

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

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Government in action

► Recently, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has been seeking 75 volunteers to be trained in listening to frogs so that the state can complete its annual frog survey. Georgia has 31 frog species, each with distinctive ribbits and croaks, and surveyors, after practicing detection, will monitor frog habitats to help officials measure population trends. Tracking season begins this week.

► A *Houston Chronicle* investigation revealed in November that Immigration and Customs Enforcement failed to act against 75 percent of all self-identified illegal aliens convicted of local crimes in the Houston area recently, including immigrants who had committed felonies ranging up to sexual assault of a child and even capital murder. After ICE declined to hold them, that 75 percent were simply released back into the community. Nationally, during that same approximate time period, ICE was deporting twice as many illegal aliens with clean records (clean, except for being undocumented) as those with criminal rap sheets.

► Environmental activists announced in November the intention to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for reducing by 80 percent the California sanctuary area of the endangered San Bernardino kangaroo rat (distinguishing feature: only four toes on its hind feet). In Britain, however, the Ministry of Defense has shown great sensitivity

to bats that were living in antiquated military housing in two Hampshire facilities. Remodeled buildings for 18,000 personnel will include special cavities built into the structures so that the bats can resume cohabiting with the military.

► Robert Christianson, 64, was arrested in October upon his arrival at Tampa International Airport, based on a hold requested by Canadian customs officials. Mr. Christianson was being sought only on two warrants: allowing a dog to run at large and having no license for his dog. ■

Police report

► Indicted for cocaine possession in Montgomery County, Ohio, in November: Mr. Dalcapone Alpaccino Morris, 20. Charged in Columbia, S.C., in November with running down her boyfriend with her car and breaking his leg: Ms. Princess Killingsworth. Charged with felonious battery in Bloomington, Ind., in October: Ms. Felony Silas. Arrested in Carrollton, Ky., in December for allegedly hitting a man in the face with a hammer: Mr. Jamel Nails. Among those arrested in a drug roundup in Greenwood, S.C., in December were people with the street names Black Pam, Lil Bit, Goat, Ewok and Truck Stop.

► Britain's association of police officers complained to the Daily Telegraph in November that bureaucratic requirements are "emasculating" law enforcement, offering as one example the Home Affairs Department's insistence that a seven-page form be submitted for any surveillance work, even if the "work" is merely observing via binoculars. And in December, the Daily Telegraph reported that 45 officers from the Lancashire county police were assigned to help install speed indicator signs but only after being sent to a two-hour class that included safety instructions on climbing a 3-foot ladder. Said a spokesman, "If we didn't do it and people were falling off ladders, we would be criticized." ■

Fine points of the law

► By a 2-1 vote, a Florida appeals court ruled in December that Andrew Craissati could stop paying alimony to his ex-wife. The couple's agreement called for alimony only until she remarried or was "cohabit(ing)" with another person for at least three months, and Mr. Craissati pointed out that his ex-wife, recently convicted of a serious DUI offense, is now "cohabiting" with a cellmate in prison.

► In November, a judge at Killorglin District Court in Kerry, Ireland, dismissed two DUI cases because the blood-alcohol readings were not administered properly. The suspects should have been isolated for 20 minutes before the test but had been permitted to use urinals, and the judge accepted lawyers' arguments that "steam" from the urine might have wafted into the men's noses and raised their readings.

► In November, Sweden's Social Insurance Agency stopped Jessica Andersson's disability payments despite her lingering back pain from a work-related accident six years ago; a doctor found that Ms. Andersson's back pain would subside, enabling her to return to work, if only she underwent breast-reduction surgery. ■


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