

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

By Chuck Shepherd

Only in LA

In March, a jury in Los Angeles listened to nine psychiatrists testify, along with other witnesses who openly described their sex lives, before finally deciding that neither party in the shrink-vs.-shrink contest was all that emotionally healthy. Dr. David Martorano had sued the UCLA psychiatry department, blaming a loss of promotion on a failed affair with his supervisor, Dr. Heather Krell, who denied the affair, especially Martorano's claim of oral sex in a parked car. Krell's witnesses "diagnosed" Martorano with narcissistic personality disorder and being "addicted" to having women fall in love with him. The jury concluded that Krell did have the affair, but did not sexually harass Martorano or sabotage his promotion.

Government in Action

Fire officials in Crystal River, Fla., stopped the planned performance in January of Jesse Aviles, "The Human Bomb," who was set to lie face down across two bar stools at the Oar House Restaurant and Lounge and have himself blown across the room by explosives. According to Oar House, the performance was canceled for the lack of permits. City Manager Andrew Houston, asked by the St. Petersburg Times what kind of permits might be necessary for a person to be exploded from a barstool, said, "I have no earthly idea."

FEMA trailer fiascos

In March, while FEMA was busy evicting the last Katrina victims that it had housed in trailers, it also disclosed that it has been stuck with 8,000 mint-condition trailers that have sat vacant for 18 months now in a field near Hope, Ark., because the agency hasn't been able to give them away (to government agencies, as federal law requires). (Also, WWL-TV in New Orleans reported in March that area hospitals continue to be overcrowded while specially equipped medical trailers, which were ordered just after Katrina hit and which took eight months to arrive, continue to sit unused.)

Police blotter

- Marshall Wolbers, 56, was arrested in Lake Bluff, Ill., in February after he had allegedly ripped off almost two dozen spas in the Chicago area over the last year by luxuriating in massage and pedicure services, etc., but skipping out on the bill. Said one specialist on nails, to an Associated Press reporter, "I just want to look at him (a 300-pound man), like 'You jerk, you didn't even tip me. You made me rub your gross feet and listen to you for an hour and a half.'"
- A woman in Bozeman, Mont., complained in March of "strange noises" from "underneath her house," being made by "people from the 'Underworld.'" She told police that her house had been "replaced" "in the middle of the night" and that the original was being stored at an undisclosed location.
- Brook Akins, 34, was arrested in January in a Salt Lake City suburb after calling 911 12 times in five hours to complain of a toothache and demand to speak to someone who could help him.

Things people believe

- Super-charismatic Stacy Finley, 34, pleaded guilty in January in Shreveport, La., to defrauding 22 middle-class victims by somehow convincing them to pay a total of \$989,000 to have medical scans done of their bodies by overhead satellite and to be administered secret therapeutic drugs while they slept, by CIA agents who would sneak into their homes.
- Veterinarian Bert Brooks of Sacramento, Calif. told a KOVR-TV reporter in February that he had a record of curing pets by having them stare at a computer monitor showing psychedelic images ("harmonic translation"). "I didn't learn this in vet school," he told the reporter, but "(t)here's a lot going on in the universe that we don't understand today."

Early-bird special

In March, the Pascha brothel in Cologne, Germany, introduced an early-bird special for seniors age 66 and above, offering services for half-price between noon and 5 p.m.

No joke

- Biologists at Germany's University of Jena announced in January that they were terminating a research project on animal movements after three years because they were tired of waiting for a sloth named Mats to leave his perch.
- In March, the Pascha brothel in Cologne, Germany, introduced an early-bird special for seniors age 66 and above, offering services for half-price between noon and 5 p.m.
- Clarence Horner's hobby, apparently, was collecting tombstones, in that upon his death in 2006 in Lincoln, Neb., authorities found 47 of them in his rented storage locker.

Correction

Last week, I reported that Gary Galleberg, a former vice mayor of Naples, pleaded guilty to battery for spitting on a diner's table at a restaurant. In fact, he pleaded no-contest. I apologize for the error.

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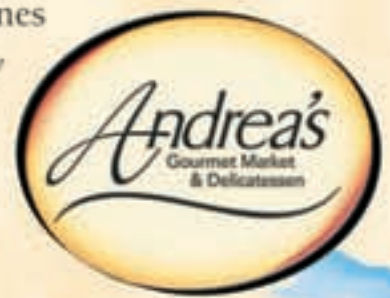
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