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Iraq's Ayatollah

Thomas E. Ollerman, PhD.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani is complicating U.S. plans for the transfer of power in Iraq by insisting on direct elections. What are al-Sistani's motives?

The last time Iraq was occupied by a foreign power, Shiite clerics led a bloody rebellion. Britain carved Iraq out of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, and had been governing the country for just six months when the Shiites rebelled. The British promptly installed an exiled Sunni nationalist as king. Sunni kings and strongmen ruled for the rest of the century, leaving Shiites with little say in how their country was run. Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani has rallied his followers by telling them that they now have a second chance to regain their rightful place in the nation's hierarchy. Many Shiites warn that if outsiders determine that the country is not ready for elections, they could be forced to fight as their grandfathers did. "We've sacrificed many martyrs and we would do it again," said *Sheikh Khamis al Suhail*, a tribal leader. "if al-Sistani called for revolution," said *Hamdiya al Niemi*, a street vendor, "I would sacrifice my life for the good of my country."

Why is al-Sistani so powerful? The 73-year - old cleric is the head of the Hawza, the supreme religious authority in the holy city of Najaf. By custom, this makes him the leading ayatollah in Iraq, and his word is respected as law by most Shiite Muslims. The Shiites account for 60 percent of Iraq's 25 million people. In December, after the U.S. announced it would set up a new government through a series of regional caucuses, al-Sistani spoke out. He demanded that the transitional government be chosen by direct vote. The U.S. administrator, Paul Bremer, said Iraq was not ready for direct democracy but tens of thousands of Shiites took to the streets, shouting "Yes, yes to elections," to echo al-Sistani's demand. "If Sistani says die, we die," said a tribal leader, *Aufi Abid Rahi*, "If he says live, we live."

What will happen is very much up in the air. The U.S. is still pushing for caucuses, where delegates from each city and region would choose the new government. But, frustrat-

Executive Trivia Question...

When was the world's first test tube baby born?

ed by al-Sistani's opposition to this plan, the Bush administration is allowing the U.N. to explore alternatives with al-Sistani's surrogates and other Iraqi leaders. It is possible that the U.S.'s June 30 deadline for the turnover of power will be delayed.

Al-Sistani is not an enemy of the U.S. He was more than happy to see Saddam Hussein removed from power, and al-Sistani's cooperation with the occupation has been credited with limiting violence in Shiite southern Iraq. In April of last year, al-Sistani issued a fatwa, or religious edict, forbidding looting in the wake of Saddam's fall, and he urged Shiites to cooperate with Bremer and U.S. troops. "He could have made it difficult," a Western diplomat said. "But he's kept the lid on the Shia."

Al-Sistani rose gradually through the ranks of the clergy. He was born in Iran and began studying the Koran at age 5. He entered religious school when he was 10. At 21, he moved to Najaf, in Iraq, where he became a favorite protegee of Grand Ayatollah Abul-Qassim al-Khoei. By the time al-Khoei died in 1992, al-Sistani had been clearly anointed as his successor. He soon emerged as the new leader of the traditional clergy of Najaf, where he was recognized as a *marja al-taqlid*, or object of emulation. A *marja* has the authority to interpret Islamic law for his followers and to provide guidance on everything from mundane matters to issues of national importance.

He is a recluse and lives a quiet life of prayer and study. His edicts on day-to-day matters are traditional - men and women, he teaches, should not mix socially - but he does not share the angry fanaticism of Islamic radicals. Al-Sistani is a lifelong adherent to a Shiite tradition known as "quietism," which encourages clerics to stay out of politics while exerting maximum spiritual influence. Most of al-Sistani's followers have never even seen him, as he sel-

dom appears in public, choosing instead to communicate through representatives. He never appears on television and discourages the public display of his image. He is an ascetic who dresses modestly, adorns his living quarters with cheap carpets, and reportedly only bought his first refrigerator a decade ago. "If the Prophet Mohammed was living today," said *Essam Kamil*, who once worked for al-Sistani, "he would live the same way."

According to the Kamil, the main concern for Shiite clerics, al-Sistani included, was to stay alive. Saddam, a member of the rival Sunni sect, brutally repressed the Shiite majority. The dictator's henchmen arrested, executed, or expelled hundreds of clerics. Al-Sistani, along with other senior Shiite leaders, was briefly imprisoned in Baghdad after the Shiite uprising that followed the first Gulf war in 1991. Three years later, the government shut down al-Sistani's Khadra Mosque, and the religious leader disappeared from public view in protest. He spent the last six years of Hussein's rule under virtual house arrest.

Because of these experiences, al-Sistani wants to make sure that Shiites never again suffer at the hands of an Iraqi minority. He stated in a fatwa last year that any new government must "respect the religion of the majority." Some U.S. officials fear that means al-Sistani wants to establish an Islamic state in Iraq that would resemble the revolutionary government in neighboring Iran. But he insists he seeks no political role for himself and has publicly called on other clerics to avoid direct involvement in politics.

To stop what he sees as an aggressive U.S. push to leave behind a hand-picked secular government in Iraq, Al-Sistani apparently fears that such a government could be controlled by Kurds or Sunnis, relegating the Shiite majority to a minority share of

power. Al-Sistani can count, and he believes that direct elections will ensure that the new Iraqi state respects the Islamic traditions and beliefs of the Shiite majority. "He told me, 'I did not go to the religious books to get this idea of elections,'" said *Mowaffak al-Rubaie*, a Shiite member of the Iraqi Governing Council who often visits al-Sistani. "I read their own books, and elections are in any textbook on democracy."

