

The Invitational Week 77: Ebenezer Screwed

Write us a funny comic strip on a certain sensitive subject. And the winning things you can write with one little patch of the keyboard.

[PAT MYERS](#)

AND

[GENE WEINGARTEN](#)

JUN 20, 2024



Hello. Today's new contest is our second installment of "Write a 'Barney & Clyde' for Us."

“Barney & Clyde” is a 14-year-old comic strip written by Gene and Horace LaBadie and illustrated by David Clark. It involves a relationship between a homeless man, Clyde Finster, and a pharmaceuticals billionaire, J. Barnard Pillsbury, but there are several subplots, among them one involving the deepest sort of love. Cynthia Pillsbury, a cynical 11-year-old, loves her grandpa, Ebenezer Pillsbury, who is a cynical man entering the early stages of dementia. Ebenezer is a piece of work, and Cynthia — a much younger piece of work — respects him, and is the only person in the family who knows of his condition. She protects him so others don’t find out, but has taken it upon herself to see that he gets medical treatment.

Yes, complicated. And dangerous. There is nothing funny about dementia, except when there might be, in the right hands, with the right timing and wording.

For Invitational Week 77: Write a four-panel script for a “Barney & Clyde” strip that addresses dementia in some amusing way, based on Ebenezer’s failing — but still active and iconoclastic — brain; he’s funny, and amazingly accepting of his situation. The strip must include Ebenezer and Cynthia, but may include other characters. You just supply a script — words only. (For formatting guidance, see a sample script on [the entry form](#).)

The first-prize winner will be drawn by David Clark, and published in many newspapers, and credited to you, the author. **And we’ll send you a signed print of the illustrated comic.** Fifty years from now, it will be worth a fortune. Original copies of “The Katzenjammer Kids,” for example, can sell for thousands of dollars. And by then David will probably be dead, so the profits go to you and Gene — who will be 120, but still alive, though incontinent. As always, you may submit up to 25 entries, but **don’t stretch a story line over multiple entries.**

Here are some more we have done:

"Cynthia" is a feminine name of Greek origin, meaning "from Mount Kynthos" or "moon."

You remember that, Grandpa?



Yep.

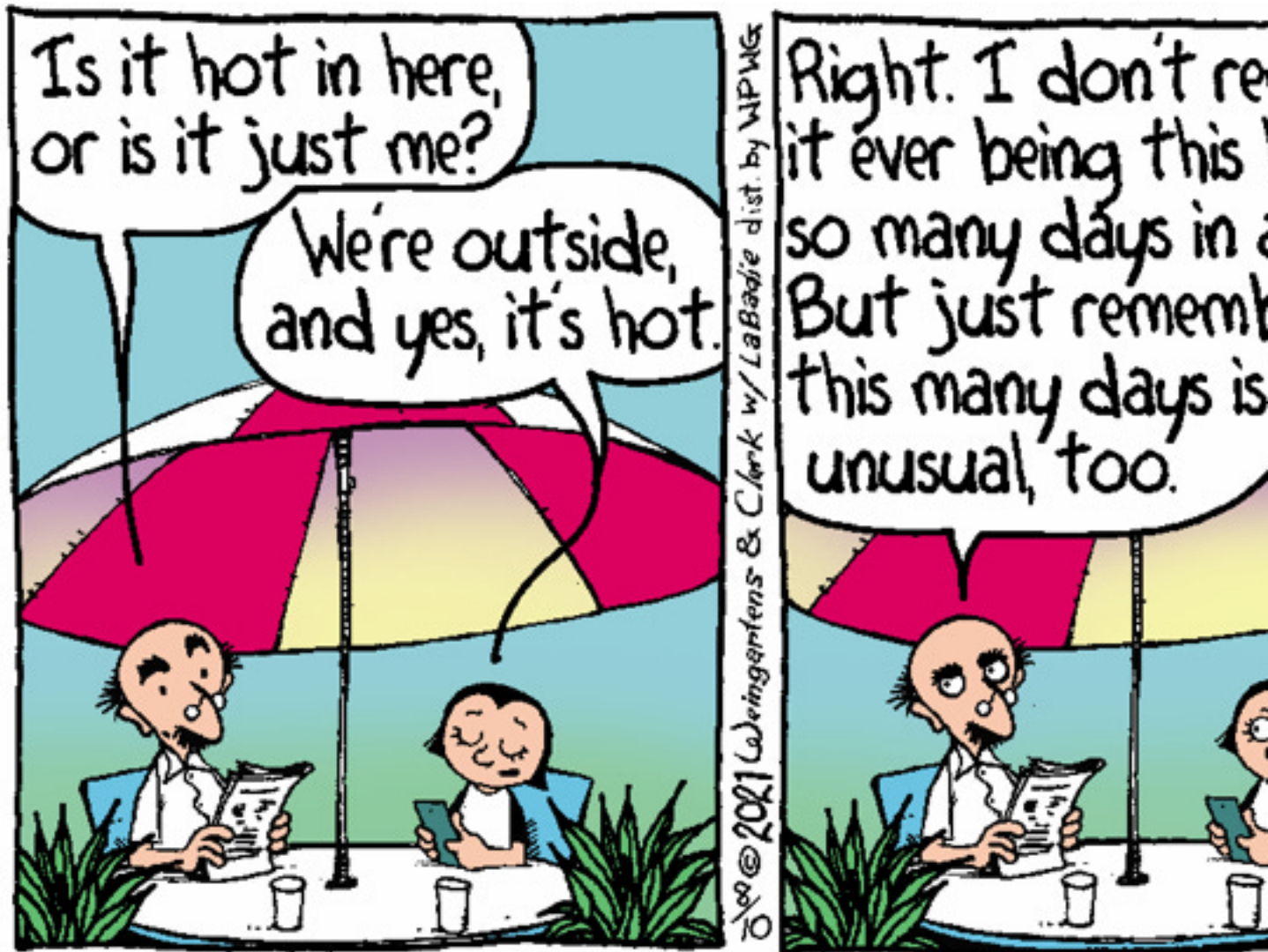
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14





