

The Invitational Week 96: The Tile Invitational XI

Make up new words with the letters we give you. Plus comically egghead jokes from Week 94.

[Pat Myers](#)

and

[Gene Weingarten](#)

Oct 31, 2024



Illustration by “Barney & Clyde” artist David Clark

***Martini**, observed on Nov. 11, is the Austrian equivalent of Halloween, celebrated with costumes and a lantern procession. *That’s a runner-up in our Asterisky Business contest for jokes that need footnotes. More hifalutin humor — or maybe for you it’s just mediumfalutin — in this week’s Invitational results, below.*

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Hello.

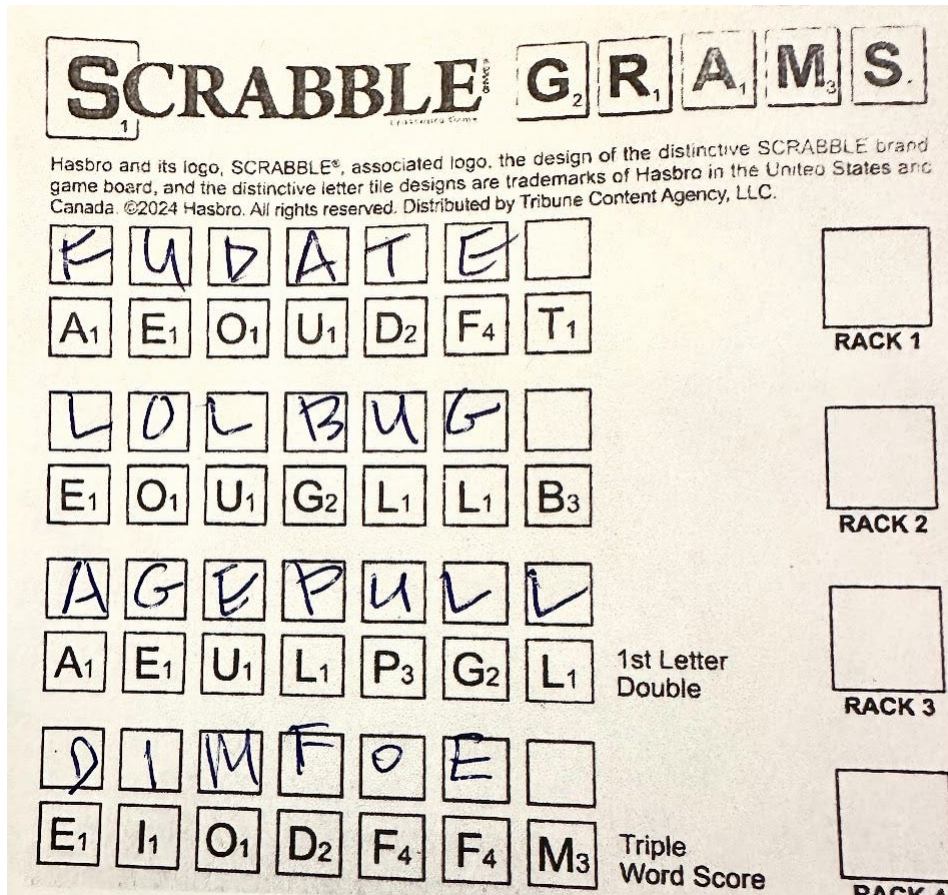
Hmm, seems we’ve been talking trash about our old employer this week. There’s more of that stuff later, in the Questions and Observations section.

As to The Post, it is true the newspaper no longer has a big section of classified ads, a world-renowned humor contest, or some 200,000 of its readers. But TWP still runs the venerable in-print-only ScrabbleGrams word game, which The Invitational has been ripping off honoring every year since 2013. So we offer you a distraction from biting your nails as you sit on the couch next Tuesday:

[AT THIS LINK YOU CLICK ON RIGHT HERE](#) is a list of 36 letter sets: the four pictured below from the Oct. 17 WaPo, the rest from the long-out-of-print *Big Book of ScrabbleGrams*; each unscrambles into a real seven-letter word, but that’s not the one you want.

