

The Invitational Week 99: Mess With Our Heads

This week's contest: Look at a headline and see a funnier meaning. Also, a contest to get paid subscriptions to The Gene Pool for free.

[Pat Myers](#)

and

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Hello! This will be an unusual Invitational Thursday, because we have a new contest to introduce, but no old-contest results on account of vacationing. This explains the extraneous but adorable photo above. We took it yesterday right off the highway on a trip south. It's in Warrenton, Va., next to the the Clark Brothers Gun Shop and shooting gallery. We feel this photo needs no explanation or elaboration. The area is prime rural Trump country, of course.

The new contest follows. **But first, we have an announcement.**

Do you remember John Beresford Tipton? That is the pseudonym we gave to a mysterious, diabolical person who has decided to become a secret, generous occasional benefactor to people who enter The Invitational. The pseudonym was taken from the

cheesy but transfixing 1950s TV show “The Millionaire,” where every week, a billionaire named John Beresford Tipton gave away a million dollars to a stranger, because he was a generous but manipulative asshole and wanted to experiment and see whether sudden riches helped or destroyed people’s lives.

Below is a still photo from the show, where his emissary is delivering a check for a million dollars to some clueless rube who, for all we know, may well have lived in Warrenton, Va. The emissary, Michael Anthony, is played by Marvin Miller, a man also well known for his voice-acting in the cartoon film “[Gerald McBoing Boing](#),” about a child who can only say “boing boing.” The script was written by a very young Dr. Seuss. That is all just inessential background, though.



As we approach the glorious Week 100 of the new Invitational, our John Beresford Tipton — not an asshole, but definitely manipulative — is offering as gifts four more free one-year paid subscriptions to the Gene Pool (worth \$50 apiece) to worthy people. Will it make their lives complete, or destroy their souls? We’ll find out.

Do you want one? It entitles you to enter “Comments” and also enter The Invitational, as well as access to the occasional special edition. Also, you become my employer, which allows you to abuse me without guilt.

We will give the four subscriptions to the best entrants to this contest:

Tell us your greatest hope for the future of America. Try to make it funny. If you are already a paid subscriber, you can submit an entry on behalf of someone else — friend, relative, colleague, whatever — but not for yourself.

URGENT CAPITALIZED AND BOLDFACED PARAGRAPH: YOU MUST INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND EMAIL IN THE BODY OF YOUR ENTRY — WE WON’T KNOW WHO YOU ARE IF YOU DON’T. WE DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY GET YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS, EVEN IF THE TECHNOLOGY LOOKS LIKE WE SHOULD KNOW IT. WE WILL NOT PUBLISH YOUR EMAIL OR NAME WITHOUT YOU BUT WE HAVE TO HAVE A WAY TO REACH YOU.

Send your stuff here, under the label “Hope for America.” Say “hope for America” in your email. You have a week to respond.

[Hope for America](#)

Good.

Okay, the new contest:

*Real headline: **No Interest for 12 Months** (bathroom remodeling ad)*

Local teen completes full year of nonstop eye-rolling, yawning

*Real headline: **Prosecutors wrap in Le Pen fraud case***

In dramatic courtroom scene, French attorneys display how plain pencil was disguised as antique Mont Blanc

*Real headline: **Terrapins Miss Their Shot to Earn Marquee Victory***

Joke bank head: U. Maryland team wins grand prize for Worst Aim

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For Invitational Week 99: Reinterpret some actual headline (or a major part of it) by adding a bank head, or subtitle, as in the examples above. The headlines may be from any publication, print or online, dated Nov. 21-30, 2024. Include the source and date of the headline so we can verify it; for online stories, please paste that page’s URL after your entry.

Quick FAQs:

What counts as a headline? It’s any text placed above the text of an article or ad and used as a title.

Can I drop words off the beginning or end? Yes, if it doesn’t totally change the meaning. Don’t change “Teacher Passes Out Report Cards” to “Teacher Passes Out.”

Will you show us last year’s winners, for guidance, inspiration, and laffs? [We sure will.](#) (Scroll down past the week’s new contest.)

How do we format it? We’ll just make it simple and tell you to make it clear enough for us to read. First the real headline, then your bank head, along with a URL or some other way to show us where you saw it. It doesn’t have to all be on one line.

Deadline is Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Dec. 5. 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-99. See (the lack of) formatting instructions above.

The winner receives this fine calendar.



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.