

## The Invitational Week 93: Ask Backwards XLIII

We give you the 'answers'; you tell us the questions. Plus winning ways to economize.

[Pat Myers](#)

and

[Gene Weingarten](#)

Oct 10, 2024



You won't have to buy it for months! See this and other winning ways to economize in this week's Invitational results, below.

**Camelot Harris**

**Roto Ruder**

**Bond. Percival Bond.**

**Chewing gumption**

**Muhammad Alley**

**The Topic of Capricorn**

**Not a peep out of him**

**Washington, CD**

**E pluribus um um**

**Grip it by the seams**

**Take it for a spin**

**A White Sox Burger**

**AI sauce**

**A children's book by RFK Jr.  
The question you'd have asked at another debate  
43 Ask Backwards contests**

---

**Hello.**

**Yes, we are running** our 43rd Ask Backwards contest, a great national achievement in recidivism and redundancy. We are very proud.

**For Invitational Week 93: Above are the “answers” for this year's Ask Backwards contest; you provide the questions,** in the “Jeopardy!”-ish form of A-followed-by-Q. Like last year's winner by Duncan Stevens:

**A.** Donald Trump, PhD:

**Q.** What's more plausible than “Donald Trump, 6-foot-3, 215 pounds”?

**SUPER-IMPORTANT formatting note!** While we'll publish the results in two lines as above, we ask you to help us sort the entries into categories. So: **Write each one of your entries in a single line, beginning with the answer** you're using, as worded in the list, and **don't start the line with “A:” for “answer.” Do it like this one:**

**A children's book by RFK Jr.: What is “Where the Wild Things Are for Eating”?**

---

**Deadline is Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024, at 9 p.m. ET.** Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Oct. 24. 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-93](https://tinyURL.com/inv-form-93).

**The winner gets,** possibly in time for Halloween, a fine pair of thin **skeleton socks**, which 4 out of 5 doctors recommend over holding an X-ray machine in front of your feet all day.



---

Q. What are prettier than your actual bunioned feet?

**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.

**Meanwhile, send us questions or observations, which Gene hopes to deal with in real time today. You do this, as always, by sending them to this here button:**

[this here button](#)

**The Skinflintational: Thrift tips from Week 91**

**In [Week 91](#)** we asked for some comical ways to be thrifty. Even the Empress, who routinely tears paper towels into quarters because why use a whole piece for a small cleanup, has not tried any of the practices below. Oh, wait, there's one.

***Third runner-up:***

Wear actual Coke bottles instead of glasses. (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

***Second runner-up:***

Get free appetizers and drinks on the way to Sunday brunch: Just stop at several churches to take Communion. (*Jeff Rackow, Bethesda, Md.*)

***First runner-up:***

Do all your old underpants have holes in them? No problem! Just wear one pair on top of another — as many as it takes until the problem is solved. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

***And the winner of the [french-fry earrings](#):***

I save on my water bill and toilet use by holding it in as long as I possibly can, both Number

One and Number Two. A doctor might tell me that's not healthy, but I also save money by never going to the doctor. *(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)*

### **Half Off: Honorable mentions**

Save those really big toenail clippings to use as letter openers. *(Kevin Doport, Washington, D.C.)*

Save money on food and yard maintenance by getting a goat stomach transplant and eating your lawn. *(Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.)*

Book all your flights through [Istanbul](#). — E. Adams, N.Y.C. *(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)*

A little strategically applied makeup, liquid latex, silicone, gelatin, and hair coloring are all it takes to snag the senior discount at the buffet. *(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)*

Hurricane insurance prices going through the roof in Florida? Move hundreds of miles inland, then way up in the mountains. Asheville is said to be especially nice ... *(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)*

Send that Nigerian prince just \$1,750 rather than \$3,500. *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

Ever wonder why Grandpa has kept fourteen old calendars? That's because in any given year, one of them will always work. And those Vargas pinup girls never get old. *(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)*

Collect debris from defective Boeing airplanes and sell to a metal scrapper. *(Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.)*

Collect S&H Green Stamps. They were discontinued in the 1980s, so now, as collectibles, they're finally worth something. *(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)*

Use both sides of the toilet paper. *(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)*

