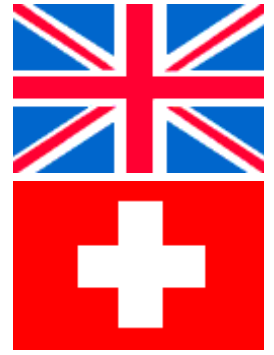




EXPAT WORLD

“the newsletter of international living”

BRINGING YOU THE WORLD IN A WAY
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE



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DIFFERENT WORLDS FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

*Expats Here and About Through the Eyes of
One Expat*

Travel anywhere and if you are observant, what will you see? EXPATS or EXPATRIATES in the long form. You see them in the back-street bars of Bangkok, Manila, Guadalajara, along third-world waterfronts, in up-country Thailand, anywhere living is cheap and rules scarce.

Some are old guys in their sixties and seventies with fading tattoos from other lives, lives that

also fade into fewer and fewer living memories. Some are in their thirties and run little businesses, often legitimate. They can be a bit rough-looking or maybe just eccentric, mostly a congenial lot and are not concerned about what you think of them. You find them heisting a brewski in out-of-the-way spots, chaffing with barmaids who maybe or may not have a sideline. They are sometimes dropouts of life other times real international entrepreneurs. What they are not are the middle-management retirees who really belong in some dismal retirement colony in Florida.

They are a breed overlooked by the world, which suits them fine. Some have pasts if you look closely you might even see some jailhouse tattoos. A few are drunks waiting to die spitting blood-poor miserable sods who just couldn't get it together after the contract ran out on the oil rig and the wife ran away with the kids, probably for good reason. BUT most are solid salt of the earth individuals who value freedom as much as anything. They drop by the bars because that's where the social life is. Some own bars. Many have local wives and families.

They are men with stories, many of which wouldn't be believed in the upholstered countries of the earth. On the other hand, expats generally don't talk to upholstered people. You meet a lot of retired pilots, maybe for United and maybe for spook outfits like Air America, or maybe the personal pilot of some oil-sheikh out of Arabia. Some did things they don't talk about during the American lunge into Asia in the Sixties; after the war, the golf course just didn't appeal to them. Golfers don't always understand about Lucy's Tiger Den, the Grey House, the Blue Fox in TJ.

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Their defining trait is that they don't fit in and don't want to. The bond broker for example who wondered, "What am I doing this for?" and stopped. He opened a dive shop in Mexico and never looked back. There are ex-drug dealers who got smart in time; men who don't seem to have last names, or not the same one twice; guys who scout trinkets for the US import market. You bump into freelance writers living by their wits, credentialed by obscure publications which sometimes exist. Military men who retired on twenty and didn't want to work in the Home Depot outlet; the former bouncer at a strip joint in Florida who somehow drifted abroad and saw no reason to go back.

The waters of anarchy run wide and fast through an expatriate soul, though they don't gather up everybody. Some of the Americans are deeply attached to the memory of the US they left. For a few, patriotism has replaced religion as the psychic buoy for the otherwise unmoored.

Others are profoundly, by conviction or inattention, citizens of nowhere, loyal to no country. Maybe they've lived in so many places that whatever bonds they may have had have worn through; borders are to them just places where you get your bags inspected. Maybe they wearied of the socialism of Canada, the regimentation of the United States, and bailed. Some are angry that their countries haven't lived up to their desires. Others are bored with the question.

The world does not approve of deliberate man wandering from State to State. These men don't care what the State thinks. There's not too much they do care about above freedom and privacy.

Almost universal among them is a profound desire not to be part of somebody else's parade. They want to be left alone. In the semi-developed countries favored by expats, governments usually don't care about you unless you break the law. Sometimes they don't care even if you do break the law, depending on the law. The big North American governments never stop supervising, admonishing, collecting data, requiring forms. Those who dislike it enough end up somewhere else.

The uncharitable in America constantly belittle the expatriate because they view them as men

who want to enjoy sex with lovely young lovelies. That's part of it. For a man who isn't attached and around the fifty mark age wise, a sloe-eyed sweetie of twenty-five beats hell out of an angry menopausal gringa with a law degree. Maybe it shouldn't be that way, but it is that way.

But much more than sex is involved. Women in the backwaters are often just plain agreeable. After the divorce back home, men learn. Some do.

Deep down, a lot of expat men just don't want the admin overhead of the usual relationship: the breakup, the shrieking, the agony, and let's-get-counseling, and everyone feels like dirt of relationships in upholstered countries. Relations between the sexes, they say, are always fundamentally commercial. Women trade sex for whatever they want, and men trade whatever they have for sex. In the US, when the whole mess becomes horribly boring, the husband insists that he's still in love to avoid admitting that he'd give anything to be in Bangkok. The woman eats bon-bons.

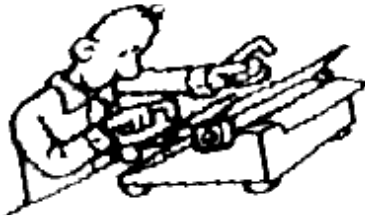
The bottom line in many expats lifestyle is a marriage relationship with a local lass. If you live overseas for any length of time you will meet many men who have married either bar girls or non-hooking local women. (Some don't know they have married bar girls.) Often it works well. The woman gets what she wants: a decent life, and a husband who doesn't knock her around. He gets what he wants: a pretty and pleasant young wife, food on the table, and a good mother if they have kids. He probably actually loves her because, praise God, she's not congenitally angry or in a law firm. They're happy. It's their business.

Editors note: This is the view of one expat as he defines expats through his experience. It hits the nail on the head in many instances but isn't intended to paint all expats with the same brush.

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BITS & PECES

NEWS AND VIEWS FOR THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION

MIT, one of the top universities in the world has made all its courses available on the Web for free. This means you can get a \$250,000 education online for free as an "auditor" or non-paying visitor to all the classes.. No catch! No charge! Undergraduate to Ph D level. You won't get a diploma, but you will get the same course material as paying students do and you can proceed at your own pace. All courses in English, many en Español and em Portugues. This is nothing short of amazing. See the course list and get full particulars at <http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html>

The Entire Course List is at:

<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Global/all-courses.htm>

Full details in FAQ Format:

<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Global/OCWHelp/help.htm>

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BANK CHIEF HELD

The owner of a Zurich private bank has been arrested and detained on money laundering charges. The Federal Prosecutor's Office says the former chief executive of the Tempus Private Bank is suspected of involvement with drug cartels and improper financial practices.

The accused was arrested in December after attempting to deposit ≈2 million (\$2.5 million) in cash in a UBS bank account. The banker, who was chairman of the board of directors at Bank Vontobel until 1995, set up Tempus six years ago.

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A VERY BIG SCAM BEWARE

Millions were taken in a 'trading' scam in Canada. Southwestern Ontario residents were hit very badly chasing a big payoff.

The bait: a can't-miss, lucrative return on a secret overseas investment. The fish: hundreds of Southwestern Ontario residents who were wined

and dined and even treated to a private concert by an award-winning singer. The haul: millions of dollars, willingly handed over by hopeful investors, most of whom have never seen a cent of it again.

RCMP Cpl. Rebecca Herrington of London knows of at least one person who lost \$1 million in a so-called "trading program" that has bilked area residents of large and small fortunes totalling millions.

"I've actually had people crying because they've invested \$50,000 from their father who recently passed away and they've lost all their money," she said.

The scam has been around since at least 2001 in Ontario. Police don't know exactly how many people have been sucked in because they are often too embarrassed to report losses, Herrington said.

One area woman, who asked her real name not be used because others trust her business acumen, lost \$5,000 US.

A relative had learned of the plan through a church group and told the woman she might be included in an offshore bank-debenture plan open only to an elite group.

At an information session, the woman learned she could pool her money with others and earn 30 per cent a month, compounded, for 10 months.

The speaker's words, delivered with religious fervour, were compelling.

"Every single question I asked there was an answer to," the woman recalled. "A good con artist you're going to believe."

The allure of a six-figure payoff was too much to resist.

