

# The Invitational Week 43: Let It Be a Lesson to Us

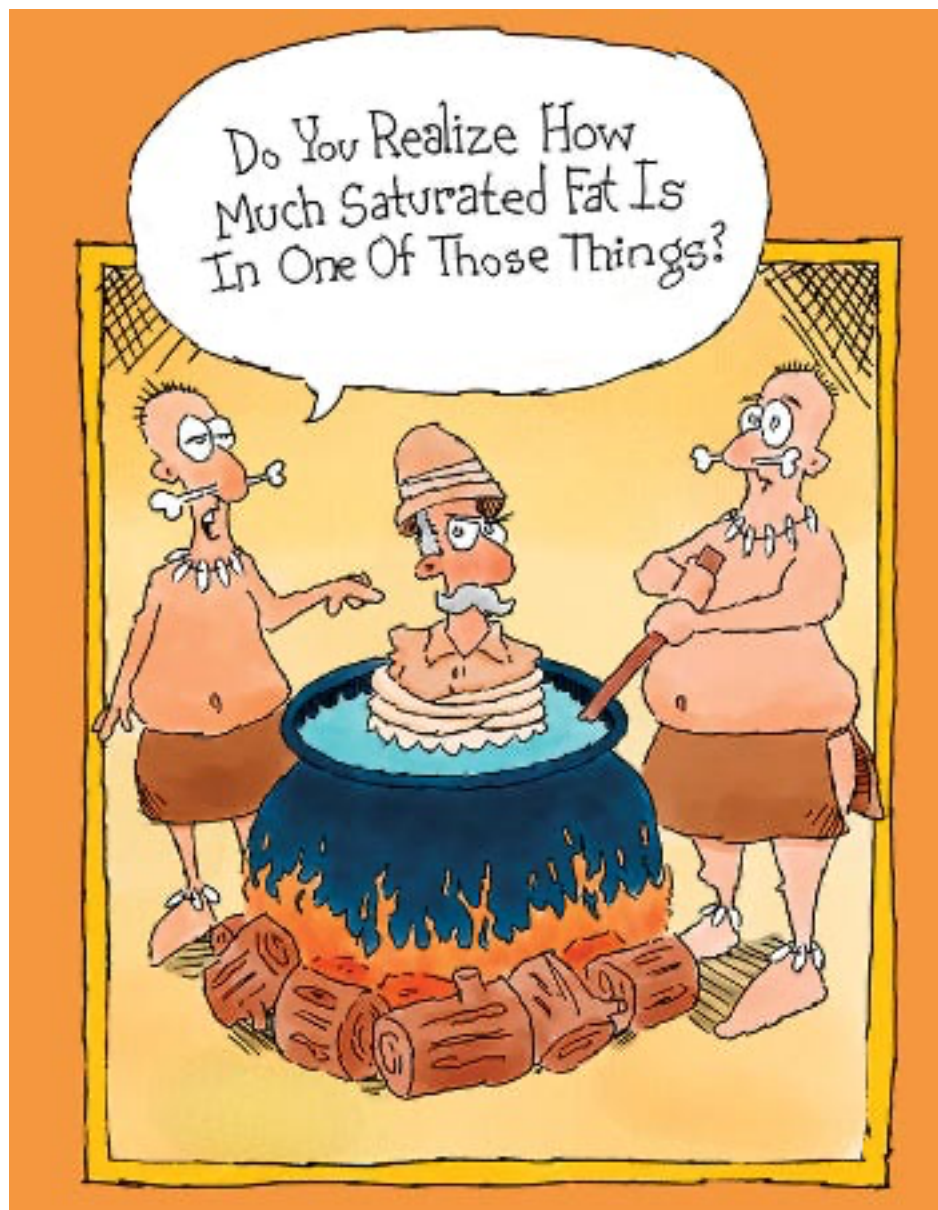
Tell us some things to be learned from Costco, the bathroom, TV shows, etc. Plus winning word-grid neologisms.

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AND

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From a birthday card (the message is “Go wild. It’s your birthday.”) available at [sofunkyfresh.com](http://sofunkyfresh.com).

