

The Invitational Week 75: Qwerty Lashes

Write us something funny from just a few letters of the keyboard. Plus winning headline 'typos.'

[PAT MYERS](#)

AND

[GENE WEINGARTEN](#)

JUN 06, 2024



Sean Gladwell / Getty Images

Hello. Welcome to the new contest, which is also an old contest, so old and desiccated that it is older than some of the people who will enter it. We last ran it 29 years ago.

The original contest was to write a complete sentence using only the letters contained on the top-letter row of a typewriter. That's how old it was: Our instructions stipulated a "typewriter."

For Invitational Week 75: Write us something — a phrase, a sentence, more than one sentence — using only one of the following partial-keyboard options:

1. The letters on any single horizontal row of a standard computer or cellphone: (Q, W, E, R, T, Y, U, I, O, P is the top row.)

2. Any three adjacent columns going *down* the keyboard, as in QAZ/WSX/EDC or YHN/UJM/IK. And since those columns slant down the keyboard, **you may slant the block of columns either right to left or left to right**. So, for example, ESZ/RDX/TFC would also be legit.

— **You may use any punctuation marks you want, and any numbers**, regardless of where they are on the keyboard.

Here are a few winners from our 1995 QWERTYUIOP contest ([full results here](#)):

Peter, Peter power pooper

You require Roto-Rooter. (*Ted Spencer*)

You retire, I retire too; quit pro quo. (*Phil Plait*)

Poe + rye + terror + woe = eerie poetry. (*Jennifer Hart*)

Deadline is Saturday, June 15, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, June 20. As usual, you may submit up to 25 entries for this week's contest, preferably all on the same form.

[Click here for this week's entry form](#), or go to tinyURL.com/inv-form-75.

Important formatting note: Begin each entry by telling us the first three letters of the row or columns you're using (e.g., "QWE:"); "YHN:"). And make each entry a single line (i.e., don't press Enter before you get to your next entry).

This week's winner — in honor of the old cliché of the scribe at his typewriter, bottle of booze sticking out of his desk drawer — **gets Cirrhosis.** Unlike the little bitty toys that make up most of the Giant Microbes collection, this one's a softball-size reversible fuzzy/plushie with a zipper on its mouth, big enough to stash a couple mini-bottles of hooch. Donated by Dave (hic) Prevar.



Unlike your fellow writers O. Henry, Jack Kerouac, and Khalil Gibran, you can get cirrhosis and keep on living: This week's prize.

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

HeadLies: Winning ‘typos’ from Invitational Week 73

In [Week 73](#) we “rewarded” Obsessive Loser Jeff Contompasis for his 1,000 blots of Invitational ink since 2004 by inviting him to do our work for us and judge the contest of his choice. JefCon’s challenge: Choose any real headline — from anywhere — dated that week; then change it by a single character (or switch two letters); then write a bank head, or subtitle, humorously reflecting the alteration. We sent Jeff a list of all the entries, all shuffled up, with no identifying information about the writers; he learns their names right now, along with you.

Jeff plunged into the assignment with fervor, which turned into, uh, less fervor as he plowed through more than 500 entries. “I knew this could be a tedious grind. How it’s done every week, I don’t know,” he told us when he returned his final list to us on Tuesday. But just as it is with us, once he winnowed the pile to his favorites, he found plenty to laugh at. Here are his picks.

Third runner-up:

Real headline from Axios: **Denver ranks among nation’s top spots for ~~pet~~ pot-friendly living**

Made-up bank head: Mile High City scores 415 out of 420 on cannabis index (*Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.*)

Second runner-up:

Return of ~~pink~~ punk birds excites watchers

Sex petrels, red kennedys clash over nesting territory (*Kevin Dopart, Naxos, Greece*)

First runner-up:

6 new knew movies our critics are talking about this week

In recent NYT poll, almost no one had heard of the obscure foreign films we touted (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

And the winner of the artsy book [Life-Sized Animal Poop:](#)

U.S. suspects Russia put ~~‘counterspace weapon’~~ ‘counter space weapon’ in orbit

Could inundate American kitchens with bulky air fryers and juicers (*Kevin Doport*)

Mehs With Our Heads: Honorable mentions

Veteran ~~homelessness~~ ~~hoselessness~~ ‘effectively ended’

Hanes donates thousands of pairs of socks to city shelters (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

Still ~~rolling~~ tolling after all these years

Londoners to celebrate Big Ben’s 165th birthday on May 31 (*Chris Doyle*)

How Trump used his own court ~~filing~~ fling to claim an ‘assassination’ attempt

Misunderstands [‘le petit mort’](#) and how it’s provided (*Kevin Doport*)

Boeing Starliner set to launch its first ~~erewed~~ screwed mission

Astronauts confident: ‘It’s not a 737, right?’ (*Richard Alexander, Grand Rapids, Mich., a First Offender*)

