

The Invitational Week 32: Holy moly, it's Limerixicon XX

Write a limerick featuring a word beginning "ho-." Plus winning ideas for stupid reader polls.

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AND

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AUG 10, 2023



This spectacular image relates to the limerick contest you will encounter very shortly after the long-awaited, Pulitzer Prize-winning appearance of our latest Gene Pool Gene Poll, below.

POLL

Which restaurant chain has the finest plasticware?

Arby's
Wendy's
Checkers
McDonalds
Burger King

125 VOTES · 16 HOURS REMAINING

Hello. Today, as with all Thursdays, we devote all our attention to The Invitational, including the above idiot poll, which relates to the results of our Week 30 contest, about idiot polls, the results of which will be revealed below. Yes, it's stupid. Take it, anyway. Your consensus might be valid!

In the meantime, here is a limerick about horsemeat and horsemeat byproducts written years ago by Brendan Beary, and which introduces our new contest, which involves limericks featuring words beginning with, um, "ho."

**A new horsemeat to-do! There's no telling
That it's clear what our vendors are selling —
Like the sandwich I'd bought
From a truck, when I thought
"Filly cheesesteak" was just a misspelling!**

Ever since a Midwestern knife seller named Chris Strolin embarked in 2004 on his Grand Mission to create a Omnificent English Dictionary in Limerick Form, in which every meaning of every word would be represented by a limerick, The Invitational has popped up once a year to help round up some prime material, seeking limericks beginning with whichever sliver of the alphabet OEDILF.com was up to. (Current estimated completion date: Nov. 3, 2063; current number of limericks: past 119,000.)

Now it's our 20th year of our Limerixicon — conveniently labeled XX — but our first in which we're no longer constrained by the proprieties of a Major Metropolitan Daily Newspaper, and thus free to celebrate the limerick's traditionally bawdy content. Last August, Chris was up to the “hi-” words, and now we inch forward.

For Week 32: Supply a humorous, previously unpublished limerick significantly featuring any word, name, or term beginning with “ho-,” as in the example above from an earlier Invitational contest.

While we may be freer with the subject matter (though we're certainly not *requiring* off-color material), we're still as strict as always about **the limerick form**: “[perfect](#)” rhyme; a strong “hickory-dickory-dock” rhythm within Lines 1, 2, and 5; a “dickory-dock” in Lines 3 and 4; extra unaccented syllables on either side are fine. Say the example above with exaggerated accents, and you'll get the hickory-thing.

For more guidance, you can read the Empress's 2022 primer “[Get Your 'Rick Rolling](#)” (just remember that the dates, etc., refer to last year). Or just absorb the classic ink from past Invites by going to the Losers' [Master Contest List](#), searching on “limerick,” and clicking on the far-right column.

[Click here for this week's entry form](#), or go to bit.ly/inv-form-32. As usual, you can submit up to 25 entries for this week's contest, preferably all on the same entry form. No special formatting needed this week; just write them as five-line poems and we'll make them look nice. See OEDILF.com about submitting limericks there, if you like, after our contest results run on Aug. 24.

Deadline is Saturday, Aug. 19, at 4 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Aug. 24.

This week's winner gets TWO Bigfoot-motif car air fresheners, which smell precisely, truly uncannily like Bigfoot. There are two because in May, totally independently, Dave Prevar and Jeff Contompasis each arrived at the Flushies, the Losers' annual award picnic, and presented us with one of these olfactory wonders.



Hopefully, it doesn't smell like big feet: Half of this week's prize.

Runners-up get autographed fake money featuring the **Czar or Empress**, in one of [ten nifty designs](#). Honorable mentions get bupkis, except for a sweet email from the E, plus the [Fir Stink for First Ink](#) for those who've just lost their Invite virginity.

Faux Questions Asked: Stupid polls from Week 30

[In Week 30](#) we asked for "a really stupid online poll for a general-interest news site." Some of the entries made direct, cruel references to what an idiotic contest

this was, which, frankly, hurt our feelings, at least to the extent that we *have* feelings. Without defensiveness, we have to say we like the results, as weird as they are.

Third runner-up: Who was our finest Under Secretary of Commerce?

- a. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney
- b. Wayne Chatfield-Taylor
- c. Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr.
- d. Luther H. Hodges Jr.

(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

Second runner-up: When putting on shoes and socks, in which order do you do it?

- a. Sock, sock, shoe, shoe
- b. Sock, shoe, sock, shoe
- c. I never wear socks.
- d. I never wear shoes.
- e. Shoe, shoe, sock, sock

(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

First runner-up: Thank you for registering a new account with Facebook. How did you hear about us?

- a. My children
- b. My grandchildren
- c. My great-grandchildren

(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)

*And the winner of **the pen you can play blackjack on — plus a Fir Stink:***

When giving random responses to a survey, which ONE answer are you likely to give?

- a. D
- b. C
- c. A

d. B

(Dan Sachs, Pineville, N.C., who is a rarity: a First Offender and winner)

None of the Above: Honorable mentions

Which fast-food double bacon cheeseburger would you prefer?

a. One that meets 98 percent of your daily calorie needs

b. One that meets 99 percent of your daily calorie needs

(Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.)

