

The Invitational Week 110: Pith Us Off

Write us a short, snarky 'Balliol rhyme' about someone. Plus our 'joint legislation' winners.

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and

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Hello.

We return today to Balliol rhymes for the first time in five years, the second time ever. Like this one, which we just wrote for you in two minutes. It's easy, but not easy to do well:

I'm Elon Musk. I run SpaceX.

Huge donor to your Donald Rex.

Rules? Ha! I'm in noncompliance!

The reason? It ain't rocket science ...

For Invitational Week 110: Write a quatrain (or two) of [Balliol rhyme](#) — a Victorian form of verse mocking some person. Here's the drill:

— Each verse is four li'l lines, rhyming AA/BB, with exactly four accented syllables in each line, as in Gene's example above. ([Here are the results](#) of our 2020 contest, featuring such then-headliners as Gordon Sondland, Rod Blagojevich, and, hm, Elon Musk.)

— **It's in first person, in the voice of the person being mocked.** Traditionally the name of the person appears in Line 1, but that's not required; in fact, you may omit the name entirely and instead put it in a title.

Deadline is Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Feb. 20. As usual, you may submit up to 25 entries for this week's contest, preferably all on the same entry form.

Formatting this week: As with all our poetry contests, *don't* follow our standard request to write each entry as a single line. **Just format the poems as they should look when published.** Do put a line of space between your poems if you're writing more than one.

[Click here for this week's entry form](#), or go to tinyurl.com/inv-form-110.

This week's winner gets yet one more 2025 calendar, this one celebrating our natural world with sixteen months' worth of gloriously priapic boulders, cactuses, mushrooms, etc. Donated by Alex Blackwood, guiding light of the [Style Invitational Devotees group](#), who knows an Invite prize when she sees one. The only thing we can't figure out: We don't see *any* ducks in the photos.



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.

Dorkness at Noon: [Check out the newly updated calendar](#) for the Loser Community's monthly brunches etc. across the D.C.-Baltimore area (and even Gettysburg). All Invitational fans are welcome; it's just relaxed eat 'n' chat, not competitive repartee. Next up: Feb. 16 in Annapolis.

LOL Call: The 'joint legislation' of Week 108

[Invitational Week 108](#) was our biennial contest, run at the start of each congressional session, to combine new members' names into "joint legislation," a bill they'd cosponsor because their strung-together names sound like some phrase.

Third runner-up:

The **Crank-King-Hinds** Act to promote twerking for physical fitness.

(Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.)

Second runner-up:

The **Knott-Bynum** Resolution to resist indulging in coins, lies, and other assorted MAGA crap.

(Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.)

First runner-up:

The **Jack-Hamadeh** Act to create a holiday honoring America's road crews.

(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

And the winner of the [Bernie Sanders finger puppet](#):

The **Jack-Kennedy-Knott-Crank** bill to clarify the difference between JFK and RFK

Jr. (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park, Md.)

Sorry for Your Laws: Honorable mentions

The **Harris-Onder-Johnson** Manscaping Resolution *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

The **Justice-Knott-Hurd-Whitesides** Act to compensate for all that unfair DEI nonsense the Supreme Court has been putting out since 1954. *(Kevin Dopart, Washington, D.C.)*

The **Barrett-Onder-Fields** Act to celebrate ancient Greece by introducing nude outdoor sports in public schools. *(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)*

The **Sheehy-Bell** Act to establish an alarm system for any federal employee still displaying their — we mean his or her — pronouns in an email signature. *(Brian Cohen, Winston-Salem, N.C.)*

The **Messmer-Schmidt** Act to replace Air Force One with Hitler's personal airplane. *(Ron Osher, Memphis, Tenn., a First Offender)*

(URGENT MESSAGE! For the first time in the storied 32-year history of The Invitational, we are interrupting the natural flow of the Honorable Mentions to tell a pertinent joke. We will likely never do this again. You are watching history. This joke takes place in 1965. A World War I fighter pilot is giving a speech at a library. He is discussing a dogfight he had in 1914 with German planes. He says: "There was a Fokker in front of me! A Fokker behind me! Two Fokkers on top of me!" The librarian, seeing some discomfort in the elderly audience, interrupted: "I should mention that 'Fokkers' were a type of German aircraft. That was their name." And the elderly fighter pilot says, 'Yes, that is correct, but these fokkers were Messerschmitts.'"