The woman scraped together \$5,000 US, the minimum investment amount, using some of her savings and borrowing the rest.

At the end of 10 months, the "investment" organizers staged a big party for fund participants

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at a downtown London hotel.

Luther Vandross, an award-winning R&B artist, was even brought in to give a private concert, as investors celebrated their imminent windfall.

After that, nothing.

The investment leaders kept coming up with excuses, the woman said: the computers crashed; the terrorist attacks had shrunk their investment temporarily; the banks didn't trade that day; accountants were still working on the numbers.

Two years later, the woman warns others not to be suckered like she was.

RCMP in Toronto have charged three men, including two Londoners, with fraud and conspiracy after investors in Toronto and Grimsby com-

plained of losses.

The local investigation continues, police said. Herrington said financial scams are pervasive during RSP season, as Canadians look to shelter money in high-return retirement funds and "the legitimate ones don't seem to be working out so well."

The scam is also "running rampant" through factories, Herrington said.

People think they know a con when they see one but they can't pass up the promise of getting rich quick. "It's boiling down to greed," Herrington said.

Only a few who scream loudest ever see a portion of their money back. The rest goes into organizers' pockets, she believes. "These trading programs don't exist."

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LETTER FROM AMERICA

This month's Letter from America is encouraging in that it is starting to show that much as the G-men want to keep the people of America frightened and use the 911 war mentality to take away their freedoms, more and more individuals, cities, areas and states are rejecting this red herring theme of George Bush and company.

REJECTING THE PATRIOT ACT

DATELINE: NEW YORK, Feb. 10. New York City, site of the country's most horrific terrorist attack, last week became the latest in a long list of cities and towns that have formally opposed the expanded investigatory powers granted to law enforcement agencies under the USA Patriot Act.

The New York City Council approved a resolution condemning the law, enacted by Congress six weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, with a voice vote in its chambers a few blocks from the gaping hole at Ground Zero.

"The Patriot Act is really unpatriotic, it undermines our civil rights and civil liberties," said council member Bill Perkins (D-Manhattan), the bill's sponsor. "We never give up our rights that's what makes us Americans."

The resolution criticized the Patriot Act for allowing infringements on privacy rights. Among other provisions, the Patriot Act allows investigators to see citizens' library records and eases requirements for search warrants. The council requested that Congress deliver periodic reports accounting for the information and records on New Yorkers the federal government has culled under the Patriot Act, but the measure has no means to enforce that request.

The vote follows months of negotiations between resolution supporters and New York City Council leadership. A major sticking point in the original proposal of the resolution centered on language prohibiting the New York Police Department from enforcing immigration laws, collecting information on activist groups and businesses, and refraining from establishing an anti-terrorism reporting database.

After Wednesday's vote, City Council Speaker Gifford Miller (D) said the measure in its final version "strikes the right balance." "The resolution has evolved to focus on what's really needed: amendments to the law to protect civil liberties particularly, at a time of war," he said.

New York joins 246 municipalities and counties and three states that have passed legislation in op-

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position to the Patriot Act, according to the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, an organization that helps local governments craft anti-Patriot Act legislation.

"So much is being done in the name of New York, we are saying don't use our name to infringe on people's rights," said Glenn C. Devitt, an organizer with the Bill of Rights Defense Committee.

Local governments in Virginia and Maryland have approved similar measures, including Montgomery County, Prince George's County and Alexandria.

Mark Corallo, a Justice Department spokesman, dismissed the local governments' resolutions, saying the majority were passed in locales with left-leaning constituencies and based on "erroneous" information about the Patriot Act.

Corallo said the act has been "one of the most important tools Congress has given the government to fight terrorism and prevent terrorist acts." But only a handful of New York council members, both Democrats and Republicans, agreed and voted against the resolution.

At a rally of supporters for banning the Patriot Act, Monica Tarazi, New York director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said the Patriot Act and other tactics to fight terrorism has sowed fear within New York's ethnic communities and activists.

"This country is not about registering [people] and ethnic profiling," she said. "We need this [resolution]. We need this as Americans."



GET THAT OLD TIME RELIGION!

Irritated by Islam? Peeved about pedophile priests? Had enough of gay-bashing Episcopalians? Consider a new, more exciting, more interesting faith. (If you've met one Scientologist, you've met them all.) The seventh edition of the Encyclopedia of American Religions, published this year, includes 250 new churches, sects, cults, temples, societies, missions and religions.

EW realizes most people don't have time to find the needle of truth in a haystack of dogma, so we've selected a few candidates that could make you the spiritual life of any party.

* **CHURCH OF ALL WORLDS** -- Background: Two students at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri created the church in 1962, taking its name and concepts such as grokking (the ability to fully empathize with others) from Robert Heinlein's science fiction novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*. In the spirit of the times, the students also decreed that sex is a divine act. (According to one account, during a police raid of an early CAW orgy, a minister, while still fucking, asked the cops not to disturb the service.) By the late 1970s the group had begun producing "living unicorns" by operating on baby goats. The first of these animals toured with Ringling Bros. until 1988. The church has also organized an expedition to search for mermaids in New Guinea and launched initiatives such as the Street Cat Aid Team, or SCAT. Its website, at www.caw.org, includes articles on responsible condom use and strategies for swinging.

Spiritual guide: The church, which claims about 575 members, survives under co-founder Tim Zell, now known as Oberon Zell-Ravenhart, and his wife, Morning Glory. Its chief text is Zell's Gaia Thesis, which posits that the planet and its creatures are a single organism.

Downside: Somebody at the orgy has to keep an eye on the unicorn.

Pickup line: Female members are greeted with "Thou art goddess."

* **TRADITIONALISTS (CATHOLICS)** -- Background: Traditionalists believe that the modern Catholic church has become too modern. Adherents at 600 chapels worldwide celebrate mass in Latin, push the theory that every pope since 1958 has been a poseur and reject the reforms of Vatican II that, among other things, exonerated Jews for the death of Jesus. Not surprisingly, the Vatican does not approve.

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Spiritual guide: Traditionalists will come under intense scrutiny early next year when believer Mel Gibson releases his \$25 million, self-financed Latin and Aramaic epic, *The Passion*, which depicts the last bloody hours of Jesus's life. (The film is already being criticized as anti-Semitic based on early readings of the screenplay.) "A lot of unusual things have been happening," Gibson told an interviewer on the set. "Good things, like people being healed of diseases." The actor has also given \$2.8 million to the Holy Family congregation, which is building a 9,300-square-foot traditionalist chapel near Malibu for Gibson and its 70 other members. One passionate if extreme traditionalist thinker is Hutton Gibson, Mel's dad and the author of *Is the Pope Catholic?* The elder Gibson considers the current pope a "Koran kisser," says Vatican 11 was "a Masonic plot backed by Jews," asserts that the planes that flew into the World Trade Center were flown not by terrorists but by remote control and denies that the Holocaust ever occurred ("There were more Jews after the war than before").

Downside: Hard to follow all-Latin sermons, especially the punch lines.

Pickup line: Wanna see my *Passion*? (Caveat: This will work only if the movie makes it to DVD.)

* **CHURCH OF SATAN** -- Background: The good news is you don't have to believe in Satan-- he's just a symbol of man as a carnal beast whose needs must be fulfilled. Every satanist is encouraged to follow his or her own set of rules, and self-preservation is considered the most powerful instinct, followed by sex. Drugs are discouraged for being escapist. The church's guiding principles include indulgence, kindness and vengeance.

Spiritual guide: On April 30, 1966 founder Anton LaVey shaved his head and proclaimed the start of the satanic era. He gained notoriety performing weddings and funerals and worshipping at his Black House in San Francisco with a nude woman on the altar. A 1991 investigation found that much of LaVey's wild biography, including his stint as a circus lion tamer, had been invented. John Raymond, who played the groom in a staged satanic wedding, wrote that LaVey had "found a gig that privately amused him."

A \$100 lifetime membership, available online at churchofsatan.com, gets you an embossed membership card and a freak-out from your mom. The breakaway First Church of Satan (churchofsatan.org) raises funds by selling *Dark Passion*, a jazz vocal CD.

