

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

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Dogs causing trouble

► A 70-lb. pit bull jumped on a car's gearshift at a carwash in Pryor, Okla., in November, sending the car out of the bay, to circle the lot briefly.

► A boxer-shar-pei mix similarly jostled the gearshift of a van in Port Jefferson, N.Y., in November, sending it through the front window of the Cool Beanz coffee shop.

► Oregon State Police said a gunshot into a boat on Tillamook Bay in November was probably caused by a Labrador's jumping on a 12-gauge shotgun while the boat was unattended.

► A 19-year-old man had several toes shot off on a hunting trip in January in Forest City, Ark., when his dog jumped onto a shotgun in the front seat of his truck. ■

Fine points of the law

On successive days in January in the courthouse in Sheboygan, Wis., 17-year-old Alan Jepsen and 17-year-old Norma Guthrie were each charged with sexual assault for having consensual sex with their respec-

tive 14-year-old, opposite-sex companions. However, Mr. Jepsen was charged with a felony (maximum: 25 years in prison), and Ms. Guthrie was charged with a misdemeanor (maximum, 9 months). ■

People different from us

► The Northwest Florida Daily News reported the arrest of a woman for trespassing in December in Mary Esther, Fla., after she was reluctant to leave a neighbor's porch. According to the newspaper, she eventually "left ... in anger, knocking over a dryer ... in the front yard."

► Robert Blue, 53, was arrested in Las Vegas in January and charged with chaining his 15-year-old daughter to her bed at night to keep her from eating. Mr. Blue told police that the girl weighs 165 pounds, but that he wanted her at 145, which he said is her ideal fighting weight for mixed martial arts. ■

Not my fault

► Timothy Hoffman, 26, was awarded \$76.6 million by a jury in Viera, Fla., in January for becoming paralyzed in a 2003 incident when, on a dare, he dove headfirst into the Indian River, which, unknown to him, was about a foot deep at that point. One reason for the large judgment may have been that the defendant, C&D Dock Works, one of whose employees may have been the one that issued the dare, is bankrupt and did not defend itself at the trial. (There was also evidence that

Mr. Hoffman may have solicited the dare himself.)

► Paul Sanchez, 67, an "occasional" golfer, filed a lawsuit in Brentwood, N.H., in February against the Candia Woods Golf Links for a 2006 incident in which his approach shot hit a yard marker in the fairway, bounced back, and struck him in the eye. Mr. Sanchez claimed the course owners were negligent in placing the sign in the fairway and also should have warned him that balls would bounce off of it. ■

Ironies

► The \$500,000 top prize in Alaska's January statewide lottery, to benefit the organization Standing Together Against Rape, for victims of sexual assault, was won by Alec Ahsok, 53, who coincidentally is a twice-convicted sex offender.

► Sweden's Hallands Nyheter newspa-

per reported in January that a police officer had endured four operations at a private clinic in Gothenburg to correct a birth condition that made one leg shorter than the other, but operations on the longer leg cut off too much, so it is now shorter than the leg that used to be the shorter one. ■

I demand my rights

► In January, an appeals court in Newark, N.J., reinstated Doris Sexton's worker-compensation lawsuit against a county-owned nursing home where Ms. Sexton had claimed that breathing a co-worker's perfume one day in 2004 had made her permanently disabled and tethered to an oxygen tank. A lower court had decided that it was far more likely that her disability was caused by her 43-year, pack-a-day cigarette habit than by the brief exposure to perfume.

► Inadvertently, Raed Jarrar, 30, made his August 2006 airline flight from New York to Oakland, Calif., pay off hand-

somely for him, despite some inconvenience and harassment. Mr. Jarrar, an Iraqi-born U.S. resident married to an American citizen, was wearing a T-shirt with Arabic lettering at the JetBlue gate at JFK airport when the airline denied him boarding. After negotiating, he was allowed to board provided he cover the shirt and sit in the back row. In January 2009, JetBlue and two officials of the Transportation Security Administration agreed to pay Jarrar \$240,000 to settle his racial profiling lawsuit. (The T-shirt read "We Will Not Be Silent" and was in both English and Arabic.) ■

Now, which one is the brake?

Elderly drivers' recent lapses of concentration, confusing the brake pedal with the gas (or "drive" with "reverse"): Former Texas Supreme Court Justice Joe Greenhill, 94, crashed into a restraining wall in downtown Austin, nearly winding up in Lady Bird Lake (December). A 90-year-old woman, driving her brand-new Dodge Challenger, rammed a pole while turning left in Pompano Beach, (October). An 83-year-old man drove through his garage wall

and continued on about 70 yards in Lycoming Township, Pa. (September). An 83-year-old man drove 50 feet into Big 5 Sporting Goods Store in Milwaukie, Ore. (December). An 82-year-old man crashed his SUV into a tree on a Pittsburgh golf course after zigzagging out of control across the fairway (September). An 82-year-old man crashed into a group of Cub Scouts lining up for a Christmas parade (injuring 12) in Dallas (December). ■



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