Activist loses ~~‘swatting’~~ ‘twatting’ suit against officers

Constables avoid gaol over inappropriate epithet, but judge notes victim is ‘kind of a wanker’ (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

Activists target ~~bottled~~ bot-led water operation

Cyborgs on executive board are mindless idiots, they complain (*Dan Steinbrocker, Los Angeles*)

Florida man sentenced to prison for conspiring to smuggle snuggle turtles
Jury rejects 'they're too cute!' defense (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

Logging Loggins, solitary tribe collide in Peru

Singer's visit is not 'alright' with Mashco Piro people (*Neil Kurland, Elkridge, Md.*)

Sparks Spanks fly in tense closing arguments as Trump's trial wraps up
Surprise reenactment of 'rolled-up Forbes' shocks jurors (*Frank Osen*)

Tornado Toronado devastates Arkansas town

1985 Oldsmobile plows into bar, diner, bait shop (*Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.*)

Yoga-Yoda You Must Do After Dinner

Pleasure You All Night He Will (*Jesse Frankovich*)

Mexico's Cartels Carvels Seizing Control of Tortilla Industry

Ice cream chain was running low on waffle cones (*Neil Kurland*)

Trump suggests ex-rival Haley will be a part of his team 'in some-form' forum'

A funny thing happened on the way to the convention (*Kevin Dopart*)

'Nothing has ever stopped her here'

D.C. Wards 7, 8 campaign for bus service (*Steve Honley, Washington, D.C.*)

Add a touch of joy to your daily routine poutine

Try moose gravy on your fried curds for that special treat (*Chris Doyle*)

An AP Photographer Captures the Pope in a Dramatic Light Fight

87-year-old Francis punches out cardinal who called him 'Your Ass-holiness' (*Mark L. Asquino, Santa Fe, N.M.*)

MIT researchers locate three of the oldest stars tsars in the universe

After extensive planetary search fails, scientists find graves of Rurik, Oleg, Igor — in Russia (*Dan Helming, Conshohocken, Pa.*)

Wife of Justice Alito called upside-down flag ‘signal of distress mistress’

‘Frankly, she’s welcome to him!’ Martha-Ann harrumphs (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Trump’s legal regal troubles

Planned 2025 coronation may be unconstitutional (*Chris Doyle*)

Biden hits milestone: 200 judges-fudges confirmed

But still far behind Trump’s 30,573 fact-checked false or misleading claims (*Chris Doyle*)

6 Fast Nasty Vegetables You Can Grow This Fall

From beets to bitter melon, a cornucopia to make the kiddos groan (*Jesse Frankovich*)

5 Biggest Solar Molar Projects in the US

Dentists race to make the perfect set of dentures (*Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.*)

Google’s A.I. Search Errors-Terrors Cause a Furor Online

Company apologizes after all medical queries generate ‘You probably have cancer’ (*Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Marco Rubio wants to be Vice Vile President

Aims to out-Trump Trump in last-minute bid (*Jonathan Jensen*)

Money raised, spent on South Dakota ballot ballot measures

State seeks to shed image as dog-shooting cultural backwater (*Jonathan Jensen*)

Oleksandr Usyk Offered Chance Change to Become Three-Weight World Champion

Boxing star willing to fight for purse of two quarters, a dime and a nickel (*Sam Mertens*)

Bucks County's finest scholar-athletes feted fetid at Kiwanis banquet

Busy game schedule left no time for showers (*Frank Osen*)

Police tape vape up outside Conley Road Walmart

'Really, you want a little THC to mellow those guys out,' says chief (*Sam Mertens*)

Research shows you shouldn't ask 'How are you?' — use this small stall talk instead.

Better words for delaying are 'Um,' 'uh,' experts say (*Judy Freed*)

Trump pitches bitches to Black and Latino voters in South Bronx

'Why don't you losers support me?' ex-President complains (*Jonathan Jensen; Gary Crockett*)

A Formula for Success Success

Stevia company leaks that it's $C_{20}H_{30}O_3$ and a Few Rebaudiosides (*Kevin Dopart*)

Jeff, a chemical engineer who'd be in the first ranks of the Nerd Pride Parade, notes: "I forgave the fact $C_{20}H_{30}O_3$ is merely a molecular formula with no structure to specifically indicate steviol, whereas 13-hydroxy-5 β ,8 α ,9 β ,10 α ,13 α -kaur-16-en-18-oic acid does — and is empirically funnier. Pay attention to detail, next time, Loser."

And Last:

DC JC Comics Reviews

After 20 years of Loserdom, Jeff Contompasis gets to be judgy on hopeful humorists (*Jesse Frankovich*)

The headline "HeadLies" is by Chris Doyle; Chris also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Jeff chose them along with today's inking entries.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET MONDAY, June 10 (but earlier is welcome!): our Week 74 contest for song lyrics on the topic of your choice — either parodies or, if you make a video, an original tune. Click on the link below.