Downside: Goat-head tattoo.

Pickup line: Behold, I have a tongue like a serpent.

* **NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH** -- Background: The Mescalero Apaches introduced the use of peyote for enlightenment to the U.S. sometime prior to 1870. It spread rapidly among Native American tribes until the U.S. government began a crackdown in 1918 that continues to this day. A Peyote Way founder writes, "When we eat the peyote we experience time and eternity, and it is from that vantage that, the next day, we can live our life in a very positive and nontrivial way, realizing that this day could be the last and everyone around us is our brother and sister and we need each other."

Spiritual guide: In 1965 the government decreed that only people who are at least 25 percent Indian could become members of the peyote-eating Native American Church, which had been tolerated since 1918 as an "Indian version of Christianity." The restriction led to the 1977 creation of the Peyote Way, whose 250 members welcome everyone; the state of Arizona allows them to distribute the drug on their 160-acre compound. For \$200 visitors can partake in a 24-hour fast followed by an eight to 12-hour meditation. The church suggests taking along spiritual reading material, a pad and pen, a lighter or matches, a hat, a sleeping bag and a flashlight. The peyote is consumed as a tea or in small buttons.

Downside: Sitting on a sleeping bag in the wilderness outside a remote religious compound may not be the best place to have a bad trip.

Pickup line: Can I see you on the other side;

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* **CHURCH OF GOD WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING** -- Background: Snake handlers, who operate under the umbrella Church of God with Signs Following, believe that the Bible commands the most godly to handle deadly serpents. (The less Godly can watch.) Snake handlers entertain 50 to 100 congregations stretching from central Florida to West Virginia to Ohio. They also believe that the Godly speak in tongues, cast out demons, drink poison, apply fire to the skin and heal the sick- including people who've been bitten by pissed-off snakes.

Spiritual guide: According to church lore, snake handling began about 1909 in Cleveland, Tennessee. That's where George Hensley was preaching on Mark 16 ("They shall take up serpents") when parishioners dumped a box of rattlers at his feet. He picked them up and kept talking. Hensley's luck ran out in Florida in 1955, when he was bitten by a diamondback. At least 77 other believers have reportedly died from bites.

Downside: Because snake handling is rooted in the Pentecostal faith, church leaders ban jewelry, booze, to- bacco, caffeine and modern medicine. Some churches allow visits to the doctor, but only if you're dying.

Pickup line: Wanna see me handle my snake.

* **THE AETHERIUS SOCIETY** -- Background: According to this Hollywood-based society, Earth is involved in a cosmic war with evil magicians who hope to enslave mankind. Its members channel humanity's concerns to the Great White Brotherhood, which includes Jesus (now living on Venus) and Buddha.

Spiritual guide: While practicing yoga in his London apartment in 1954, founder George King heard a voice proclaim, "Prepare yourself, you are to become the voice of Interplanetary Parliament." The following year King announced that Mastetherius of Venus had named him as the planet's primary terrestrial mental channel. In short order he visited 18 mountains (including Mount Baldy and Castle Peak) to charge them with power. Until his death in 1997, King channeled some 600 messages from the Cosmic Masters, many of which are posted as audio files at www.aetherius.org. He also wrote numerous books, including *You Too Can Heal* and *Contacts With the Gods From Space*.

Downside: Ever seen the movie *Independence Day*?

Pickup line: Nice peaks.

* **UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH** -- Background: The ULC is the best known of the mail order churches that will ordain anyone who asks. Once a person's name is added to its database at www.ulchq.com, he or she can legally perform baptisms, weddings and funerals in most states. The church offers other benefits, such as a \$5 minister-on-call windshield card so you can snag prime parking spots at nursing homes and prisons. Although the ULC cites the Bible to justify its unorthodox position- "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you"- it has no central beliefs. "We believe only in that which is right, and everyone has the right to determine what is right for themselves." The church trinity is freedom, food and sexuality.

Spiritual guide: Kirby Hensley and his wife, Lida, founded the Modesto, California-based church in 1962. The IRS viewed it as a tax dodge, but the Hensleys said they believed that all religious and political forces would someday unite under the ULC banner. (Courts ultimately ruled in the ULC's favor.) To speed the unification process, Kirby Hensley formed the People's Peace Prosperity Party and ran for governor of California and president of the U.S. Ever the progressive, in 1971 he officiated at the wedding of two women.

Downside: None, really, unless you get the IRS involved.

Pickup line: You'll have sex only if I marry you? Okay, stand right here.

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2004 QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

Thanks again to International Living newsletter we can report to you on their 2004 Quality of life Index. Once a year they take a calculated view of the world and rate over 194 countries in an attempt to qualify the overall quality of life. The objective is to provide a comprehensive guideline and comparative ranking of the quality of living in nearly every country on the planet Earth.

For the 20th year out of 23 the USA ranked first. Does that mean the USA is the best place in the world to live. Well, yes and no. It's a big country and you can find paradise area and shit-hole areas. There's usually no argument that the USA affords a comfortable way of life because of its infrastructure but you may have to give up some freedom today to be able to "live" with this comfortableness.

Northern Europe and Switzerland rank high in the index with Zurich ranking the number one best city to live in. And down under, New Zealand and Australia rank high in many categories.

How are the numbers crunched? -- 100 is the highest score, 0 the lowest. Cost of living is 15 percent, Culture and recreation is 10%, Economy is 15%, Environment is 10%, Freedom is 10 percent, Health is 10%, Infrastructure is 10%, Safety and risk is 10 percent and Climate is 10 percent.

THE TOP TEN

	Cost of Living	Leisure & Culture	Economy	Environment	Freedom	Health	Infrastructure	Risk & Safety	Climate	Final Score
United States	77	79	84	79	76	80	100	100	90	85
Denmark	66	95	74	85	100	96	70	100	79	84
Switzerland	41	92	73	84	100	100	100	100	78	83
Australia	54	86	61	76	100	90	94	100	98	82
New Zealand	78	84	60	78	100	91	69	100	85	81
Norway	58	100	76	68	100	92	63	100	71	80
Monaco	77	83	62	63	92	71	78	100	90	79
Austria	60	82	62	94	100	92	59	100	77	78
Canada	60	80	63	72	100	88	72	100	68	77
Malta	73	70	50	82	100	93	30	100	100	76

THE BOTTOM TEN

	Cost of Living	Leisure & Culture	Economy	Environment	Freedom	Health	Infrastructure	Risk & Safety	Climate	Final Score
Eritrea	75	17	41	38	0	15	28	60	74	41
Djibouti	67	1	42	67	42	24	31	50	8	39
Liberia	75	36	37	67	17	9	31	20	29	38
Qatar	66	53	38	59	17	27	22	20	13	37
Yemen	67	21	42	33	25	34	25	60	0	36
Sudan	60	18	43	66	0	32	31	20	7	33
Afghanistan	99	13	24	35	0	0	25	10	62	33
Sierra Leone	70	9	43	31	25	12	28	0	24	30
Somalia	68	0	38	63	8	3	25	10	16	29
Iraq	86	7	34	0	0	0	0	0	38	23

TEN FAST FACTS ON THE WORLD'S TOP 10 COUNTRIES

1. There are 190-million credit card-carrying consumers in the United States. The average number of cards per person is eight, and the average balance per household is \$8,562.
2. Denmark charges the highest income tax rates in the world, ranging from 42% to 68%.
3. The most expensive hotel room in the world is the Imperial Suite at the President Wilson Hotel in Geneva, Switzerland. A one-night stay costs \$33,000.
4. Australia is home to the world's fussiest eater, the koala. It feeds exclusively on eucalyptus leaves, but only six of the 500 species are edible.
5. New Zealand's capital, Wellington, boasts more restaurants per capita than New York City.
6. Norwegians spend more money on make-up products than any other nation in the world.
7. Monaco has been ruled by the Grimaldi family since 1297. A 1918 treaty with France states that, should the Grimaldis die out, Monaco will become an autonomous state of France.
8. Placido Domingo's performance in Othello in 1991, the audience at the Vienna (Austria) Staatsoper clapped for one hour and 20 minutes through 101 encores.
9. At 5.3-million square feet, the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada, is the world's largest shopping mall with more than 800 stores, 110 restaurants, and a theme park.
10. Built in 3,600 BC-before the Egyptian pyramids-the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra temples near Qrendi, Malta, are the oldest free-standing monuments in the world.

