

The Invitational, Week 52: Replaying Around-- The 2023 retrospective, Part II

Enter or reenter our Week 26-50. Plus we tell you what happened next year.

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AND

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What will be the saucy title of the Taylor Swift-Travis Kelce breakup song? See this week's Invitational results below.

The New Contest

... which is a continuation of last week's contest, which we split in two parts on a conundrum we tend to get millions and millions and millions of good entries from people who feel aggrieved at not getting ink the first time. Please note that "millions" is not a neologism, but an antiquated British term meaning "billions," which was made famous by the poet and polymath Piet Hein, in this existential ditty:

*Nature, it seems, is the popular name
For millions and millions and millions
Of particles playing their infinite game
Of billiards and billiards and billiards.*

For Invitational Week 52: Enter any or all of our 2023 Invitational contests from Week 26 through Week 50. You can enter a contest you missed, or reenter a contest with a better idea this time, or even a second shot with an entry that, dagnabit, *deserved* ink: Sometimes we do have too much good stuff in a given week, and so this ploy has borne fruit occasionally in our end-of-year retrospectives. (Click on the contest from two weeks later to see the results.) Be sure to read the directions on each contest itself, not just these thumbnails, but *your entry must be sent to bit.ly/inv-form-52, NOT THE FORMS FROM THOSE WEEKS!* Feel free to send in different contests on a single form. Please also [take a look at this link](#) for a few extra (but important) directions.

[Week 26:](#) Compare or otherwise link any two items on the random list provided.

[Week 27:](#) How certain businesses might pander to Trump's faithful supporters.

[Week 28:](#) Write a short poem, or tell a riddle-style joke, featuring a word from this year's National Spelling Bee.

[Week 29:](#) Write a funny sentence that includes all 26 letters.

Week 30: Come up with a stupid online poll for a general-interest news site.

Week 31: Make up a new word by scrambling one of the seven-letter “racks” from that week’s ScrabbleGrams word game.

Week 32: Write a limerick prominently featuring a word or name beginning with “ho-.”

Week 33: Ask Backwards: We give the “answers”; you tell us the questions.

Week 34: Compare two people who share a birthday.

Week 35: Write a Muldoon, a four-line poem that features at least two body parts and a place name, and at least one rhyme.

Week 36: Offer either a reason to feel compassion for Trump-worshippers or a reason to respect and admire them.

Week 37: Backronyms: Snarkily describe someone or something as an acrostic, i.e., by spelling out its name with the first letters of the words of your description.

Week 38: Chiasmus: Write an original witticism containing a sentence or phrase followed by its inversion, including spoonerisms.

Week 39: Dylan “tailgaters”: Choose a line from a song written by Bob Dylan, then pair it with your own rhyming line.

Week 40: Song lyrics about the news. (Videos also welcome.)

Week 41: “Discover” and define new words by snaking through a word-find grid. **Week 42:** “Am I the asshole?” situations.

Week 43: “Life lessons” to be learned from any particular milieu, such as the movies, working at the White House, etc.

Week 44: Monorhymes, poems whose lines all rhyme with one another.

Week 45: New items and descriptions for a mail order catalog such as Hammacher Schlemmer.

Week 46: Set off a word-within-a-word in “air quotes” to give a new context to the word, as in “fun”eral.

Week 47: Compare two people who share some element of their names.

Week 48: Humorously rewrite a bad-news sentence or headline to give it positive spin.

Week 49: Caption any of seven pictures we offer. **(Results here.)**

Week 50: In present tense, say what “happened” sometime in 2024 (see today’s results).

Click here for this week’s entry form. Or go to **bit.ly/inv-form-52**. As usual, you may submit up to 25 entries for this week’s contest, preferably all on the same form. **Check this list** for a few special directions for specific contests, plus some other secret messages.

Deadline is Saturday, Jan. 6, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Jan. 11.

The winner gets the 2024 version of the sublime **Dull Men’s Club Calendar**, which each month celebrates someone with a “unique and quirky passion.” Such as Mr. July, “Dustbin Dave” of Norfolk, England, a trash can aficionado. The calendar also marks such notable occasions as International Clothesline Week, and the Rhubarb Festival of Intercourse, Pa. Donated by the anything-but-dull (or -man) Loser Melissa Balmain.