**This week’s contest** is one we’ve done thrice, but not in a long time. Then, we limited you to a few situations; now you have free rein. **For Week 43: Tell us a life lesson that can be learned from any particular milieu** — say, “on the pot,” or “from the comics pages,” or “from surfing the Internet,” or “at Costco” or “at the movies” or “lying in the gutter with a bottle of Ripple.” The examples below were past winners.

***From romance novels:*** No one is named Maxine Fischman or Fred Paczynski. (*Mel Loftus*)

***At the movies:*** At all speeches, the microphone will squeak once before allowing the speaker to continue with no further problem. (*Alan Hochbaum, Timothy Gotwald*)

***From TV:*** All family crises, whether large or small, take exactly 22 minutes to solve. (*Ed Gordon*)

***At the dentist:*** Nitrous oxide can somehow cause your underpants to turn inside out. (*Russell Beland*)

This week you may choose any of the above categories — see the results of those contests [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) — or others such as “at the gym,” “at preschool,” “while doing your taxes,” “from scrolling on X for two hours.” Or any other category you devise.

**[Click here for this week’s entry form.](#)** Or go to [bit.ly/inv-form-43](http://bit.ly/inv-form-43). Be sure to read the formatting directions! As usual, you can submit up to 25 entries for this week’s contest, preferably all on the same form.

**Deadline is Saturday, Nov. 4, at 4 p.m. ET.** Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Nov. 9.

The winner gets a pair of very nice socks that look like cat paws, or what cat paws would look like if they had heels and big long soles. Donated by the footsome Dave Prevar.



Fog not included: This week's prize. ([shopsockysock.com](http://shopsockysock.com))

**Runners-up** get autographed fake money featuring the Czar or Empress, in one of [ten nifty designs](#). Honorable mentions get bupkis, except for a personal email from the E, plus the [Fir Stink for First Ink](#) for First Offenders.

**Sharing Your Pathword: The neologisms of Week 41**

In [Week 41](#) we asked you to choose any letter on the randomly generated grid below, then “discover” a new word or phrase by snaking around the grid through adjacent letters in any or all directions. That so many of you noticed that M-11 or K-12 can begin “asshole” ... well, let’s say we have lots of hope for our still-running [“Am I the Asshole”](#) contest. (Note: Pat and Gene judge the Invitational without knowing who wrote the entries, and so sometime the same person nabs two spots in the top four. This time two people did.)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
1	L	Y	I	R	J	K	R	L	B	Y	J	G	B	R	X	A	Y	D	B	R	J	R
2	T	S	A	Y	A	T	J	Y	Q	Y	K	J	R	K	U	L	A	T	S	O	P	K
3	W	E	C	V	V	F	A	D	S	Z	O	L	K	T	L	W	R	J	Q	D	M	R
4	T	E	A	V	L	N	A	P	N	S	X	A	O	L	A	Y	N	D	L	Y	R	V
5	C	H	P	A	E	L	L	A	P	S	I	M	I	T	N	P	T	G	M	T	M	J
6	E	C	T	D	L	N	Y	W	E	E	A	S	N	C	P	M	E	P	L	Y	E	B
7	L	T	I	W	T	P	N	H	Y	T	T	U	D	Y	Q	L	M	L	D	L	J	B
8	A	J	Y	B	M	L	C	Y	O	J	J	B	R	Y	O	U	O	O	A	L	O	X
9	I	T	W	T	Y	E	L	N	A	J	D	D	N	H	D	V	I	N	O	O	D	D
10	D	T	V	P	E	D	S	C	D	Y	V	D	S	B	C	T	D	T	Z	L	C	G
11	L	B	T	S	L	N	K	X	G	G	T	S	A	T	H	T	I	Y	E	H	G	L
12	D	F	E	X	R	A	N	M	M	R	A	M	I	S	I	Y	D	B	A	X	D	I
13	X	B	R	L	L	Z	L	P	L	U	N	P	C	E	E	K	Y	L	P	K	Y	Y
14	N	T	Y	O	R	Y	R	J	O	L	B	I	E	L	F	J	L	G	O	N	A	T
15	L	Y	P	J	N	M	T	Y	L	L	G	A	P	K	S	A	M	A	D	H	Q	L
16	A	E	T	Y	K	T	L	B	Y	Y	L	L	O	C	H	P	L	Z	O	P	O	A
17	Q	L	R	E	L	Z	Z	I	F	J	X	A	L	U	G	A	M	L	M	O	E	O
18	Y	J	L	Y	I	B	D	W	M	J	K	I	A	H	R	A	A	P	B	R	R	B
19	Q	J	R	A	W	M	N	T	V	D	Z	A	M	C	D	R	I	A	O	I	P	N
20	Q	N	W	M	C	B	I	W	M	G	B	J	Y	V	N	E	T	E	E	Q	Q	Y
21	Y	L	P	N	Y	M	V	N	X	Y	T	M	P	K	T	Q	Q	L	T	M	P	K
22	X	M	N	T	D	K	M	Y	Z	R	M	P	J	A	M	M	T	B	R	Y	X	R
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V

