

The Invitational Week 48: Well, the Good News Is ...

Put positive spin on a bad-news headline. Plus AN"TIP"ATHY and more winning "air quotes."

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AND

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How's your flair for audacious sugarcoating? Find out in this week's Invitational.

This week's Invitational: Be nice!

Original line from a Washington Post article:

Maine's governor told critics Friday to "kiss my butt" over

his decision not to attend the state NAACP's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations.

The same news with positive spin:

Maine's governor found it in his heart to turn the other cheek. (*Dixon Wragg*)

Original: **Tom DeLay, former U.S. House leader, sentenced to 3 years in prison**

Spin: **Government again calls DeLay to serve** (*Roy Ashley*)

Oh, we in the news media (ahem, we who used to be in the news media) are always so mean, so cynical, interpreting every action and comment in the worst possible light. Just ask Donald Trump — so unfair! But we *could* have ended up with careers in “communications,” a.k.a. PR, which requires a different talent, one we'll try to evince today: **For Invitational Week 48: Take any sentence (or substantive part of a sentence) or a headline, from an article or ad published in print or online from Nov. 28 through Dec. 9, and make it sound more upbeat (or not so bad), as in the classic examples above from a 2011 Style Invitational. ([Complete results here.](#))**

Obviously you need to give us the original quote, followed by your sugarcoated revision, along with a link to the article if it's online, or the name, date, and page number of the publication if it's in print. Don't worry about getting everything on a single line, our usual request.

[Click here for this week's entry form.](#) Or go to **bit.ly/inv-form-48**. Please see formatting instructions on the form. As usual, you can submit up to 25 entries for this week's contest, preferably all on the same form.

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

And totally apropos of this contest, the winner receives **a truly amazing device that will *instantly* take inches off your waistline with no dieting, exercise, or even corsetry:** It's a shoelace-thin tape measure that arrived last week from

China along with a bathroom scale that the Empress ordered. On one side, it's in perfectly normal centimeters. But on the other it's inches — or “inches.” Each “inch” is about 1.3 of the real ones, and so the tape measured the E's waist at a Barbie-like 21. It'll be hard to give this baby up, but we sacrifice for the good of The Invitational. (The bathroom scale, alas, doesn't cheat.)



A mean, disgraceful fake-news tape measure, top, and this week's much more complimentary prize.

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

New Mean'in'gs: The 'air quotes' of Week 46

In [Week 46](#) we asked you to put part of a word or phrase into “air quotes” and then define the word in the context of that highlighted part.

Third runner-up: “MUSK”M“ELON”: Fruit that’s quickly rotted on the vine. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Second runner-up: AN“TIP”ATHY: Why no, I do NOT wish to add a 20 percent gratuity — hellooo, this is a self-service kiosk! (Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase, Md.)

First runner-up: AM“BRO”SIA: Beer. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

And the winner of the [Word Nerd socks](#):

THU“MBS”CREW: Saudi peacekeeping tool. *(Kevin Dopart, Washington, D.C.)*

MUC‘HO HUM’OR: Honorable mentions

“FU”NNY: What you call a joke you find amusing and to hell with anyone who is offended by it. *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)*

A“POL”OGY: “I’m truly sorry if anyone might have been offended by my innocuous, inadvertent, well-meaning comment that in no way reflects who I am or what I believe.” *(Karen Lambert)*

“NO”TIFY: Don’t call us, we’ll call you. *(Gary Crockett)*

C“HARDON”NAY: Something cold that gets me hot. *(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)*

NI“TP”ICKING: “Honey, how many times do I have to tell you to put the roll on the right way?” *(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)*

RO“UGH”ING IT: For many people, camping. *(Neil Kurland, Elkridge, Md.)*

“AMEN”ITIES: Televangelists’ private jets. *(Gary Crockett)*

“APP”REHENSION: The sudden feeling you've just downloaded malware. (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

“BAM”BI: The inspiration behind [Emeril Lagasse's](#) venison chili. (*Neil Kurland*)

“GEORGE-SAN”TOS: “Did I mention that I’m also a sumo champion?” (*Neil Kurland*)

AMUSE-B“OUCH”E: “They charged me \$24 for that little dab of sherbet they brought out after the soup?” (*Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.*)

AN“XI”ETY: Did China just offer to help Russia build a tunnel into Crimea? (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

BA“T MI”TZVAH: When you’re at the same table as Bubbe at the reception and she won’t stop talking about her urinary problems. (*Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.*)

BEN“EDICT”ION: Now go forth in peace, thankful for the Lord’s blessings, love one another, serving others with meekness, tenderness, mercy, and humility, AND THAT’S AN ORDER! (*Roy Ashley*)

LUNCH“EON”: For the love of God, please no more speeches! (*Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.*)

DRUN“KEN”NESS: Party time at the [Mojo Dojo Casa House!](#) (*Karen Lambert*)

EX“CELL”ENT: Trump’s prospects for 2024 — Fani Willis (*Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.*)

F“AU”X: What pyrite is. (*Chris Doyle*)

F“AI”L: The result when they discover how you “wrote” your term paper. (*Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park, Md.*)

SAM H“O”“WELL”: Another Commanders quarterback, another lost year
... (*Mark Raffman*)

MIKE J“OH”NSON: Okay, *now* I see how we could do worse than
Kevin. (*Gary Crockett*)

NE“W HAM”PSHIRE: A place that’s dealt a knockout blow to many a
presidential hopeful. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

P“OWE”RBALL: Not the best strategy for personal debt reduction. (*Judy
Freed*)

P“UTI”N: Maybe that’s why he’s so ornery. (*Neil Kurland*)

P“ARENT”S-TO-BE: A high school couple who seem awfully
relieved. (*Frank Osen*)

SAC“RAMEN”T: A divine rite of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster,
Tokyo Branch. (*Kevin Dopart*)

SU“BS”IDIES: Important government expenditures for things like coal, private
jets, and football stadiums. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

T“ANGER”INE: An orange-hued complexion associated with fury. (*Jeff
Contompasis; Kevin Dopart*)

T“HER”MOSTAT: “Is it just fifty-year-old me, or does it suddenly feel like
an oven in here?” (*Karen Lambert*)

U“NDE**”RWIRE BRA:** “To say this thing is killing me is only a slight
exaggeration.” (*Judy Freed*)

“MANIC”URE: What nervous nail-biters give themselves. (*Frank Osen*)

C“HIT”CHAT: Gossip about a contract to make Louie the Fink
disappear. (*Pam Shermeyer*)

“NAP”OLEON: Ridley Scott’s new 2 ½-hour epic snoozefest. *(Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.; Mark Raffman)*

And Last: RE“GENE”RATE: To post decades-old columns within live chats to entice new subscribers. *(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)*

And Even Laster: “AI”R QUOTES: Hopefully, they weren’t used in this contest. *(Neil Kurland)*

And Lastest of All: EX“CREME”NT: The best of the worst. “Rob’s entry was the excrement of the honorable mentions.” *(Rob Cohen)*

The headline “New Mean ‘in’gs” is by Jeff Contompasis; Jon Gearhart wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 4 p.m. ET Saturday, Dec. 2: **Our Week 47 contest to compare two people with a shared part of their names.** [Click here](#) for details.