Did you know it only takes 165 free Wawa coffee creamers to fill a gallon jug? *(Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)*

Adjacent burial plots: Use only one headstone. At the bottom, draw an arrow with a Sharpie, adding, "He's with me." *(Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.)*

The morning after Halloween, gather toilet paper from all the TP'd houses in the neighborhood. *(Lee Graham, Reston, Va.)*

Cut food costs by getting a DoorDash gig and keep a bit of each meal until you have enough for your family's dinner. *(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)*

Taking discreet sips from cups of beer as you pass them down the row at sporting events can give you a pleasant buzz at no cost! *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)*

Did you forget to brown-bag it today? The kids on that unlocked bus in front of the museum didn't. *(Rob Huffman)*

Don't throw away that toothpick until you've used both ends. For the fancy ones, you can use the frilly part to clean out your nose. *(Diana Oertel, San Francisco)*

Explain to the hookers you patronize that you're short on cash but you'll happily pay them in sexual favors. *(Duncan Stevens)*

Get your money's worth for that parking space: Hang out in your car till the meter hits zero. *(Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.)*

Give a few small donations to Habitat for Humanity; get a lifetime supply of postage stamps from the return envelopes in its solicitation mailings. *(Michael Stein, Arlington, Va.)*

Go back to dial-up internet access: It's much cheaper and your porn addiction will quickly dry up. *(Stephen Dudzik)*

Go to a forested park, don a bear costume, and sit innocently along a tourist road; when enough idiots give you food for a picnic, enjoy it while forest-bathing. *(Dave Prevar, Annapolis, Md.)*

Instead of buying milk, shampoo, toothpaste, laundry detergent, and motor oil, just use water. *(Jesse Frankovich)*

Collect your earwax and use it as lip balm, just as [some refined ladies did](#) in the 19th century. *(Dan Steinbrocker, Los Angeles)*

Instead of buying sweets for Halloween, put out a sign on your front lawn that says "COME GET YOUR CANDIED BROCCOLI." *(Sam Mertens)*

Let's say you have a, uh, an old dead fish that you need to dispose of, and I mean totally. Just mix up a vat of sulfuric acid and hydrogen peroxide from your, um, chemical business. It'll melt all that soft tissue — and even turn the bones into gypsum, which could be added to stucco or drywall if you also happened to, say, own a legitimate construction materials interest. — Jack "The Dipper" Stromboli, Brooklyn *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)*

Instead of purchasing expensive name brands, make your own cars, appliances, and smartphones. *(Jesse Frankovich)*

Re-create most of the Disney World experience for less, by standing outside in 105-degree heat for hours while not going on rides. *(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)*

Make pens and pencils last longer by writing everything in shorthand. *(Sam Mertens)*

When someone passes the collection plate to you in church ... collect! *(Gary Crockett)*

Junior doesn't need a tuxedo for his prom when the party store has lots of perfectly good penguin costumes! *(Duncan Stevens)*

Learn how to tie your shoes, brush your teeth, and change the toilet paper roll yourself instead of hiring a professional. *(Jesse Frankovich)*

When your kid needs wheels for a soap box derby car, remember that shopping carts are only a quarter at Aldi! *(Jon Gearhart)*

Place fake pizza orders going to your neighbors, wait for them to turn the delivery person away, then go outside and offer to buy it at a discount. *(Sam Mertens)*

Persuade your multiple personalities to participate in your pyramid scheme—that way you get all the profits. *(Jesse Frankovich)*

Volunteer at a local senior center. Ever notice that those people almost never finish a meal? *(Rob Huffman)*

To make a thriftier PB&J sandwich, put the peanut butter on one side of a slice and jelly on the other. Bam! 50 percent off your bread bill right there. *(Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.)*

When your ratty old shoes are about to fall apart, go bowling and exchange them for some snazzy multicolored replacements. *(Jeff Contompasis)*

**And Last:** Cancel your subscription to the Substack column that keeps being unfair to our BEST PRESIDENT EVER! —John Barron *(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)*

*The headline "The Skinflintational" is by Kevin Dopart; William Kennard wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.*

**Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, Oct. 12:** our Week 92 contest for witty haiku about the campaign or other current events. Click on the link below.