SINGAPORE -- Singapore ranked 67th with a score of 61. This put it with 7 other nations in the 60-61 ranking: Botswana, Grenada, Tunisia, Macedonia, Namibia, Dominican Republic and Fiji.

THE FINAL SCORES FOR THE 2004 QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

United States	85	Spain	72	Bermuda	68
Denmark	84	Panama	71	Korea, South	67
Switzerland	83	Liechtenstein	71	Bolivia	67
Australia	82	Slovenia	71	Bulgaria	66
New Zealand	81	Uruguay	71	Chile	66
Norway	80	Mexico	71	Nicaragua	66
Monaco	79	Netherlands	71	Japan	66
Austria	78	Costa Rica	70	Ecuador	65
Canada	77	Czech Republic	70	Romania	65
Malta	76	Lithuania	70	Belize	65
Finland	75	Argentina	70	Barbados	65
France	75	Estonia	70	Brazil	64
Portugal	74	Croatia	69	Paraguay	64
Germany	74	Poland	69	Antigua & Barbuda	64
Luxembourg	74	Italy	69	Mauritius	64
Sweden	74	Andorra	69	Cayman Islands	63
United Kingdom	73	Latvia	69	Dominica	63
Slovakia	73	Iceland	69	Bahamas	63
Belgium	72	Greece	68	Saint Kitts & Nevis	63
Hungary	72	Ireland	68	Honduras	63

THE FINAL SCORES FOR THE 2004 QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

South Africa	63	Malaysia	56	Kyrgyzstan	50
Israel	62	Cuba	56	Tanzania	50
Jamaica	62	French Guiana	56	UAE	50
Moldova	62	China	56	Tajikistan	50
Cyprus (Greek)	62	Bosnia-Herzegovin	55	Egypt	50
Taiwan	62	Bhutan	55	Indonesia	50
Botswana	61	Malawi	55	Mayotte	50
Grenada	61	Turkey	55	Cape Verde	50
Singapore	61	Trinidad & Tobago	55	Comoros	50
Tunisia	61	Suriname	55	Oman	50
Macedonia	61	Palau	55	Mali	49
Namibia	60	Georgia	54	Marshall Islands	49
Dominican Republic	60	Senegal	54	Mozambique	49
Fiji	60	Tonga	54	Zimbabwe	49
Thailand	59	Madagascar	54	Iran	49
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THE FINAL SCORES FOR THE 2004 QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

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SOME MORE FACTS ON QUALITY OF LIFE.

- Happiest people in the world -- A survey by Britain's New Scientist revealed that the Nigerians to be the happiest people in the world. Mexicans came in second, Venezuelans third. The least happiest people on earth? The Romanians.
- Where have all the men gone? With 54% of its population being female, Latvia has the highest ratio of women to men. It also has the world's lowest birth rate (after the Vatican City where there's not much mating going on)
- World-class teetotallers. Ireland has the highest consumption of tea in the world. Average consumption is 4 cups per day.



GOD SPEAKS TO G.W. BUSH

Well, George,

I heard you have bandied my name about quite a bit since you've become Commander and Chief. Don't make me come down there and straighten you out. Let this email be your warning. Here I will set the record straight:

1. I am the Lord thy God and you, G.W. Bush are the Son of George, not the Son of God. I will have you spending eternity parking cars in Hell's VIP lot as soon as I get my hands on you.

2. I did not order you G.W. to invade any countries. It is still wrong to kill other human beings unless they have a really big knife at your throat and all pleas for mercy and a warning shot have gone unheeded. Killing humans is My job, and boy, do I love it. You've all gotten Me so pissed off, I may just ax another 10,000 of you tonight!

3. I do not want school kids praying to Me in a classroom. Save it for the church and before bedtime - that's enough for the little tikes. You keep forcing them to pray to Me, they are going to hate My ass. Stop it!

4. An embryo is an embryo, a fetus is a fetus, and a baby is a baby. That's the way I set it up. When it is a baby, then it becomes a human being. You humans are difficult enough, I don't need more of you around any sooner than necessary. And while we're on the subject, I really don't care about your sex lives, as long as they're consenting and adult. Just keep it to yourselves, okay?

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5. One more thing on the subject of creation: Let Me state once and for all that I did not invent and do not endorse "creationism." It's a completely bogus concept, right up there with the New Hampshire primary and non-alcoholic beer. I'm an evolution guy, despite what the Neanderthals claim in My name. Who do you think created science? Only a Higher Power could come up with something so complex and miraculous.

6. I do not approve of plaques and monuments with the Ten Commandments and other religious material being displayed in public buildings. My little-known Eleventh Commandment? Keep your religious convictions to your own damn selves.

7. As far as those other religions go, two points of clarification. One, there are never going to be seventy-two virgins waiting for you up here. We haven't had a virgin up here since Jesus' mother, and you're not getting anywhere near her. So save yourself the dynamite and blown-to-bits body parts because you aren't ever getting a room in My joint. And, two, there is no "Promised Land." That big truck-load of sand I dumped in that horrid little strip between the Mediterranean and the River Jordan? NOBODY was supposed to live on it, let alone fight over it to the point where it may result in the end of the world. I did not give that land to the Israelites, I did not give that land to Mohammed, and if everyone keeps using Me as the landlord I'm going to settle the dispute once and for all, so knock it off.

8. And, finally, no more of this "God Bless America" crap. What makes you think you get to be blessed and no one else does? I don't play favorites. You don't hear anyone in Djibouti saying, "God Bless Djibouti." I have never heard anyone utter the words, "God Bless Botswana." They know better. Let's get this straight-God don't bless America, God don't bless anyone, God has got a tee time on the back nine and he doesn't have time to be interrupted with this patriotic mumbo jumbo. Go bless yourselves and quit using MY name as a justification for feeling superior to everyone else. You aren't. You are actually among the dumbest people on the planet. Don't think so? Name the president of Mexico. See? Ask anyone else in the world the name of the leader of the country next to theirs and they can tell you who it is. God bless America? More like God bleeps America.

Look, I'm asking for a little cooperation here. I realize I should have put an end to this madness a few days after 9/11 when you George W. said on the altar of the National Cathedral that it was your mission now to "rid the world of evil." People started to believe that you were going to do it. Well, you can't rid the world of "evil" because evil is necessary to define what is good. If there were no evil, there would be no Me. Evil is a necessary element for you humans, a way for Me to test you, challenge you, to give you the chance to decide with your own free will whether you will chose evil or good.

You want to get rid of some evil? Why not start with eliminating a bit of the evil you've created. Letting people live on the street without a home is evil. Allowing millions of your children to go hungry, that is evil. Watching endless hours of reality television when you could be having really raunchy sex with someone you love, that is evil.

You wanna fight an evildoer? Go smack yourself around the room for an hour. Then go out and announce you will not be running for President again in 2004. Leave that big white house in D.C. That is your mission. Fail Me, and you'll be toast.

That is all. God has spoken.

Editor's note: Taken from Michael Moore's book. Dude, Where's My Country ? - a book that gets EW's highest rating. Probably the best book on America and it's politics, corporate state and George W. Bush that we've ever read. All Americans should read it. It will open your eyes to the bad shape America is in today.

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EXPAT WORLD'S WORLD OF TRAVEL

SWITZERLAND -- Chilling Out in an Igloo Village: The village of Scuol in the southeast of Switzerland has a "inn" with nine bedrooms, a large dining area and a sauna. Spending the night in an igloo is a chilling if not necessarily cheap alternative to the usual accommodation found in the Swiss Alps. It has become one of the coolest trends in the Alps.

