with the Losers and the Empress in the [Style Invitational Devotees](#) group on Facebook (tell the admins that you saw us in The Gene Pool); join and the Devs will anagram your name every which way.