Ms. February Angela Clark in the Dull Men's Club calendar, with some of the 10,000 plastic bags in her collection. Oooh.

Wack to the Future: Our news from 2024

In [Week 50](#), as we do at the end of every year, we asked you to help build a timeline of things that happen *next* year. Curiously, almost none of the entries dared tell what happens on Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2024, except for a couple that had Trump declaring victory from his prison cell.

Third runner-up: April 15: On the 112th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, the last known iceberg melts into the North Atlantic. (*Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.*)

Second runner-up: Texas begins erecting a wall to keep women from escaping. (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

First runner-up: Biden's poll numbers drop further after he turns water into wine, but fails to create bourbon, mead, and non-alcoholic prosecco. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington, D.C.*)

And the winner of the 2023 pooping-dog ornament:

The NFL announces that next year's Super Bowl will be the halftime entertainment at a Taylor Swift concert. (*Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.*)

Oraculls: Honorable mentions

January

Jan. 1: As Disney's copyright expires on the earliest Mickey Mouse images, Mickey immediately stars in anime porn, and Trojan releases a Steamboat Willie line of condoms. (*Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.; Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

The Supreme Court rules that Trump must be reinstated to the Colorado ballot. In a concurring opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas writes that he must also be awarded 11,700 extra votes in the general election. (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Rudy Giuliani appeals all his convictions to Supreme Court Total Landscaping. (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

February

Feb. 11: Moments after the 49ers beat the Chiefs in Super Bowl LVIII, Taylor Swift dumps Travis Kelce for Brock Purdy. Soon afterward she releases yet another breakup song, "You've Scored Your Last Time in My End Zone." (*Jon Gearhart, Des Moines; Mark Raffman*)

Feb. 14: Lent begins this year on Valentine's Day. Millions of those who usually give up chocolate opt instead to give up kale. (*Jeff Contompasis*)

Elon Musk professes not to understand the furor that erupts after he adopts a swastika logo, explaining, “It’s clearly just an X with a semi-serif font.” (*Frank Osen*)

Continuing to insist on his innocence, Trump holds a classified-document sale to raise money for his legal bills. (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

March

In a rare show of compromise, Congress passes a law for national year-round standard time by setting clocks back 37 minutes, except in Texas, where clocks will be set back 67 years. (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.*)

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signs an executive order pledging \$3.5 billion over four years to find a cure for diversity. (*Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.*)

Archaeologists discover an ancient drawing of what appears to be a caveman saving money on insurance. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

April

April 8: North America experiences a total solar eclipse. Trump rants that it’s a Democratic plot to make him go blind. (*Pam Shermeyer*)

April 8: Tucker Carlson urges eclipse deniers to demand that President Biden resign for using millions of drones to block out the sun. (*Rob Cohen*)

April 27: Sen. John Fetterman attends the White House Correspondents’ Association dinner in a single-breasted wool Louis Vuitton tuxedo jacket, black tie, and cargo shorts. (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

April 30: On the anniversary of his death, Adolf Hitler’s estate sues Donald Trump for quoting lines from der Führer’s speeches without attribution. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

May

Flagging ticket sales lead the NFL to announce that at least one player from each of the 32 teams will be required to date Taylor Swift. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

The U.S. Border Patrol naively waves in a huge wooden burro. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

After learning he inadvertently shook an undocumented immigrant's hand, Donald Trump gets tested for [blood poisoning](#). (*Chris Doyle*)

June

[After trying mightily to control his lustful urges](#), House Speaker Mike Johnson gives a sobbing Swaggart-style "I have sinned" speech, announcing that he once ogled Kim Kardashian's ankles. (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

Elon Musk adds Tesla's Autopilot system to X. Users can now sit back and post venom without speaking or touching their keyboards. (*Gary Crockett*)

June 30: In the wildest round of conference expansion to date, the eighteen-team Big Ten adds Notre Dame, Australia, and Uranus. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

Vice President Harris takes a [Dale Carnegie](#) course, but the company gives up and offers her a full refund. (*Jeff Hazle, San Antonio; Chris Doyle*)

July

With the GOP nomination locked up, Trump doubles down on his Christian authoritarian theme with the campaign slogan "My Kingdom Come, My Will Be Done." (*Kevin Dopart*)