Just for the record, before we get back to the honorable mentions: Hitler's personal plane was a Fokker, not a Messerschmitt.)

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The **Bell-Min-Hurd-Knott** Act to acknowledge that what happens in a Marriott stays in a Marriott. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)*

The **Hamadeh-Ansari** Resolution to atone on Yom Kippur for eating pork all year long. *(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)*

The **Jack-Schmidt** Proclamation on how much President Trump really knows about tariffs, Greenland, and President McKinley. *(Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.)*

The **Gray-Ansari** Resolution apologizing for everything Boomer legislators have done in the last two decades. *(David Smith, Pleasanton, Calif.)*

The **Moody-Gray-Crank Act** ordering you to get off the lawn. *(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.; Barbara Turner, Takoma Park, Md.)*

The **Slotkin-Knott-Barrett-Moore** act to prohibit excessive sexual effort by men in bed. *(Jesse Frankovich)*

The **Knott-Hurd-Simon** Rule to prohibit congressional motions on the floor unless preceded by the proper authorizing phrase. *(Kevin Dopart)*

The **Knott-Jack-Kennedy** Act honoring the career of former vice president Dan Quayle. *(Jon Ketzner)*

The **Barrett-Tran-Johnson** Act: A GOP bill requiring “certain people” to undress before entering public restrooms. *(Lee Graham, Reston, Va.)*

The **Knott-Moore-Begich** bill to impose universal airline carry-on limits. *(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)*

Knott-Pou-King-Hinds Act to ban sodomy. *(Marleen May, Rockville, Md.; Mark Raffman)*

The **Moore-Rivas-Alsobrooks-Onder-Fields** Act to expand the National Flood Insurance Program. *(Chris Doyle)*

The **Barrett-Biggs-Figures** Act to encourage body shape positivity on the nation’s beaches. *(Dan Helming, Conshohocken, Pa.)*

The **Biggs-Knott** bill to subsidize public tissue dispensers. *(David Peckarsky, Tucson, Ariz.; Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.; Jeff Shirley)*

The **Bynum-Moore-Banks** Act to stop the next bailout before it begins. *(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines; Ken April, Rockville, Md.)*

The **Gray-Harris-Conaway** Bill to Give Government Officials a Lifetime Supply of L’Oreal *(Seth Christenfeld, Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.; Mark Raffman)*

The **Turner-Moore-Min** Act encouraging women to join the Church of Latter-Day Saints. *(Judy Freed; Rob Cohen)*

The **Turner-Whitesides** bill requires beach chairs to have a rotisserie function. *(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)*

The **Goodlander-Moore-Fields-Moore-Banks-Alsobrooks** Act encouraging Sully Sullenberger to try some new trick landings. *(David Smith)*

The **Jack-Min** bill to save the wolverine. *(Barbara Turner; Bill Dorner, Wolcott, Conn.)*

The **Johnson-Barrett-Knott** Anti-Flashing Act. *(Jonathan Paul; Barbara Turner)*

The **King-Hinds-Barrett** Act to publicly expose royal a-holes. *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)*

The **Downing-Moore-Whitesides** Act for the Promotion of Cole Slaw, Mashed Potatoes, and Cauliflower *(Seth Christenfeld; Chris Doyle; Jesse Frankovich)*

The **Johnson-Crank** Act to fund research into mechanical solutions to ED. *(Chris Doyle)*

The **Turner-Crank** Act to get your mama’s motor running so she can stimulate growth in the privates sector. *(Jon Gearhart)*

The **Downing-Moore-Liccardo-Knott-Riley-Turner-Crank** bill to offer barflies friendly advice on flirting. *(Jonathan Paul)*

The headline “LOL Call” is by Chris Doyle; Jesse Frankovich wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, Feb. 8: Pick words here and there from Trump’s inaugural address to write your own “quote.” (You don’t even have to read the appalling original; we have a list of all the words.) Click on the link below.