Scuol's igloo village has to be Switzerland's largest accommodation made entirely of snow and ice. On a typical winter night, the outside temperature dropped to minus 10-18 degrees. It did not seem much warmer inside despite assurances by the igloo innkeeper, Adrian Günter, who tries to keep us guests in high spirits by refilling their cups with mulled wine and preparing a steaming fondue for dinner.

For the cold pleasure, be prepared to lay out SFr140 (\$105) for the night per person which includes half board and a down-filled sleeping bag rated for North Pole expeditions.

Günter started building igloos out of necessity years ago when he ventured out on overnight mountain treks and found them the best way to bivouac among the winter elements. When friends told him they would like to do the same, the idea for the village was born.

Günter makes his igloos from scratch each December - as soon as there is enough snow on the ground - and has been doing so for the past seven years. He read books took advice from friends and learned by doing. Günter says: "My first igloo was two metres high, and everyone told me it would collapse. It didn't, so I tried building one that was seven metres high but never finished it so I had to be content with a three metre version." His latest effort is monumental. A narrow arched passageway connects the village kitchen with eight sleeping chambers. There are dormitory rooms and lovers suites with heart-shaped floors - made of snow, of course.

In case the suites fail to warm the lovers' hearts, Günter has taken precautions by placing the two-person sleeping bags on top of a multiple layer of carpets, foam mattresses and sheepskins.

The passage from the bedrooms eventually leads to a dining dome, which is Günter's pride and joy. This part is seven metres high and required more than 1,000 blocks of snow to build. It has seating for 40 people. "It took us 28 days to construct the village," says Günter. "There were three of us working on it. One person to cut the blocks, one to carry them, and the third to put them in place."

However impressive the dining dome is, many guests do not waste much time there but spent most of the evening in the next structure – the village sauna. At the start of each winter, Günter hauls a trailer of the kind usually found on Swiss construction sites to the igloo village. He camouflages it with snow, adds wooden benches, a stove and changing room. After a steaming a hour or two, you feel you are among the chosen few who could say they worked up a sweat in an ice cube.

"It the perfect balance to sleeping in an igloo," remarks Günter. "You can experience both extremes in temperature." Since there are no showers, you are left with no choice but to go for a skinny dip to cool down in the snow outside.

"When people sign our guest book, they always say the sauna was the best part," Günter says with a playful smile.

WACKY FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD

AUSTRALIA -- Australia Day Cockroach Races: Australia, Jan 26, 2004, Story Bridge Hotel, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane log on to www.storybridgehotel.com.au/cockroachraces

Official race rules state that a bucketful of sponsored roaches are released in the middle of a circular track, with the first to the edge declared the winner. However, flagrant flying and the use of performance enhancing substances such as chocolate or soda pop are grounds for a good stomping. The degree of difficulty is raised in steeplechase events where a garden hose hurdle puts the cockroaches to the test.

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JAPAN -- Inazawa's Naked Festival, Japan: Every February but exact dates vary, Inazawa City, near Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. Call the Japan National Tourist Organization's Bangkok office at 662-233 5108, or log on to www.jnto.go.jp

The 1,200-year-old annual festival starts with a man, crowned the festival's "spirit-man", going through days of ritual purification including a full body shave. Then, in the middle of winter, he runs naked through the streets in front of 300,000 onlookers for several hours. Meanwhile, about 9,000 men dressed in loincloths try to touch him in the belief that he will absorb all their bad luck. These frivolities continue until 5pm, when the "spirit-man" staggers into Konomiya Shrine where for an hour or so, he gets pushed, pummelled and pulverized by a sake-fortified mob. Then, he puts some clothes on, thanks the shrine's deity, and gets booted out of town to rid the city of misfortune.

THAILAND -- Songkran Festival, Thailand: April 13-15, Chiang Mai. Call the Tourism Authority of Thailand or log on to www.thailandgrandfestival.com

Traditional Thai New Year involving thousands of water pistols, water balloons and lots of colored powder.

Everyone ends up hilariously soaked and caked in soggy powder in this wet and wild funfest where Bazooka-sized squirtguns, bowls of talcum sludge and a wicked sense of humour are common.

ENGLAND, U.K. -- Cooper's Hill Annual Cheese Rolling, England: Last Monday in May, Cooper's Hill, near Brockworth in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds. Call Visit Britain or log on to www.visitbritain.com.sg

The folk of Cooper's Hill have been gathering on its peak once a year for several centuries to set free a 3kg clump of cheese. Chasing merrily after it for 180m, most of it is spent stumbling, tumbling and bouncing down the 45-degree slope. Bruises, sprains and the odd break are all part of the mayhem although competitors swear that, with 5,000 spectators cheering them on, they don't feel any discomfort for the first minute or two. The first down the hill gets to keep the cheese, the runner-up wins 5 U.K. pounds while the second runner-up gets £3.

FINLAND -- Wife Carrying World Championships, Finland: First week of July, Sonkajarvi, Iisalmi District, Finland Call the Scandinavian Tourism Promotion Centre or log on to www.finland-tourism.com

The challenge: to carry your wife, or somebody else's, around a 250m obstacle course harbouring sand traps, bitumen patches, high hurdles and a pool of chilly water. The quickest couple wins the wife's weight in beer, a cellphone, US\$170, a brand new T-shirt and a loaf of rye bread. Since the event started about 12 years ago, wife-lifters from around the world have joined the challenge, from a gargantuan South Korean sumo wrestler and his gnome-sized "wife", to a champion Estonian pair that pioneered the crowd-pleasing "Wife Backpack with Butt Up" technique.

Pallo of Siena, Italy -- Bare Back Horse Race -- July 2 and Aug 16, Piazza del Campo, Siena, Tuscany Call the Italian Embassy or log on to [www.italyemb.org.sg/default\(eng\).htm](http://www.italyemb.org.sg/default(eng).htm)

This 1,000-year-old bareback horserace around Siena's central piazza sees riotous cheering, simmering feuds, scurrilous cheating, jockeys, courage 'skill and speed, all squeezed into just 90 seconds. The equestrian hurly-burly comes to life twice a year, when representatives from each of the city's 17 districts vie for a sacred banner, or palio, destined to hang in the victor's neighborhood museum.

GEORGIA, USA -- Summer Redneck Games, USA: First Saturday in July, Buckeye Park, East Dublin, Georgia, USA For details, log on to www.georgia.org/tourism

Expect events like Spitball Bug Zapping, Hubcap Hurling, Watermelon Seed Spitting, The Armpit

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Serenade and The Mud Pit Belly Flop. Where the Olympic Games has a torch-lighting ceremony, the equivalent here is a ceremonial lighting of a barbecue grill. And in lieu of winners' medals, there are beautiful crushed-and-mounted beer cans.

IRELAND -- Muff Festival: First Friday in August, Muff, near Derry City, County Donegal. Call the Embassy of Ireland or log on to www.ireland.org.sg

Events at this four-day public party include horseshoe throwing contests, treasure hunts and pig racing, a fancy dress parade, a talent show for the talent-challenged and a lorry pulling competition. And there are lots of jigs and jigging around. Wander into a pub looking a bit weird, and an impromptu court of prankish larrikins could sentence you to hand over a fiver for charity, Don't bother playing it cool either, you could also be fined for appearing too normal.

La Tomatina, Spain -- Tomato Fight: The third Wednesday of August, Bunol, 40km west of Valencia, Spain Call the National Tourist Office of Spain or log on to www.spain.info

Some 20,000 people cram the town square of Bunol before a firecracker explodes at noon and several large trucks dump 140 tonnes of juicy tomatoes on the revellers. For the next hour, the world's biggest food fight erupts in a bright red mushy melee of side-splitting proportions. This annual fruity free-for-all started in 1944 when a gaggle of teenagers arrived late to carry effigies in the Bunol fiesta. On hearing their places had been taken, a scuffle broke out that quickly led to the raiding of nearby tomato stalls and a muy grande food fight.