The grid used in today’s results. (Circled letters show the example, OUCHPAL.)

*Third runner-up:* Beginning at V-7, heading down diagonally and then straight up: **BOOZO**: Former children’s entertainer, now in rehab. (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)



*Second runner-up: K-5: **I AM A STUD, YOU OLD LOON!:** Debate response to be used by both candidates in 2024. (Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.)*

*First runner-up: J-13: **URASSHOLE:** Proposed name for the seventh planet before they decided it should be more polite, but still able to provoke snickers. (Jesse Frankovich)*

*And the winner of **the headband that looks as if a knife's going through your head:***

*Q-10: **DITZY, BITCHY, 'N' RUDY:** The next three candidates who were in line for the House speakership. (Frank Osen)*

### **Turns for the Worse: Honorable mentions**

*F-12: **ARSE ROLL:** One of your less popular sushi choices. (Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)*

*B-5: **HEAPA:** A unit of measure equal to 40 trillion tons. "Donald Trump's reelection would mire our country in a heapa shit." (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)*

*B-7: **TITCH:** An involuntary spasm that a guy experiences when he sees a well-endowed woman. (Lee Graham, Reston, Va.)*

*C-2: **AIRYAK:** The spiel at the beginning of your flight that the attendants pantomime with arm gestures and you totally tune out, even when the sound system is audible. (Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.)*

*C-10: **VP SEX:** Official event celebrated annually in the Pence household. "Mike found himself stirring on the night before Christmas." (Stu Segal, Southeast U.S.)*

*C-12: **EXLOPE:** Run away to get a quickie divorce. "After my parents spent so much on the wedding, we felt it was only right to exlope." (Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.)*

C-15: **PORNYLAND:** Theme park with the happiest endings on Earth. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

C-17: **RELIB:** To reminisce about the good ol' days of youth radicalism. "There goes Aunt Cleo again, relibbing the SDS sit-in at the Berkeley chancellor's office..." (*Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

D-6: **DENAY:** To deny a previous denial. "I didn't say I wouldn't run again for Speaker," the congressman denayed. (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.*)

F-3: **FAPPETA:** The stiff, discolored fabric that teenage boys' bedspreads seem to turn into. (*Frank Osen*)

F-15: **MR. JOLLY GALLOP:** YouTuber nickname for [Sen. Josh Hawley escaping the Capitol on Jan. 6](#). (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

G-10: **SKANX:** Open-crotch shapewear. (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

G-19: **NITWIZ:** An ace proofreader. (*Steve Leifer, Potomac, Md.*)

H-3: **DJT APP:** A mobile tool that automatically adds gaslighting, dog-whistling, disinformation, and all-caps to your tweets. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

D-8: **BIDEN APP:** Program that works better than any alternative, but damn, it's on such an old platform. (*Mark Raffman*)

H-4: **PAYN:** An ache in your fingers as you write a check to the IRS. (*Judy Freed*)

H-10: **CANDY TRAMP:** What the grumpy old man next door calls a trick-or-treater. (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