Biden's approval rating falls below the inflation rate. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

Using DNA samples, scientists try but fail to bring back from extinction a specimen of a moderate Republican. (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

July 18: In accepting the Republican nomination, Donald Trump pledges to build a wall on the southern border. Later that night, Justin Trudeau makes the same pledge. *(Steve Smith)*

Trump announces that his running mate will be ... himself: "Next time my VP will do as I say because he'll be me." *(Leif Picoult)*

July 24: Rep. Lauren Boebert wins the cow-milking contest at the Garfield County Fair. *(Steve Smith)*

Bangor, Maine, officially changes its name to Romance-Her-Gently, Maine. *(William Kennard, Arlington, Va.)*

As more members of Gen X switch to edibles, a common expression heard at parties is "Don't Cookie Monster those gummies." *(Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.)*

August

Aug. 1: Having trained under the House Budget Committee, Team USA wins the Olympic gold medal in can-kicking. *(Jesse Frankovich)*

Aug. 5: Jeff Bezos marks his anniversary of buying The Washington Post by signing on Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and Mark Zuckerberg as co-owners, freeing the newspaper from financial constraints forevermore. The next week, 80 percent of the staff is laid off. *(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)*

Republicans expose video of Hunter Biden with eleven items in the 10 Items or Less line. *(Barbara Turner, Takoma Park, Md.)*

September

Regulators are concerned when Tesla's self-driving car begins drag-racing and playing chicken with other self-driving models. *(Duncan Stevens)*

Sept. 14: Paul Simon, age 83, hosts the premiere of “Saturday Night Live’s” 50th season, featuring the surviving members of the Not Ready for Prime Time Players, with 91-year-old Willie Nelson as the musical guest. Baby boomers everywhere applaud and yell, “What’d he say?” (*Jon Ketzner*)

Spotting a driverless car moving erratically, a state trooper pulls it over and gives it a sobriety test. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

During Travis and Taylor’s wedding, Kanye grabs the mic from the officiant and says, “Yo, Taylor, I’m really happy for you. I’m-a let you finish. But Beyoncé had one of the best weddings of all time!” (*Leif Picoult*)

A senator is caught introducing bills written by ChatGPT when one of them includes a grant to the NEA to be distributed among Art Garfunkel, Art Monk, and the estate of Art Linkletter. (*Sam Mertens*)

Elon Musk tries to be more relatable to British advertisers by [telling them](#) to “bugger off.” (*Jeff Hazle*)

October

A reunion episode of “Friends” is aired with an AI-generated Matthew Perry, but viewers are put off by his seventeen fingers. (*Sam Mertens*)

House Speaker Mike Johnson legally changes his name to Mike Procreation Stick. (*Leif Picoult*)

Elon Musk buys the struggling New England Patriots for \$44 billion and promptly renames them the Oath Keepers. (*Steve Smith*)

Right-wing billionaires complain to Fox News about how inflation is so out of control, they can barely afford to buy Supreme Court justices anymore. (*Duncan Stevens*)

At a torch-lit rally, Donald Trump vows to establish a [Thousand-Year Day One](#). (*Frank Osen*)

November

When it becomes clear Trump will not be elected, Stephen Miller hops a submarine to South America and disappears into Paraguay. *(Frank Osen)*

Gov. DeSantis announces plan to combat antisemitism on Florida college campuses by converting all the Jews to Christianity. *(Mark Raffman)*

House Speaker Mike Johnson is voted out by Republicans who deem him insufficiently conservative. They schedule an AR-15 shooting competition to choose his replacement. *(Jonathan Jensen)*

December

Merriam-Webster announces that its 2024 Word of the Year is “shitshow.” *(Mark Raffman)*

And Last: Taylor Swift wins the Grammy, Oscar, Emmy, Tony, Golden Globe, Pulitzer, Nobel, Pritzker, Medal of Freedom and NFL MVP, but fails to ink in The Invitational’s limerick contest. *(Rob Cohen)*

And Even Laster: May 8: The Gene Pool is awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Pubic Service. *(Gary Crockett)*

The headline “Wack to the Future” is by Chris Doyle; Jeff Contompasis wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, Dec. 30: **Our Week 51 contest to enter any of 24 contests from the first half of the year.**