WALES -- World Bog Snorkelling Championships: August Bank Holiday Monday (usually around Aug 25), Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys, central Wales. Call Visit Britain or log on to www.visitbritain.com.sg

Contestants snorkel through a smelly, gummy, muddy ditch and complete two lengths of a 55m-long, 1meter-deep trench cut through a swampy paddock, in the quickest time possible, without using regular swimming strokes. While wetsuits, masks and fins are the norm, it's not entirely unheard of for competitors to attack the gooley mess dressed in body paint. pink tutus or even business suits.

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LOOKING FOR "ALTERNATIVE" ID?

Here are some sites to find what you need:

- * I HATE FAKE ID, go to: www.ihatefakeid.com -- a good site with links to good and bad providers.
- * FAKE PHOTO ID: www.fakephotoid.com
- * PHIDENTITY: www.fakeiduk.co.uk
- * PHONEYID: phonyid.net
- * MYOIDS: www.myoids.com

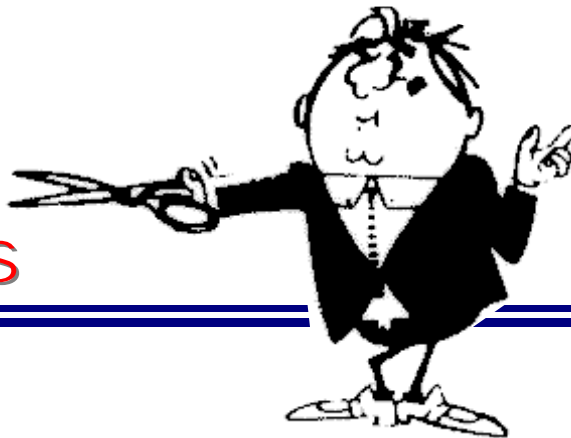
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INTERNATIONAL SNIPS AND CLIPS



MAURITANIA GIRLS FORCED TO BE FAT

NOUAKCHOT~ (Mauritania) — To be fat is to be revered.

At least in Mauritania, where many of its adult women were sent to “fat farms” when they were children, not to lose weight, but to gain it.

Indeed, the white Moor Arabs in this African country were once so obsessed with obesity that over a third of its girls were force fed to a “life-threatening” degree, the BBC reported.

“I make them eat and eat and eat. And then drink lots and lots of water,” said Ms Fatematou, an enormous woman who runs such a farm.

She said the girls grow to between 60 and 100kg, “with lots of layers of fat”.

Fat was seen as a sign of wealth — if a girl was thin she was considered poor, and would not be respected.

But the practice is dying out. An official study has found that now, only 11 per cent of young girls are force fed.

But Ms Fatematou said that she was soon expecting some seven-year old girls for the treatment. If they refuse, she said: “We grab them and we force them to eat. Of course they cry.”

But she added: “Once they are fat and beautiful they can serve their men well. Once they are fat, they can be married.”

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‘Basically, the (US) economy is in the hands of Karl Rove, President Bush’s political adviser.’

- George Sores

the billionaire currency speculator, warning that the US and global economy may be in trouble after the November American presidential election.

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‘Unless you are a plumber, or perhaps a newspaper reporter, or one of these jobs which is geographically situated, you can be anywhere in the world and do just about any job’

- Craig Barret

chief executive of Intel, on why some jobs are being sent overseas.

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IT WAS ALL A BLUR

The world land speed record by a blind driver, set this year in a Jaguar XJR 4.2: 144.75 mph

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A DIME OF DNA

MERI DEN. CONNECTICUT—A scientist at the state forensics lab has created a database of DNA samples from marijuana plants. By applying the same DNA fingerprinting used on criminal suspects, prosecutors hope to recreate the supply line, including distant growers who share cuttings from potent plants. “It links everybody together—the user, the distributor the grower,” said the scientist. “That’s the real intent of it, to show that it’s not just one guy with a little bag of marijuana but a group of people.”



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(Continued on page 17)

COSMIC COOKER

Forget about global warming killing off 15 to 37 per cent of existing species by 2050. Astronomers have given us cause to worry about something else.

Evidently, about 440 million years ago, a supernova may have exploded just 10,000 light-years from Earth. The resulting gamma rays may have zapped the Earth, destroying the chemistry of its atmosphere, and allowing the sun's ultraviolet rays to cook to a crisp two-thirds of the planet's species, according to astronomers who presented their findings at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society last week.

If something similar were happen again, sun-block would be of no help.

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... you and some buddies are making a pilgrimage to Los Angeles for the Southern California Linux Expo. Or the L.A. Jewish Family Health Fair. Whatever – it's surely not to go to the Adult-Con 5 pornfest. That's your story, and you're sticking to it.

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BUY AND SELL YOUR POLITICIANS

Buy and sell your politicians Americans can log on to www.PresidentialMarket.org and play Wall Street using politicians as shares of stock to be bought, sold and even sold short.

Although the website's purpose is to educate as there are links to news items about the Presidential primaries, most visitors will no doubt be attracted by its competitive aspect: The person who turns a faux US\$2,500 (\$4,300) into the most funny money by the time November's election rolls around, wins a trip for two to the inauguration.

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FAKE ICE WINE FROM CHINA

Counterfeit ice wines sold in parts of Asia are threatening legitimate Canadian exports of the sweet dessert wine.

Ice wine is made from grapes frozen on the vine and picked at temperatures below minus 8 deg Celsius.

Canada, Austria and Germany are the largest

producers of the dessert wine, which typically sells for between C\$50 and C\$150 (\$63 and \$190) for a 375 ml bottle. The bogus bottles from China, priced under C\$20, had labels copied from genuine products and were made with grape juice and sugar or grapes frozen after being picked.

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DEFICITS ARE OK

FORMER US treasury secretary Paul O'Neill has spilled all in a book by journalist Ron Suskind on Mr O'Neill's troubled tenure in the Bush administration.

Mr O'Neill reports on one meeting after the 2002 mid-term elections, when officials were considering another round of tax cuts. Warning that the US was "moving towards a fiscal crisis", Mr O'Neill argued against the cuts. Vice-President Dick Cheney cut him off.

"Reagan proved deficits don't matter," Mr Cheney said. "We won the midterms. This is our due," he declared, referring to the tax cut.

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STUDENT BODIES

WINDSOR, ONTARIO—The owner of a chain



of strip clubs has offered to reimburse college students \$1,500 to \$2,000 per year for tuition if they agree to perform three or four seven-hour shifts each week. The students, who will earn \$10 an hour plus tips, must maintain a B average. Twenty college girls majoring in such fields as massage, nursing and engineering have hit the poles.

"A girl who wants to better herself makes for a higher-level entertainer," the owner said. "They're happier young ladies."

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"WE'RE NUMBER, UH..."

4 schools, contrary to ubiquitous campus lore; have been named Top Party School by PLAYBOY. The winners: University of Wisconsin

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(1968), UCLA (1976), Cal State—Chico (1987) and Arizona State (2002).

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STATISTICAL CLOWNING

Congratulations the recession is over! In fact, it ended two years ago, according to the Bureau of Statistical Silliness.

Actually, it's called the National Bureau of Economic Research and this official committee of economists is not kidding when it asserts that the recession ended in November 2001.

What? You say you're out of work and can't get an interview, much less a job? You say your 401(k) is now only a (k) and that personal bankruptcies are rampant? You say that two million jobs have been lost since November 2001, that corporations are dumping 200,000 workers a month, and that long-term unemployment is the highest in decades?

Now, now—it's not the NBER's fault. In dating business cycles, they're legally restricted to an academic definition of "recession that bears no relationship to what you might call reality." Indeed, an economist at the Bank of America said that the declaration of the recession's end is useful because it "should help confidence on the part of businesses, investors, and consumers."

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Starbucks went wild when it spotted this political art: it sued artist Kieron Dwyer, who sold comics, shirts and stickers that displayed it. A judge limited the enterprise, allowing Dwyer to post the image online.

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HARD HEADS BELOW

BRUSSELS. BELGIUM—The insurers of the Moscow State Circus say they will no longer

cover tightrope walkers, acrobats or jugglers unless they wear hard hats. The policy is designed to comply with a European Union law stating that people who work at heights above that of a stepladder must wear protective gear. The circus's general manager says the ruling is a symbol of "bureaucracy gone mad, with a lot of help from the current compensation culture." The performers offered to wear helmets during rehearsals but noted they wouldn't do them much good in a 45-foot fall.



