

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

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The eyes have it

Canadian filmmaker Rob Spence said recently that he would install a prosthetic eye with a camera and wireless transmitter (of the size now used for colonoscopies) into the socket from which one of his eyes had been removed as the result of a childhood accident. He hopes to control the prosthetic eye in the same

way that his muscles control his good eye, to record what his eyes see. His first project will be a documentary on people's attitudes about privacy in an "Orwellian society." "(T)he best way to make a connection (with an interviewee) is through eye contact," he said. "When you bring in a camera, people change." ■

Government in action

► Artist Beth Grossman created her wall exhibit, "Seats of Power," to encourage citizens to greater activism in local affairs around Brisbane, Calif. The seats are upholstered cushions individually tailored with the buttpoints of each of the 10 city council members, who allowed Ms. Grossman to photograph them from behind, clothed, through a sheet of Plexiglas pressed against their posteriors to simulate being seated. All 10 co-operated, including Mayor Sepi Richardson, who said she had been considering her "legacy" lately, "But I never thought it would be my butt."

► Tony Randall of Ashland, N.H. (pop., 2,000), a surveyor by trade who was elected chief of the town's 12-member police force in March, promised he would know more about his job by September, when he will finish police academy training.

► The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that a March meeting of the Medina, Ohio, City Council required a recess when all members engaged in serial giggling over one person's flatulence.

► Mayor Jerry Oberholtzer of Snell-

ville, Ga., involved in a recent feud with an aggressive city council member, called on police chief Roy Whitehead to escort him to the men's room at City Hall for his safety.

► The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, with the impossible task of "regulating" 18,000 makers of drug devices (and thousands of other companies and enforcing 123 new federal laws since 1988), has had virtually no increase in staff in 15 years. It's little wonder, then, that the AM2PAT company of Angier, N.C., was not caught before bacteria in its pre-filled syringes were linked to five deaths and hundreds of illnesses in December 2007. Subsequently inspected, AM2PAT's saline and heparin syringes were found to contain "debris" and "sediment" and to be "muddy" and "dingy brown" in color. Furthermore, according to a February report in the *Raleigh News & Observer*, the required "clean (air) room" was found to be just a room with a fan, and the company's "chief microbiologist" was revealed to be a teenager who had dropped out of high school. The company's owner has fled to his native India to avoid prosecution. ■

The homeland is secure

► The U.S. Transportation Security Administration ruled in January that a post-9-11 federal maritime law, which requires comprehensive background credentials for mariners holding U.S. Coast Guard authorization on U.S. waters, applies even to the two "mule skimmers" who work, in tourist season, dressed in colonial costumes at the Hugh Moore Historical Park in Easton, Pa. The park's lone mule-pulled boat is operated in a 2-mile-long canal that is near nothing of strategic significance, said the park director.

► In addition to addressing the usual

state homeland-security concerns, Kentucky's statute requires anyone licensed as a first responder to disasters to take an oath against dueling ("I, being a citizen of this state, have not fought a duel with deadly weapons ... nor have I sent or accepted a challenge (to duel), nor have I acted as second in carrying a challenge (to duel), so help me God"). Another provision requires the state Homeland Security Office's executive director to "publicize" a legislative finding that "reliance upon Almighty God" is necessary to homeland security. ■

Police blotter

► Police were called to the Aliso (Calif.) Town Center on March 15 after a woman telephoned 911 to report being attacked near the center's fountain by another woman, who had flung her dog's feces at her and her infant. The flinger was said to be upset about complaints from passersby about the enema she was giving her dog in public.

► Charged in Albuquerque in Febru-

ary with giving her daughter marijuana: Ms. Jodi Weed. The victim of a January beating by her middle school classmates in Tampa (for the obvious reason): Miss Special Harris. Charged with arson and destruction of property in Charleston, W.Va., in March: Mr. J. Edgar Hoover. Charged with prostitution in Tampa in February: Ms. Ho Suk Kim. ■

Undignified deaths

► A motorist survived a crash on Feb. 4 near Los Banos, Calif., though his car fell down a 200-foot cliff. After he climbed back to the highway and sought help, he was accidentally hit and killed by another driver.

► A 60-year-old man, celebrating his

retirement from a transportation company in Ritto, Japan, in December, was killed when three co-workers tossed him playfully into the air and then apparently miscommunicated as to who would catch him. ■



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