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Deadline is Saturday, June 29, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool right on Thursday, July 4! 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-77.

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.

Talk QWERTY to Us: The partial-keyboard inventions of Week 75

The contest was simple and complex in equal measure. You had to write complete phrases or sentences using only portions of the classic typewriter/computer keyboard: You could use the QWERTY row, or either of the two other letter rows, or any three adjacent vertical lines, such as QAZWSXEDC. And you could use any numbers or punctuation. We cannot tell you how bad and painfully stretchy most of the entries were, because we do not wish to insult people whose only sin was entering a contest for which they were ill-equipped. Fortunately, some were excellent.

Special thanks to Loser Gary Crockett, who worked out a program to check whether each of the hundreds of this week's entries contained only the letters in its given little row or patch of the keyboard — and promptly discovered, too late, that one of his own entries had flunked.

Third runner-up: QWERTYUIOP: Outwit uppity uteri? You worry or pout. We uproot Roe! — S. Alito, Flagstaff (Kevin Dopart, Naxos, Greece)

Second runner-up: WAESZRDX: Sex rearward? See ass, reassess. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

First runner-up: ASDFGHJKL:

All shall gag as Dad, alas

Has alfalfa salad gas. (Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.)

And the winner of the [toy diseased liver cell](#):

WSXEDCRFV: Sex ed exed? We're screwed! (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

YHNUJMIK > Junk Ink: Honorable mentions

IJNOKMPL: Limp, I pop pill... OK, I'm in! (Jesse Frankovich)

IKOLP (punctuation marks fill the other keys): **Lollipop, Lollipop, O, Lolli-Lolli-Lolli, Lollipop pop** (LOL LOL LOL LOL) (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

ESZRDXTFC: **Reefer test + secret sex = street cred.** (*Neil Kurland, Elkridge, Md.*) .

IJNOKMPL: **Look, no poopin' in pool, OK? Poop in loo!** (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

WSXEDCRFV: **2024: "We deserve 2020 reversed! We revere screed-server, excess-sex-fevered, sewer-fed exec!"** (*Duncan Stevens*)

QWERTYUIOP:

Retro toy: Yo-yo.

Retro potty: Poop pit.

Retro outputter: Retiree. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

QAZWSXEDC: **Ed assesses ewe, accesses ewe, WEDS ewe? Eww, Ed!** (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

QWERTYUIOP:

01001110 01101111 01110100 00100000 01100110 01110101 01101110

01101110 01111001 00100000 01100010 01110101 01110100 00100000

01101001 01110100 00100000 01101001 01110011 00100000 01100011

01101100 01100101 01110110 01100101 01110010 00101100 00100000

01101101 01100001 01111001 01100010 01100101 00100000 01110111

01101111 01110010 01110100 01101000 00100000 01100001 01101110

00100000 01101000 01101111 01101110 01101111 01110010 01100001

01100010 01101100 01100101 00100000 01101101 01100101 01101110

01110100 01101001 01101111 01101110 00111111 (*Stephen Dudzik, Olney,*

Md. — *Hey, the contest rules said you could use any numbers on the keyboard!*

Click on it.)

QWERTYUIOP: I write wry, witty poetry. You trot out poop & potty rot — utter tripe. I pity you & your trite repertoire. (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

**QWERTYUIOP: P_T _ _ _ _
_ RETIRE_ _RO_ W_EE_ O_ _ORTU_E (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.)**

QWERTYUIOP:

Pete: “I wrote witty trope!”

Writer tutor/torturer: “You wrote petty tripe. Utter rot. Your terrier puppy outwit you. I pity you.”

Pete: “Yet to our pet pittie, you’re prey. I pity YOU.” (Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.)

QWERTYUIOP: We require you to put your pup out to poop or pee. — Proprietor (Beverley Sharp)

QWERTYUIOP: Writer + pot + pot + pot = pretty poor poetry. (Beverley Sharp)

UHBIJNOKM:

I join jumbo-boob bimbo: “Hi, I’m Bob.”

Bimbo: “Hi, Bob, I’m Kiki.”

I un-bikini Kiki. . . Oh, no! Him-junk! (Jesse Frankovich)

And Last: IJNOKMPL: Look, Mom, I’m inkin’ in poop-jokin’! (Jesse Frankovich)

The headline “Talk QWERTY to Us” is by Jesse Frankovich; both Dave Prevar and Jeff Contompasis offered up the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, June 22: our Week 76 contest for “good/bad/ugly” progressions. Click on the link below.