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LEAST PROBABLE WHITE CHRISTMASES

(according to the National Climate Data Center, based on average annual snowfall in the 48 contiguous U.S. states)

- 44. Georgia, 1%
- 45. Mississippi, 0.75%
- 46. Texas, 0.70%
- 47. Louisiana, 0.67%
- 48. Florida, 0%

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US KNEW OF PLANS TO RIG PAPUA VOTE

JAKARTA — Newly declassified American documents have revealed that the US knew that Indonesia would rig Papua's 1969 Act of Free Choice, the UN vote which legitimised its incorporation into Indonesia.

The US papers also show that although Washington knew that up to 90 per cent of Papuans wanted independence, it lobbied to have the fraudulent vote ratified by the UN, Brisbane's Courier Mail reported yesterday.

The report said that the vote, where only a handful of tribal leaders were allowed to choose between independence or incorporation with Indonesia, was brokered in a 1962 agreement between the Dutch, the UN and Indonesia.

The declassified cables and State Department correspondence also reveal that the US government knew as early as 1968 that Indonesia would

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hand pick about 1,000 pro-Indonesian tribal leaders allowed to vote as representatives of the Papuan population.

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THE FCC GIVES AWAY THE FARM

You've got to love the rhetoric employed about the FCC's recent rewriting of our country's media-ownership rules. News reports gingerly said the rules had been "relaxed" or "eased"—as though it was a minor adjustment.

It wasn't. The FCC trashed the rules that protect our airwaves from monopoly control. It was a move plotted by three Republican nuts on the FCC and by top media executives—who gave generously to George's election and are now collecting their due at the expense of democracy.

The FCC's new rules mean that if you live in a sizable city, Mickey Mouse at ABC or Rupert Murdoch at Fox can dictate your daily mass-market news feed. In any city a single conglomerate can now own two or three TV stations, eight radio stations, the cable-TV system, and the only daily newspaper. In fact, one of these giants can buy up enough local TV stations to control broadcasting to 90% of U.S. households. The Center for Public Integrity reports that since the proposed rewrite of the rules first surfaced eight months ago, the CEOs and lobbyists for Fox, CBS, ABC, and other broadcasters held 71 private, off-the-record meetings with FCC commissioners and top staff. To learn how you can help stop this dirty deal, call the Media Access Project: 202-2~32-4300.

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ANOTHER CASE FOR RED WINE

NEW YORK — California scientists have found a second element in red wine that makes it good for the heart.

Called saponins, these glucose-based plant compounds are linked to an ability to lower cholesterol and are being found in an increasing number of foods such as olive oil and soybeans, said an American Chemical Society release this month.

Previously, the so-called French Paradox — the link between red wine and lower heart disease risk — had been attributed to resveratrol, an

antioxidant compound found in grapes.

Red wine has three to 10 times as much saponin as white wine, with, among the reds, red zinfandel having the most, followed by shiraz, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon.

Although merlot was not analysed, it is believed to have similar levels.

Said lead researcher Dr Andrew Waterhouse, a professor of enology (wine chemistry) at the University of California, Davis: "Saponins are a hot new food ingredient. People are just starting to pay attention to it. No one ever thought to look for it in wine."

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CAMP BAREASS

LAND OF LAKES, FLORIDA—For the past decade, children age 11 and older have attended a weeklong, clothing-free summer camp run by the American Association for Nude Recreation. When U.S. Representative Mark Foley read about the camp in The New York Times, the Florida Republican called for an investigation. "What's wrong with your kids going to Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls or sports camps?" he asked parents who send their children to the camp. An AANR spokesman replied, "Kids are natural nudists. It's so cute to see naked babies and toddlers. But as we mature, somehow that is no longer seen as a wholesome, healthy thing."

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MIME PAYS

About 250 people dress as Ronald McDonald for appearances worldwide. A typical Ronald makes \$40,000; an ambitious Ronald—doing 400 shows a year—can make \$100,000. But the real dough comes from TV: A Ronald who appears in national spots can make



\$300,000

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INVASION OF PRIVACY ON THE ROAD

YOUR DRIVERS LICENSE CONTAINS PLENTY OF PRIVATE AND PERSONAL INFO ABOUT YOU

A Scenario: A patron walks into a bar and orders a drink. The bartender asks to see some ID. Without asking permission, the barkeep swipes the driver's license through a card reader and the device flashes a green light approving the order. The bartender is just verifying the card isn't a fake, right? Yes, and perhaps more.

Visitors to an art exhibit at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts got more than their martinis when they ordered drinks at a bar inside the gallery's entrance. Instead of pretzels and peanuts, they were handed a receipt containing the personal data found on their license, plus all the information that could be gleaned from commercial data-mining services and voter registration databases like Aristotle. Some patrons also got receipts listing their phone number, income range, marital status, housing value and profession. For added effect, the receipt included a little map showing the location of their residence.

The magnetic strips and bar codes on the back of most state's driver's licenses in the USA contain more information than people think. The way the swipers use the information might surprise them as well: Some bars and restaurants scan driver's licenses to catch underage drinkers and fake IDs, but they're also using the information for marketing purposes.

Last year artists and producers Beatriz da Costa, Jamie Schulte and Brooke Singer built the Swipe exhibit in Pittsburgh to show what's on the cards we all carry. To reinforce the point, they also launched a website a few weeks ago with a free online suite of tools that lets visitors decipher the bar codes on their IDs, calculate the worth of their data and request copies of their personal files from commercial data-mining companies like Acxiom and ChoicePoint.

We wanted to give people back their data, to empower them to prevent having their information swiped," Singer said. While many patrons thought the museum project was fun, Singer said they were "pretty stupefied." "We put what we thought was the least sensitive data on a monitor over the bar, showing maps and a person's name and age. But they were upset about that; especially about their age," Singer said.

"We didn't do it to offend anyone," Schulte said, "but sometimes that's the best way to get through people's defenses. We wanted them to be aware that the data was easy to get."

More than 40 states use magnetic strips and bar codes on licenses. Depending on the type of code used, some cards can store up to 2,000 bytes. In some states, a driver's Social Security number also serves as the license number, so that sensitive nugget is also on the card. And Kentucky has embedded a digital image of the driver's photo in the bar code, according to the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, or AAMVA, which sets voluntary standards for states to use when creating their licenses.

Bar codes on licenses generally make life easier for law enforcement. Police scan the cards during traffic stops to avoid scribbling the information on a citation report. They also can more easily retrieve information from the computer in the squad car.

Bars and restaurants scan the codes to catch underage drinkers using fake IDs. Convenience stores use them to verify the age of cigarette buyers. Airports, hospitals and government buildings are beginning to scan driver's licenses for security. And businesses can use driver's license records for legitimate business purposes such as verifying identities.

"But is it legitimate to then store the information and use it for marketing purposes, or however they see fit without regulation?" said Singer. Using the information, a bar can track how often patrons come in, the hours they arrive and even identify those who arrive in groups (if the cards of friends are swiped in sequence). The bar can query, for example, how old the audience for a particular hired band was or how many were male or female.

Bars also can combine the info with sales data if a patron purchases drinks and food with a credit

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card. The combination of age, weight, gender and liquor sales could help a bar determine what kinds of drinks to market to which crowd.

Some people say there's no privacy violation in scanning licenses because the information on the bar code is the same information on the front of the card. A bar owner could easily photocopy the card and get the same data. But privacy advocates say the electronic file makes data collection, entry and combination far easier. "It's an area of concern," said Rich Carter, director of technology and standards for the AAMVA. "The policy is that you shouldn't be collecting the info for one purpose and using it for another. If you're telling them you're using it to verify their age, you shouldn't be using it to market them."

THE SITE LOCATION FOR FINDING OUT WHAT'S ON YOUR BARCODE ON YOUR DRIVING LICENSE IS : <http://turbulence.org/Works/swipe/barcode.html> -- You may be surprised and plenty pissed off!