For Invitational Week 96: Rearrange the letters of any of the letter sets to create a new term, then define or describe it, as in the examples below. Your word may use all 7 letters or just 6, but you may use each letter in the set only once. (So if there are two L’s, you can use them both, but if there’s just one L, you can’t use it twice.) Your term can be one word, two words, or hyphenated; we’re easy.

There's a good chance that someone else will make up the same word you did, so having a funny definition or description (e.g., a sentence using your term) can be what gets you the ink. **See the word list for instructions on formatting your entries.**



AEUDFT > F.U. DATE: What dinner has become by the third time he's taken out his phone to place a Draft Kings bet.

EOUGLLB > LOL BUG: It's infectious!

AEULPGL > AGE PULL: Sag. "That little butterfly on Grandma's chest? It's starting to look like a freight train with wings. That's agepull for you."

EIODFFM > DIM-FOE: A Chinese dumpling that not only disagrees with with you, but declares outright war on your gut.

Deadline is Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Nov. 14. 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-96.

The winner receives a handsome pair of socks in which the wearer's ankles are being eaten up, or at least swallowed, by alligators. While we could see these worn with some preppy Lacoste high-water khakis, it seems only right that they also be worn with Crocs.



Some people have alligator shoes ... : 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.

Wonk on the Wild Side: Winning esoteric jokes

In our [Week 94](#) contest, Asterisky Business, we asked for jokes depending on such technical or specialized knowledge that they required footnotes. Gene features these head-scratchers with the recurring character of Horace in his daily comic strip "[Barney & Clyde](#)," and he once again asked B&C artist David Clark to draw a couple of strips incorporating today's top entries.

Third runner-up:

Q: Why was Henry VIII unsuccessful at golf?

A: He had a brutal slice and ultimately did not break Parr.

**The king had two wives beheaded, and allowed wife No. 6, Catherine Parr, to remain unscathed and un-divorced. She outlived him. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)*

Second runner-up:

Man: Guess what I saw at the Tokyo theater.

Woman: Kabuki?

Man: No.

Woman: No?

Man: Yes.

**No (sometimes spelled “noh”) is a form of Japanese dance-drama. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)*

First runner-up: (See the “Martini” cartoon at the top of the page.)

And the winner of [the toilet earrings](#):



**Hitty-titty is an old Scots term for hide-and-seek. (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)*

Nerd-Do-Wells: Honorable mentions

Kamala Harris bought a pair of glasses, and to her amazement, she could see the future. But Latin scholars weren't surprised at all. Of course, they said — they're Harris specs.

**A haruspex is a Roman seer. (Chris Doyle)*

An actuary walks into a bar and begins to drink continuously.

**In actuarial notation, \bar{a} , pronounced “a-bar,” refers to an annuity paid continuously over a period of time. (Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.)*

American: “It's so cold outside, it must be minus-40 degrees!”

European: “I know, right?”

**Minus-40 degrees is the only point at which the Fahrenheit and Celsius temperature scales converge. (Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)*

Why did the physics professor name his cat Friction?

It had a notable mew.

**The Greek letter mu denotes how much friction a specific surface generates. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

Why did the geologist study the low area before the high area?

Because she put the karst before the horst.

**Karst is an irregular limestone region characterized by sinkholes; horst is an elevated block of the Earth's crust between two faults. (Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.)*

Why was the state-court criminal defense lawyer upset at the federal judge?

He told her she wasn't getting any Younger.

**"Younger abstention" is a doctrine of law under which federal courts will not interfere in state criminal proceedings. (Mark Raffman)*

How did the American tourist react when his German host wished him a good trip?

He was embarrassed.

**German for "have a good trip" is "Gute Fahrt." (Chris Doyle)*

What did Ringo Starr's cardiologist call his patient's typical breakfast of a bacon, egg, and cheese sandwich?