What is your favorite way to create a secure password?

a. Wedding anniversary

b. Name of pet

c. Child's birthday

d. High school mascot

e. Other (please specify): _____

(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

What is your dream vacation spot in Europe?

a. Hafnarfjarðarkaupstaður

b. Bolungarvíkurkaupstaður

c. Svalbarðsstrandarhreppur

d. Dublin

(Jesse Rifkin)

Where do you prefer scooter renters to abandon their rides?

a. In the middle of the sidewalk

b. On someone's lawn

(Leif Picoult)

The movie *Oppenheimer* would have been improved ...

a. If the title character had ridden on the bomb à la *Dr. Strangelove*.

b. If there were more BRRRAAAAAM sound effects.

c. If everything were pink.

(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

When you sort your socks after a wash, do you place them heel down or heel up?

- a. Heel down
- b. Heel up
- c. It's random.
- d. All my socks are identical, so I have no need to sort them.

(Neal Starkman, Seattle)

Whom would you rather sleep in the same bed with?:

- a. A dog with fleas
- b. A cat with mange
- c. A spouse with fleas *and* mange

(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

How much weight do you need to lose?

- a. 5 pounds
- b. 10 pounds
- c. More than 240 pounds

(Beverley Sharp)

Besides “Macarena,” what is your favorite song by Los Del Rio?

- a. “El Sueño de la Marisma”
- b. “Aquí Me Tienes Rocio”
- c. “Qué Bonita Está la Feria”

(Jesse Rifkin)

If you had to choose one in a social situation, which would you rather have?

- a. A random hair sticking out of your nose
- b. A random hair sticking out of your ear

(Leif Picoult)

Women, who is your favorite member of the Three Stooges?

- a. Curly
- b. Larry
- c. Moe

d. I can't pick one — they're all so great!

(Jesse Rifkin)

Which restaurant chain has the finest plasticware?

- a. Arby's
- b. Wendy's
- c. Checkers
- d. McDonald's
- e. Burger King

(Leif Picoult)

What should the status of Pluto be?

- a. Dwarf planet
- b. Ninth planet of the solar system with all accompanying rights and privileges
- c. Planet-like celestial object unfazed by judgments and titles assigned by Earth-bound astronomers who have never even visited
- d. Dog companion—but a pet, not an equal like Goofy

(Jon Carter, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Which 1960s-era mustache do you think gets more food stuck in it?

- a. Handlebar
- b. Walrus
- c. Van Dyke
- d. Fu Manchu

(Leif Picoult)

When you accidentally step barefoot on a Lego piece, what do you say?

- a. "Son of a bitch!"
- b. "Damn it all to hell!"
- c. "Fuuuuuuuck!"

(Leif Picoult)

Which is the most entertaining relationship in a daily comic strip?

- a. The subtle socioeconomic debates of Barney and Clyde
- b. Hagar and Helga's classic take on the familial pressures created by Viking

marauding and debauchery

- c. The brutal working-class violence unleashed on Andy Capp by wife Flo
- d. The sexually charged repartee of Nancy and Sluggo

(Jon Carter)

How long is a piece of string?

- a. Twice the distance from the middle to the end
- b. 3
- c. I HAVE THE BEST, MOST BEAUTIFUL STRINGS, UNLIKE THOSE CRAZY CORRUPT STRINGLESS PROSECUTORS.

(Duncan Stevens)

Which of these claims from Marjorie Taylor Greene do you most agree with?

- a. A Rothschilds-sponsored satellite started wildfires in California.
- b. Georgia Sasquatches are taller and more Christian than those in the liberal Northwest.
- c. The Lizard People controlling the economy should raise interest rates a quarter point but keep White Claw under \$10 a six-pack.

(Jon Carter)

When clipping your toenails, do you start with your dominant foot or the other one?

- a. Dominant foot
- b. Other foot
- c. I don't have a dominant foot.
- d. I don't have feet.

(Tom Witte)

If you stay in a hotel room that has a houseplant in it, do you water it?

- a. No, that's not my job
- b. Yes, if it is in need of water
- c. Yes, I water it with my own urine, which is a natural fertilizer.

(Tom Witte)

Choose the sentence below that's closest to your own views:

- a. Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.
- b. Ernst Haeckel's biogenetic law vastly oversimplifies embryology and understates the significance of genetic frameworks and mutations in his insistence that zygotic development parallels evolutionary relationships between taxonomic groups.

(Duncan Stevens)

Do you lie to your dentist about how often you floss?

- a. Yes
- b. No, but I'm lying to you now

(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

How should the Supreme Court be adjusted?

- a. Increase number of justices to 11, 13, or maybe even 29.
- b. Impose mandatory retirement at 80, earlier if they can no longer find way out of their robes.
- c. Bring back those long white wigs.
- d. Set limits of \$10K per occasion, \$100K for the year, for bribes from any one source.

(Jon Carter)

Cats or dogs?

- a. Cats
- b. Dogs
- c. I'll stick with the traditional beef and pork.

(Gary Crockett)

And Last: Should I cynically attempt to get ink by exploiting, for the third time, the Empress's fondness for Bob Dylan?

- a. The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
- b. You're an idiot, babe; it's a wonder that you still know how to breathe
- c. When you ain't got nothing, you got nothing to lose

d. She knows there's no success like failure and that failure's no success at all
(*Greg A. Johnson, Victoria, B.C.*)

The headline "Faux Questions Asked" is by Chris Doyle: both Chris and Tim Livengood submitted the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 4 p.m. ET Saturday, Aug. 12: **Our Week 31 contest for new words formed by seven-letter ScrabbleGrams "racks."** [Click here](#) or type in bit.ly/inv-week-31.