•••••

A MARIJUANA AND CHOCOLATE LINK?

WOMEN, CHOCOLATE AND THE BRAIN: MORE THAN A FOOD, LESS THAN A DRUG

It has been said of chocolate it's "MORE THAN A FOOD, LESS THAN A DRUG." Allegedly some women prefer chocolate to sex and chocolate has been found to contain a substance that acts on the same receptors as marijuana in the brain!

FORTY PERCENT of women in the United States say they have a craving for chocolate before and during menses according to Understanding the Theories Behind Chocolate Cravings. Yet researchers have yet to agree if this is a biological or psychological phenomenon. Is some chemical in the chocolate causing the attraction or is it because chocolate is just plain yummy?

Dr. Debra Zellner, a professor at Montclair State University in New Jersey believes the woman chocolate thing is a cultural phenomenon," that women in the U.S. have the craving because they've turned chocolate into a nutritional taboo". For example, she found that women in Egypt are not longing for chocolate. SU Prof's Study Says Women's Love of Chocolate is Cultural. Chocolate and A Brain Chemical That Mimics Marijuana

Chocolate Contains Substance Anandamide that Mimics the Effects of Marijuana : Fits in THC Cannabinoid Receptors of the Brain -- Anandamide a substance that acts in our brain like the active ingredient in marijuana is a chemical that is produced in our brains in addition to being found in chocolate. Anandamide was in the news recently as the purported source of the "runners high".

Chocolate Contains Chemical That Activates Marijuana Brain Receptor and Others That Prevent Marijuana Mimic's Destruction -- Anandamide (arachidonyl ethanolamide) is a chemical produced in our brain that scientists think is natural mimic of marijuana. Anandamide activates receptors in the brain that are activated by tetrahydrocannabinol, the active ingredient in marijuana. Our body produces a chemical or chemicals that have endogenous cannabis (marijuana) like properties. The brain has marijuana receptors called the receptors which is odd since marijuana is not a natural body chemical.

It turns out that chocolate has anandamide as well as two other chemicals,

- * N-oleoylethanolamine and
- * N-linoleoylethanolamine

Daniele Piomelli, a scientist at the University of California, Irvine studies "the function of lipid-derived messengers, with particular emphasis on the endogenous cannabinoids anandamide and 2-arachidonylglycerol. In 1996, Emmanuelle di Tomaso (she's now at Harvard University) and Piomelli found three substances in chocolate that "could act as cannabinoid mimics either directly (by activating cannabinoid receptors) or indirectly (by increasing anandamide levels)." Anandamide is also synthe-

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sized in areas of the brain that are important in memory and higher thought processes and in areas that control movement. That implies that anandamide's function is not just to produce bliss.

There are more psychoactive chemicals in chocolate. There are a variety of chemicals in chocolate that have been held up as candidates to explain it's soothing almost caressing properties. In fact, according to published reports, chocolate contains more than 300 known chemicals. There are psychoactive chemicals in chocolate but the naysayers ask how could they possibly have an effect in the small quantities that are present.

Among the psychoactive chemicals in chocolate are:

- caffeine
- theobromine --related to caffeine
- tyramine

Tyramine is a nervous system stimulant that is made naturally from the amino acid tyrosine. It's found in a variety of food products such as cheese and wine. People on the anti depressants called monoamine oxidase inhibitors are cautioned to avoid tyramine containing foods because tyramine accumulates in these people with nasty side effects like high blood pressure and migraine headaches.

- sugar
- phenylethylamine

So does chocolate and marijuana have something in common? EW doesn't know. All we know is that a brick of marijuana the size of a large Cadbury chocolate bar will get you hung in Singapore while the same amount of chocolate will only get you fat.

•••••

TOO MUCH TIME

Someone out there either has too much spare time or is deadly at Scrabble.

GEORGE BUSH: When you rearrange the letters: HE BUGS GORE

DORMITORY: When you rearrange the letters: DIRTY ROOM

PRESBYTERIAN: When you rearrange the letters: BEST IN PRAYER

DESPERATION: When you rearrange the letters: A ROPE ENDS IT

THE MORSE CODE: When you rearrange the letters: HERE COME DOTS

SLOT MACHINES: When you rearrange the letters: CASH LOST IN ME

ANIMOSITY: When you rearrange the letters: IS NO AMITY

MOTHER-IN-LAW: When you rearrange the letters: WOMAN HITLER

SNOOZE ALARMS: When you rearrange the letters: ALAS! NO MORE Z'S

A DECIMAL POINT: When you rearrange the letters: I'M A DOT IN PLACE

THE EARTHQUAKES: When you rearrange the letters: THAT QUEER SHAKE

ELEVEN PLUS TWO: When you rearrange the letters: TWELVE PLUS ONE

And for the grand finale: PRESIDENT CLINTON OF THE USA: When you rearrange the letters (With no letters left over and using each letter only once): TO COPULATE HE FINDS INTERNS

Yep! Someone has waaaaaaaaaay too much time on their hands!

•••••

WORD ON THE STREET

The Pittsburgh Pirates baseball club ace was chilling out in Los Angeles on Jun12, 1970. Thinking it was an off day, he took LSD with his girlfriend. An hour later she looked at the sports section and shouted, "it says here you're pitching today!" Ellis jumped on a flight to San Diego to play the Padres and walked onto the mound, tripping wildly. Surprise: He pitched brilliantly. He saw a "blazing, comet-like tail" on fastballs; he dived out of the way of weak hits. "I can remember only bits and pieces of the game," says Ellis. "The ball was small sometimes, the ball was large sometimes. Sometimes I saw the catcher, sometimes I didn't." Ellis walked eight batters but won 2-0 without giving up a hit. He PITCHED A NO HITTER! His dealer got the save. Every word is true, says Ellis.

CRAPPER RAPPER

POINTS TO PONDER ON THE POTTIE



POOP

A teacher decides that she is going to teach her second grade class a new word today. She tells them that the word is "definitely" and its meaning is "absolute, positive, without a doubt." She asks the class if anyone can think of a sentence with the word in it. She calls on little Susan who is in the back raising her hand, quite sure of herself.

Susan stands up and says, "The sky is definitely blue." The teacher replies to her, "Well, that's a good sentence but sometimes the sky is gray, and sometimes its cloudy, and sometimes its red and pink so the sky is not definitely blue. Anyone else?"

Tom's hand flies up and she calls on him. Tom answers, "The water is definitely clear."

"Well, Tom that's a good sentence but sometimes the water is muddy, and sometimes it's green, and sometimes it's full of seaweed so it's not definitely clear. Anyone else?"

Finally, in the far corner, little Robert slowly raises his hand. "Yes, Robert?" asks the teacher.

"Can I ask a question, teacher?" Robert replies. "Yes." "Do farts have lumps?" "No. Why do you ask." "Well, then I've definitely pooped in my pants."

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SELF-ESTEEM

A mild-mannered man was tired of being bossed around by his wife; so he went to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist said he needed to build his self-esteem, and so gave him a book on as-

sertiveness, which he read on the way home.

He had finished the book by the time he reached his house. The man stormed into the house and walked up to his wife. Pointing a finger in her face, he said, "From now on, I want you to know that 'I' am the man of this house, and my word is law! I want you to prepare me a gourmet meal tonight, and when I'm finished eating my meal, I expect a sumptuous dessert afterward.

Then, after dinner, you're going to draw me my bath so I can relax. And, when I'm finished with my bath, guess who's going to dress me and comb my hair?"

"The fucking funeral director," said his wife.

•••

This has got to be one of the best singles ads ever printed. It appeared in the Atlanta Journal.

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(Over 15,000 men found themselves talking to the Atlanta Humane Society about an 8-week old black Labrador.)

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EYEBALL TO ASS

Did you know that in the human body there is a nerve that connects the eyeball to the anus? It's called the Anal Optic Nerve, and it is responsible for giving people a shitty outlook on life. If you don't believe it, "pull a hair from your ass and see if it doesn't bring a tear to your eye. "

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