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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

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Crime sometimes pays

Joshua Hoge, a schizophrenic confined to Washington's Western State Hospital, is claiming at least part of his late mother's estate even though he's the one who killed her in 1999. Washington law prevents profiting from the "unlawful" and "willful" taking of another's life, but Hoge was found "not guilty by reason of insanity," and the legal

issue is still unsettled. Furthermore, according to a January report in The Seattle Times, it appears that the mother's estate consists almost totally of the \$800,000 the estate won in a lawsuit against a county health clinic because it was negligent in delaying Joshua's medications, which probably led to his killing her. ■

Can't possibly be true

• Mr. Coll Bell, a New Zealander who invented a composting toilet supposedly superior to a septic system and who wanted permission from the Auckland Regional Council to install one at a campground, said an ARC bureaucrat had queried him on whether the worms he uses would be traumatized by the volume of work required in the annual two-week period of intensive campground use. Coll told Agence France-Presse in December that vermiculture expert Patricia Naidu had assured him that the worms would be "happy."

• Convenience-store manager Carol Mendenhall told reporters in December that among the police citations she had recently received for a disturbance at her home in Dibble, Okla. (pop. 282), was one for allowing her four goats to have sex in her front yard in public view, which was illegal in Dibble. She admitted that her billy goat, Adam, had been attending to three females who were in heat at the same time. (The city council has since repealed the ordinance, following a campaign Mendenhall conducted.) ■

Inexplicable

• Police in Mount Lebanon, Pa., said in December that no illegal acts were involved, but some parents still want to know why the nondenominational Christian Mount Lebanon Young Life club had staged a teenagers' social event during which boys wore adult diapers, bibs and bonnets and sat in girls' laps while being spoon-fed. Said youth minister O.J. Wandrisco, the skits were not "dirty," but "to break down the walls and let (the kids) have fun." A previous skit involved, according to a parent, kids eating chocolate pudding out of diapers.

• In November, accused armed robber Steven McDermott, 49, was finally captured after leading California Highway Patrol officers on a high-speed chase in a commandeered taxicab, causing two minor collisions before McDermott fled on foot. When McDermott was finally cornered, officers said, he reached toward his waistband, leading one officer to shoot him, though the object McDermott was reaching for turned out not to be the gun used in the robbery but a sex toy, tethered to his belt loop. ■

Chutzpah!

Ingrates

1. "Get in here and do your (word omitted by the Allentown Morning Call) jobs, you dumb (omitted)," said Donald Reidnauer Sr., 56, after summoning police to investigate a BB pellet fired at his house in Richland Township, Pa., in November. "I pay taxes. I am your boss. Get in here and do your jobs or I'll have to kick your (omitted)." Reidnauer

er then lunged at officers and was arrested. 2. Marjorie Kelley, 50, called 911 in Sarasota, Fla., in January after feeling chest pains, but she requested that no sirens or lights be used by the ambulance. When EMTs arrived using sirens and lights, Kelley reportedly jumped up and chased them down the street, wielding a rolling pin, according to WWSB-TV. ■

Injudicious Judges

In Dhanbad, India, Judge Sunil Kumar Singh has been trying to settle a 20-year-old land dispute involving temples of the Hindu gods Ram and Hanuman and has become impatient, according to a December BBC News dispatch from Patna. One

priest claims the land belongs to him, but most locals say the temples own it, and Judge Singh, exasperated, recently placed ads in local newspapers asking Ram and Hanuman to come to court personally and address the issue. ■

Judges Fond of Probation

1. An unnamed Children's Court judge in Melbourne, Australia, sentenced eight boys to probation in November even though he had found them guilty of sexually assaulting a teenage girl, setting her hair on fire, spitting and urinating on her, and filming the episode. (There was no jail time, but the youths were assigned to a rehabilitation program teaching "positive

sexuality.") 2. Britain's Judge Francis Gilbert in November sentenced a 28-year-old woman to probation for her eighth conviction for false claims of rape, involving seven men over a six-year period. In one case, police said, she called them "every two or three days" to keep the investigation alive. ■

People with issues

Serious Substance Abuse

1. Bill Long, a former member of the county council in Daytona Beach, was charged with DUI in December after he, allegedly speeding, hit another car. "When officers arrived at the scene," reported WKMG-TV (Orlando), "(Long) was found drinking ... suntan lotion."

2. Joseph Cardillo, reportedly a certified therapist in tantra, kundalini and other spiritual arts, was arrested by sheriff's deputies in Boulder, Colo., in November for, among other things, drinking an 8-year-old girl's urine, which he allegedly caught in his cupped hands, according to a report in Boulder's Daily Camera. ■