

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

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New-age medicine

Legendary banjo player Eddie Adcock, age 70 and suffering hand tremors that failed to respond to medication, volunteered for a revolutionary neurosurgery in August in which he finger-picked tunes while his brain was exposed, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center surgeons tried to locate the defective area. In "deep brain stimulation," doctors find a poorly responding site and

use electrodes to arouse it properly. As Adcock, conscious but pain-free, picked out melodies, doctors probed until suddenly Adcock's playing became disjointed, and electrodes were assigned to that spot. By October, according to an ABC News report, Adcock, with a button-activated chest pacemaker wired to his head, was back on stage, as quick-fingered as ever. ■

Fat is good

► Clair Robinson, 23, told an interviewer in September that she believes the only reason she survived the deadly flesh-eating infection recently was because she had too much weight for the bacteria to consume. "Being big saved my life," she told Australia's "Medical Emergency" TV show.

► Though Mayra Rosales, 27, stands

charged with capital murder in Hidalgo County, Texas, she was not ordered to jail pending trial but was allowed home detention because of her obesity. At about 1,000 pounds, Rosales requires special transportation and facilities and was ruled by a judge in August certainly to be no "flight risk." ■

The litigious society

► Reggie Townsend, 29, serving 23 years in a Wisconsin prison for reckless homicide against an 11-year-old girl, won \$295,000 from a jury in September as compensation for a two-month confinement with only a "wet, moldy and foul smelling" mattress to sleep on (about \$4,900 per unpleasant night).

► Muri Chilton (aka Murray Garton), serving a life sentence for the rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl, was awarded \$2,500 by a Canadian Federal Court judge in September as compensation solely for feeling "utterly humiliated" in 2000 when guards

roared with laughter after he mangled his thumb in a prison workshop accident.

► Brian Hopkins, 25, severely burned in 2006 after climbing onto the roof of an empty train at Boston's South Station at 2 a.m., filed a lawsuit in August against Amtrak. Though admitting that he was trespassing at the station when he was zapped by 27,500 volts of overhead wire, Hopkins said Amtrak ought to have known that people trespass and climb on top of trains, and therefore should have parked its train in a less-accessible place. ■

Equal rights for all

► Roy Hollander filed a civil rights lawsuit against Columbia University in New York City in August, claiming that its "women's studies" curriculum teaches a religion-like philosophy that oppresses men by blaming them for nearly all social problems. (When interviewed by the New York Daily News, Hollander declined to give his age, saying such a revelation would crimp his pickup success with young women: Frequently, he said, women "think I'm younger than I am, so I don't want to disillusion them.")

► Complaints were lodged with the Swedish government in June against the state-run retail pharmacy Apoteket, alleging illegal sex discrimination, in that its stores stock sexual aids that benefit women (e.g., vibrators) but none that particularly benefit men. Said one complainer, "(A) woman with a dildo is seen as liberated, strong and independent, whereas a man with a blow-up plastic vagina is viewed as disgusting and perverted." The government's Equal Opportunities Ombudsman rejected the complaints. ■

Compelling explanations

In September, the Indiana Court of Appeals upheld the 18-year sentence of a 73-year-old South Bend man who had insisted that he was only trying to revive his 68-year-old wife after she became fatally incapacitated in June 2007. However, police noted that he

had not called 911, nor checked her vital signs, nor performed CPR, but that instead, his "reviving" consisted of performing an oral sex act on her (which the judges concluded was merely the fulfillment of a desire that his wife had long since denied him). ■

What goes around, comes around

Neighbors in the previously quiet New York City neighborhood of Nolita complain about the raucous, late-night trance music and crowds at the recently opened delicatessen, according to an August New York Post story, but with little success. However, 10 of the apartments next door

happen to look directly down upon the club's architectural signature, a see-through ceiling, and at least one resident has taken to relieving himself out his window, splattering the roof. (Another of the residents, though, said that when the man misfires, it ruins his air-conditioning unit.) ■

Ironies

► In September, alleged flasher Patrick Dodenhoff, 39, fled after a report of indecent exposure, and police chased him from Atascadero, Calif., south to Pismo Beach, and finally caught up with and arrested him at a well-known local nude beach.

► As urban Detroit continues its

decline, with an estimated 5,000 residents fleeing annually, it is not just living people who leave. Dead bodies depart, as well, at a rate of 500 a year, according to an August Detroit News report, as relatives unwilling to travel to the crumbling city's cemeteries have their loved ones disinterred and relocated. ■



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