H-16: **BLIZZLE:** A much-hyped snowstorm that turns out to be a few flakes on the grass. (*Michael Stein, Arlington, Va.*)

I-5: **PEWNY:** What church attendance has been since the pandemic. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

J-4: **SOLOLAY:** A politer version of “screw yourself.” “The deacon smoothly suggested that the rude taxi driver would benefit greatly from a sololay.” (*Kevin Dopart, Naxos, Greece*)

J-11: **GRASSHOLE:** That neighbor who insists on mowing the lawn at 6 a.m. (*Duncan Stevens*)

N-10: **BASSHOLE:** Your co-worker who regales you every Monday morning with his fishing stories. (*Richard Franklin, Alexandria, Va.*)

J-12: **RATMICEELKPIGLLAMA:** The genetically engineered feature attraction — well, the only attraction — at the One Room Zoo. (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

K-22: **MM...PÂTÉ!:** Homer Simpson gets hoity-toity. (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

L-7: **UNSMIT:** Reversed an infatuation. “One look at his bathroom floor and she was immediately unsmit.” (*Pam Shermeyer*)

L-8: **BUTTASM:** Occasional result of prostate massage. (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

L-17: **LOLLYGAP:** Taking a schoolyear off to do nothing. “Scott said he’d master tutoring in the barrio, but instead he’s lollygapping through mastering Super Mario.” (*Frank Osen*)

M-12: **I, ASSHOLE:** In his memoirs, Trump finally comes clean. (Fiction) (*William Kennard, Arlington, Va.*)

M-19: **McNERD:** A Facebook friend who posts tips like this: “Because the discount for buying two McDoubles is a non-coupon offer, you can add a large fries for \$1.19. That's still only \$5.78, which is \$2.18 less than a Big Mac with two extra patties and one extra slice of cheese. Bargain!” (*Chris Doyle*)

L-12: **McSHIT:** What not to order at the Golden Arches. (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)

M-3: **KAMOLALULA:** In a bid for ratings, Tucker Carlson unveils a new mispronunciation of the VP's name. (*Frank Osen*)

M-3: **KOI MIX:** What Pepperidge Farm calls its Goldfish in Japan. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

N-10: **BS-SAT:** A special standardized test used by college football recruiters. Question 27: What kind of fruit is in apple pie? (*Leif Picoult*)

N-12: **SASSHOLE:** (1) A mouthy teenager. (2) A teenager's mouth. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

O-7: **QUINOA OOZE:** Product name before the manufacturers decided to call it "vegan ice cream." (*Barbara Turner, Takoma Park, Md.*)

L-12: **MASHTIT:** What the clinic techs call the mammography machine. (*Lee Graham*)

O-15: **SALARD:** "At the We Please Everybody Cafe, we offer a salard special: a fresh romaine/spinach blend, smothered in pork fat gravy." (*Judy Freed*)

P-4: **YALLISM:** A classic Southern expression such as "Butter my butt and call me a biscuit." (*Rob Cohen*)

P-9: **VINALDOO:** What you get when you misread the recipe in your Indian cookbook. (*Duncan Stevens*)

P-13: **KELCE PASS:** Something Taylor Swift didn't need a football to make. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

P-15: **ALPS FLESH:** Epic goosebumps. (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Q-17: **MAGARITA:** A Kool-Aid alternative that Republicans have wasted away on. (*Kevin Dopart*)



R-7: **LOOLOO:** A stunningly beautiful restroom. (*Jeff Contompasis*)

R-7: **LOONOODLE:** To cogitate on the toilet. (*Steve Leifer*)

T-21: **MEATRE D’:** The headwaiter at a barbecue joint. “Yup, y’all can sit at that picnic table over yonder.” (*Jesse Frankovich*)

*The “Pathwords” headline is by Jesse Frankovich; Chris Doyle wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.*

**Still running** — deadline 4 p.m. ET Saturday, Oct. 28: **Our Week 42 contest for humorous “Am I the Asshole” situations** à la the popular Reddit thread. [Click here](#) for details.