

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

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Can't possibly be true

• Sweden's English-language news outlet reported in June that the government's employment service had granted Roger Tullgren, 42, supplemental income benefits based on his illness of addiction to heavy-metal music. Tullgren (with long, black hair, tattoos and skull-and-crossbones jewelry and who said he attended nearly 300 concerts last year) said he had been addicted for 10 years but finally got three psychologists to sign off on calling his condition a disability. His employer now permits Tullgren to play his music at his dishwashing job.

• Ohio inmate Keith Bowles may spend the rest of his life in prison just because a federal judge miscalculated Bowles' deadline for appealing his case. Bowles was convicted of murder in 1999, and his federal petition for a writ of habeas corpus was denied in 2004. However, the federal judge wrote "Feb. 27" as the deadline for appealing (mistakenly, because federal rules gave Bowles only until Feb. 24). Bowles' Feb. 26 appeal was dismissed as too late by the U.S. Court of Appeals and, in June 2007, by the U.S. Supreme Court. ■

Inexplicable

According to police, Derrick House and another man planned to kill four people in a 1985 Chicago drug hit and needed a stranger to knock on the door so that House and his companion could gain entry. They paid teenager Charles Green \$25 to do that, and House completed the mission. Green was convicted and imprisoned for "participat-

ing" in the murder. House got the death penalty, but as a result of legal challenges, was recently released. House's companion was never convicted. Thus, the only one of the three still in prison 22 years later is the one who just knocked on the door. In August, a judge is scheduled to hear Green's latest petition for a new trial. ■

Unclear on the concept

• Jenny Brown, 62, entered her sponge cake in a contest sponsored by an organization in Wimblington, England, in July, was informed by judges that she had won "second place," and was only later told that she was the only entrant (but was also told that she could not have first place).

• According to U.S. government figures, Afghanistan's opium crop produces more than 90 percent of the world's heroin, but in July the country's council of ministers began a crackdown on smoking tobacco in government buildings. ■

Ethnic clichés

• The registrar of Nigeria's university entrance exams reported in May that almost 2,000 of the students had been caught in cheating scams.

• Arab researchers writing in the American

Journal of Clinical Nutrition reported in June, not surprisingly, that Middle Eastern women who dress covering all or nearly all their skin may have significant vitamin D deficiency due to lack of sunlight. ■

News that sounds like a joke

• A star athlete at Brigham Young University was arrested in Provo, Utah, in June after police saw him angrily dueling with a street cleaner using the man's mops. The cleaner had crossed a street slowly, provoking driver Kyle Perry to leap from his car, grab a mop and swing it at the cleaner (who parried the attack with another mop).

• The representative from Boulder, Colo., in the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., in May was 14-year-old Miss "Maitreyi Gopalakrishnan" (that's M-a-i-t-h-r-e-y-i G-o-p-a-l-a-k-r-i-s-h-n-a-n).

• Once-classified reports obtained by the Associated Press in May revealed that three times in late 2005 and early 2006, the U.S. Department of Defense issued espionage alerts regarding newly designed Canadian 25-cent pieces, which the Pentagon warned may contain embedded transmitters capable of eavesdropping, and which perhaps were given purposely to U.S. contractors working in Canada. Some time later, according to the reports, the Pentagon learned that the coin's coating was not a film-and-mesh transmitter but merely a covering to preserve the limited-issue coin's unique design. ■

Crème de la weird

• Robert Theriault, 49, a courthouse security officer in Concord, N.H., was convicted in April of persuading a couple that he was a tester for an insurance company and would pay them \$20 to have sex in front of him so he could evaluate a certain bedsheet and condom.

• Aaron Meinhardt, 37, was arrested in Riverside, Mo., in July after a municipal swimming pool employee saw him expose himself. The arresting officer said Meinhardt asked him, "Am I (not) allowed to satisfy myself? It has been a long time since I have. What am I supposed to do, just keep it in?" ■

Least competent criminals

Crime Time in Wilmington, Del.: (1) Jesse Dale, 42, was arrested and charged with cocaine possession in Wilmington in June during a routine traffic stop after he attempted to throw his stash out the passenger window as the officer approached. (However, the window was up, and the package bounced back into the seat in "plain sight" for the of-

ficer to base an arrest on.) (2) Also in June, according to police, Branden Tingey, 28, was arrested after closing hours in the manager's office at Wilmington's Polidoro Italian Grill, trying to open the safe. It appeared that Tingey was using a computer displaying a Web page on safecracking. ■

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