

news of weird

During the same week in February that the Westminster Dog Show opened in New York City, United Arab Emirates held its first-ever beauty contest for camels in Abu Dhabi, with total prize money of about \$27,000.

And in June, an Interlachen, Fla., farmer named a goat (which he said came from a long line of show goats) Li'l Dale when it was born with a white marking in the shape of a "3" on its brown coat (and which the hundreds of Floridians who flocked to see it thought was surely a divine sign about the late NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt). (Babe Ruth also wore number 3, but the visitors seemed certain the goat did not refer to him.) [BBC News, 2-8-02]

Also in June, Mr. Andrea Cabiale, 40, of Turin, Italy, was charged with arranging at least 500 bump-and-stop car accidents involving young female drivers, in largely unsuccessful attempts to date them; in Cabiale's apartment were 2,159 photographs of female car owners and their damaged vehicles. [Chicago Tribune, 6-2-02] [Sydney Morning Herald-London Daily Telegraph, 6-17-02]

Melodie Morsicato, 45, was arrested in New Britain, Conn., in March after she crashed through the front door of a Target store at 4 a.m. in her Nissan Stanza and, once inside, continued to drive around the store.

And a 37-year-old woman drove into the Ginger Inn Chinese restaurant in Durham, N.C., in April in her Honda SUV and, once inside, continued driving around the dining room.

And two men in their early 20s were arrested in El Dorado, Ark., in April for riding their horses into a Wal-Mart and around the store for a few minutes; police said alcohol was involved. [Hartford Courant, 4-1-02] [Raleigh News and Observer, 4-7-02] [MSNBC-AP, 4-9-02]

The Agence France-Presse news service reported in April that a severely disabled boy (believed to be about age 7) had been taken in by a children's home in Kano, Nigeria, in 1996 after having been abandoned by his nomadic parents and raised with chimpanzees for 18 months. The nursing staff at the Tudun Maliki Torrey home said the kid now no longer drags his hands on the ground as he walks but still often springs at people and makes chimplike noises. The nomadic Fulani people of Nigeria have been known to reject disabled children as too difficult to travel with. [Agence France-Presse, 4-15-02]

Because of police

department budget cuts in Argentina's miserable recession, residents of Junin (population 93,000) have been lending their cars, gassed up at their own expense, for officers' patrolling (May)

Lawyer Steven Wise, promoting his book "Drawing the Line: Science and the Case for Animal Rights," told an audience at a Washington, D.C., bookstore in June: "I don't see a difference between a chimpanzee and my 4 1/2-year-old son (based

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on the fact that 98.7 percent of their respective DNA is the same)." (The boy, Christopher, was not available for comment.) [Toronto Star, 6-15-02]

Officials at California's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory decided that their brand-new, \$62 million storage facility for low-level radioactive waste was not secure enough from terrorists and that until modifications were made, the waste would continue to be stored outside, underneath a tent (May).

The principal of Franklin Elementary School (Santa Monica, Calif.) banned the game Tag at lunchtime, in part because, she wrote, whoever is "it" is a "victim," "which creates a self-esteem issue"

Perth, Australia, brothel owner Mary-Anne Kenworthy closed down for a day on April 30 because the influx of 5,500 U.S. Navy personnel on shore leave had left her workforce worn out. "We're the biggest and the best," she said, "(and) I'd rather take nothing than offer a poor service." She added, "I just wish they could dribble-feed the Yanks in, fly a thousand (in) at a time." (The Bremerton (Wash.) Sun carried a wire-service version of this story but later apologized for it to its readers since many Navy families in the Bremerton-Seattle area apparently did not appreciate learning this news.) [The Mercury (Hobart, Australia), 5-3-02; The Age (Melbourne), 5-2-02]

Police in Norfolk, Neb., are still trying to find Curtis Boyd, 23, after he skipped out on bail after allegedly trying to pass a check for \$22 million at the Bank of Norfolk drive-through in May. Boyd had purchased a computer software check-writing program and apparently figured all he had to do to get the bank to give him money was to present a realistic-looking check with certain Federal Reserve code numbers. When the bank declined to take it, Boyd took the check back, decided apparently that the one imperfection in the check was the lack of an "issuing bank," and thus returned to the Bank of Norfolk after hand-writing the name "Reality Perspective Bank" at the top of the check. This time, the bank employees called the police. [Lincoln Journal Star, 6-7-02]

A Catholic priest closed down his "Junior Professional Wrestling Association" Web site, which featured photos of teen-age boys in wrestling tights, allegedly a charitable fund-raising venture (Mont Clare, Pa.).

In June, after the British musical group the Planets introduced a 60-second piece of complete silence on its latest album, representatives of the estate of composer John Cage, who once wrote "4'33'" (273 seconds of silence), threatened to sue the group for ripping Cage off (but failed, said the group, to specify which 60 of the 273 seconds it thought had been pilfered). Said Mike Batt of the Planets: "Mine is a much better silent piece. I (am) able to say in one minute what (took Cage) four minutes and 33 seconds." [The Independent (London), 6-21-02]

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In January 2001, News of the Weird reported that a 6-year-old boy had been removed from his mother's home in Champaign, Ill., because she insisted on continuing to breastfeed him. A judge later released the boy back to the mother, and in July 2002, the woman, Lynn Stuckey, 34, appeared on an ABC's "Good Morning America" videotape showing that she is still to this day breastfeeding him (every two weeks or so). Stuckey continues to call it "a perfectly normal practice": "We are your standard middle-class American family, and we're not doing anything wrong." [Chicago Sun-Times, 7-10-02]