

## NEWS OF THE WEIRD

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### The Redneck Games

East Dublin, Ga. and Athens, Tex. recently sponsored their own versions of Redneck Games, with events such as mud-pit belly-flopping, seed-spitting and making armpit music, "red-neck horseshoes" played with toilet seats, a Spam-and-jalapeno-eating contest, a mattress chuck, men bobbing for raw animal

parts in tomato paste, and the ever-popular coed butt crack contest. The San Antonio Express-News wrote: "There was something strangely arresting about watching 10 serious-faced guys grind away at pink bricks of Spam while Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild" boomed from the loudspeakers." ■

### Not my fault

Amy Mueller filed a lawsuit recently against Samy's Bar and Grill in Joliet, Ill., after she willingly tried to climb onto the bar to dance in May 2006 but fell and broke her ankle. Samy's should have had a ladder or other climbing aid, said Mueller's lawyer. Jeromy Jackson and his family filed a \$10 million lawsuit in Morgantown, W.Va.,

against McDonald's because there was cheese on his Quarter-Pounder, which triggered a severe allergic reaction that required hospital treatment. Jackson's lawyer said the family's order was painstakingly clear that the burger should be cheese less, but apparently, after being served, Jackson failed to lift the bun to check. ■

### Compelling explanations

• Cheveon Ford, 21, was arrested in Pensacola, in July and charged with making false 911 calls. According to authorities, Ford's only explanation was that he had no more minutes on his phone and knew that 911 calls were free.

• In Rochester, N.Y., in June, Eric Kennedy, 38, was sentenced to 12 years in prison for molesting an underage girl over a three-year period, which he partly attributed to his poor eyesight, in that at times he might have mistaken the girl for her mother, with whom he was living. ■

### Ironies

• Florida Rep. Bob Allen was a co-sponsor of 2007 legislation to increase the penalty for public lewdness and indecent exposure, such as trolling for sex partners in public restrooms (upping the crime from a misdemeanor to a felony). The bill did not pass, which was lucky for Rep. Allen, who was arrested in July in a men's room in Titusville when undercover officers said he entered and exited three times in the space of a few minutes, peered over a restroom stall and of-

ferred oral sex for \$20. • After a 25-year-old woman was accused of murdering her father and sister and wounding her mother in July in Sydney, Australia, authorities revealed that she had been diagnosed with a psychotic illness in 2006. However, she had been discouraged from seeking psychiatric treatment by her parents because they are Scientologists, who by doctrine reject psychiatry and psychotropic-drug treatment. ■

### Great moments in anger management

Raul Ponce Jr., 20, was arrested at his anger management class in San Diego in April and charged with killing his teenage girlfriend by stabbing her 122 times. And Rev. Robert Nich-

ols, who for several years had been teaching anger-management classes for accused criminals in Gary, Ind., was arrested in July and charged with beating his wife. ■

### Grrlzz with attitude

• A 12-year-old girl was sentenced in Perth, Australia, in July to two months detention for stealing a car and leading police on a harrowing high-speed chase. According to court records, she has already been convicted of more than 60 crimes. • A 7-year-old named Alisha told reporters in Reidsville, N.C., in August that she was

just being a good daughter when she challenged the man who tried to rob her mom, a convenience store clerk. "I was pushing on him and telling him to back away, back away, man." Her aggressiveness foiled the robbery, but the man got away. Said Alisha, "He should be locked up by his gills and towed to the police." ■

### The benefits of eye damage

An estimated 50 followers of Hira Ratan Manek live in the Atlanta area, according to an August report by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and regularly follow his teaching to stare directly into the sun, supposedly for energy and clarity of thought. Ophthalmolo-

gists consulted by the newspaper expressed alarm, even though Manek advises to start staring for just a 10-second span, gradually increase up to 45 minutes and to stare only when the sun is near the horizon. ■

### Fine points of the law

• In July, a federal appeals court ruled that no one could challenge President Bush's order permitting warrant less eavesdropping on phone calls into and out of the United States, unless it was a person actually eavesdropped on. However, according to law professors cited by the Los Angeles Times, anyone who could prove that would be barred under other national security laws from revealing that fact in public.

• Pamir Safi will soon be retried in Lincoln, Neb., for raping a woman in 2004, but this time, Judge Jeffre Chevront has prohibited prosecutors from using the terms "rape" or "sexual assault" in front of the jury because they might prejudice Safi, who claims the sex was consensual. The alleged victim said she feels humiliated to refer to the incident as mere "sex." ■

### Recent alarming headlines

• "(British National Health Service) Dentists Turn Away Patients With Bad Teeth" • "Indian Lawyers Tie Man to Tree, Beat Him" (a May Reuters report from Lucknow, India)

• "Principal Admits Throwing Excrement (at a kid)" (an April story in the Toronto Star; said suspended principal Maria Pantalone, "I couldn't take it any more.") ■

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