A double-stroke roll.

**In a double-stroke roll, a drummer strikes twice with one stick before striking with the other stick. (Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.)*

Can I help myself to the breath mints at the Supreme Court reception desk?

Only if you file a Cert petition.

**Requests that the Supreme Court take a case are called petitions for certiorari, or "cert petitions." (Duncan Stevens)*

How did the art critic insult New York's mayor?

"Your MOMA has a giant Wang."

"Witches are Flowers, Sis" by Evelyn Taocheng Wang is a 25-foot-long painting at the Museum of Modern Art. (Mark Raffman)

Why couldn't the physicist integrate a scalar field?

Because he had no more flux to give.

**In physics, flux is a scalar field that measures the number of electric or magnetic field lines that pass through a surface in a given amount of time. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)*

What do you call a Greek yes-man?

A naysayer!

**In Greek, the word for "yes" (vai) is pronounced "nay." (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)*

Did you hear about the student whose music teacher criticized his performance of a song? The student pointed to the score and countered: "What do you mean? When I got to the last measure it said 'fine.'"

**Pronounced fee-nay, "fine" in a musical score indicates the end of a section. (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)*

How did the doctor decide that no one watching the sad movie had Sjögren's syndrome?

There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

**People with Sjögren's syndrome have dry eyes and mouths. (Chris Doyle)*

Why did the large woman get offended while walking in a downpour?

Someone called out, "Whoa, what a thunder-plump!"

**A heavy and sudden rainstorm. (Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.)*

"Yesterday at church was Missionary Sunday, and we celebrated the author of "Rock of Ages."

"How inappropriate!"

**That hymn was written by Anglican cleric Augustus Montague Toplady — and you wouldn't*

think Reverend Toplady would be an advocate of the missionary position. (Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.)

Why did the caterer put a case of Chateau Latour '82 up his ass?

His clients had ordered a buttload of fine wine for the party.

**A buttload is an actual unit of measurement equal to 126 gallons of wine.* (Mark Raffman)

What did the first-class passenger on a KLM flight say when offered either sweet buns or crepes for breakfast?

"As the pilot would concur, a Dutch roll is much better than a pancake."

**A Dutch roll is a usually correctable combination of yawing and rolling motion in an aircraft. A pancake is a landing with the gear up.* (Kevin Dopart, Washington, D.C.)

Why does your parrot squawk, "Get off my lawn!"?

Because he's a senior psittacine."

**Psittacines (with a silent P) are birds of the parrot family.* (Jesse Frankovich)

Before treatment by a gynecologist, a woman should thoroughly familiarize herself with her vagina. As they say, it's always best to look before you LEEP.

**LEEP stands for loop electrosurgical excision procedure, in which an electrified wire loop is used to remove tissue in a woman's lower genital tract for diagnosis and treatment.* (Judy Freed)

Why did the chicken cross from right to left?

Because it was an Eastern Orthodox chicken.

**The sign of the cross is made from right to left in the Eastern Orthodox tradition and from left to right in the Latin church.* (Mark Raffman)

Why were the groundhogs covered in a weird adhesive?

They were rodents of unusual size.

**Size is a thin glue used to prime a surface for applying metal leaf. And "rodents of unusual size" are characters in "The Princess Bride."* (Jesse Frankovich)

Why do people play Schoenberg's music right before Yom Kippur?

It's highly atonal.

Arnold Schoenberg was a composer of atonal music, which has no discernible key; Yom Kippur is the Jewish Day of Atonement. (Duncan Stevens)

Doctor: "Don't worry about payment for SUI treatment. Your insurance should cover the whole thing."

Patient: "Please, doctor, don't make me laugh."

**SUI, or stress urinary incontinence, is prompted by such movements as coughing or laughing.* (Judy Freed)

The headline "Wonk on the Wild Side" is by Kevin Dopart; Jeff Contompasis wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, Nov. 2: our Week 95 contest for comical musings on Terrible Things That Could Happen if the other side wins. Click on the link below.