One mysterious question still concerns many Americans. It's the question we all ask, though no one wants to say it out loud: "Why have we not been attacked again?" Almost 2 years have passed since Sept. 11, 2001, and al Qaida has yet to mount another assault on U.S. soil - not even a simple suicide bombing. Intelligence experts are wondering as well, and they've offered two main explanations. "The first is that al Qaida has been so severely degraded and disrupted that it simply cannot do it." This rationale, while comforting, doesn't quite wash. Timothy McVeigh didn't need "a huge terror apparatus to kill 168 people in the heartland of America." Nor would al Qaida; just one or two fanatics could easily explode a few TNT-filled trucks in crowded shopping malls. That raises a second, more disturbing possibility. After pulling off the worst terrorist attack in history, Osama bin Laden and his followers do not want to settle for a bombing that claims a mere 100 or 200 lives. They may be biding their time as they plot a fitting sequel to 9/11 - one designed to show the world that al Qaida is winning its holy war. Chances are that our far more vigilant nation will stop whatever they're plotting. But that's a guess, not a prediction. "It could prove catastrophically wrong tomorrow."

From the Institute for Collaborative Alliances

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How to Get AIDS Drugs to Africa

By Gary S. Becker

Instead of forcing drug makers to cut profits, groups such as the World Bank should provide the help African nations need to fight the epidemic.

The number of persons in Africa infected with the AIDS virus is of disastrous proportions. The incidence of the virus is also growing rapidly in India, Brazil, and other poor nations. This epidemic will rival some of the most devastating ones of past centuries unless more affordable and effective policies are developed soon.

A recent U.N. report details the magnitude of the AIDS problem. Almost 30 million adults and 1 million children globally were infected with the AIDS virus by the end of 1997. Two-thirds of those infected are in Africa, and the infection rates on that continent are expected to grow even more rapidly during the next several decades.

Death rates reflect the rate of HIV infections with about an 8 to 10 year lag, since there is no effective treatment once an infection evolves into AIDS. About 12 million people worldwide already have died from AIDS, and the number of deaths will grow rapidly. Eight million succumbed in Africa alone between 1995 and 2000, and the U.N. estimates that deaths there from AIDS will increase to 24 million during this decade. This would constitute almost 40% of all deaths expected on that continent, where AIDS has sharply reversed what had been impressive declines in mortality rates during the past 40 years.

The AIDS “cocktails” that combine various drugs often slow down the progression from HIV positive to symptomatic AIDS. These cocktails have reduced AIDS death rates in the

U.S. and other rich nations, but they have been much too expensive elsewhere. This is why pharmaceutical companies have come under enormous international pressure to supply their drugs to poor nations at a small fraction of the cost in the West. Some of these countries have also begun to permit cheap generic copies that violate international patent agreements. As a result, most pharmaceutical companies have recently caved in on pricing.

Over a longer run, this policy could have a negative effect on Africa and other poor nations because it could discourage the costly development of drugs to fight malaria and other world diseases that are mainly due to poverty and climate. Profit-oriented companies will not invest the half-billion dollars and more required to research and develop effective drugs for major diseases if they cannot price them sufficiently high to recoup their investments.

These financial considerations explain why drug companies already concentrate most of their research on cancer, heart disease, and other diseases that are common in richer nations, that can pay enough to support large development costs.

For this reason, a better strategy than pressuring companies to essentially give away their drugs is for international organizations such as the World Bank to negotiate with drug companies to buy large quantities of the AIDS cocktails. They would arrange to have them resold cheaply to persons who are HIV positive in Africa and other poor nations. This approach would provide adequate compensation to drug companies, but it needs to be carefully policed. Otherwise, some individuals

and government officials in poor nations who obtain drugs through these programs will ship them instead to the “gray” markets of Western nations to profit from the much higher prices there.

Given the severity of the consequences, it is puzzling that so many young African men and women risk becoming infected with the AIDS virus through unprotected sex or the use of contaminated needles to inject drugs. Presumably many are either unaware of the consequences or they are unwilling to pay for condoms and clean needles. To combat these forces, a second international program should both subsidize condoms and clean needles and spread better information about the dangers of unsafe sex and drugs.

International efforts to reduce the incidence of AIDS are justified not only by humanitarian considerations but also because they would reduce the spread of a deadly contagious disease that has worldwide consequences.

In addition, these efforts would encourage greater investments in human capital in Africa and other poor nations with an AIDS epidemic. Since the typical young person who contracts the AIDS virus lives only for 8 to 10 years, such people have less incentive to invest their time and money in education and training that leads to higher earnings in the future. The heavy incidence of the AIDS victims in many African nations is surely one factor behind their dismal economic performance in recent decades.

International organizations can take steps to reduce the high rates of HIV infections on the African continent and to slow down the progress of this virus among those infected. Successful efforts would dispel some of the prevailing pessimism about prospects for combating the AIDS epidemic in Africa and in poor countries around the world.

The Idea Incubator

By Frank Helton

How Can We Harness Ocean Tides?

Ocean waves will soon power the lights in the world's northernmost town. When tides ebb and flow in response to the moon's gravity, they cause swift currents along the seabed. Engineers in the Norwegian town of Hammerfest have placed a windmill-like turbine on the seabed near the Arctic tip of Norway to take advantage of them. In late November or early December, the engineers will turn on the turbine. The receding tide will flow through the machine, spinning its blades and producing electricity. Initially, the turbine will produce only 300 kilowatts, enough to provide electricity to 100 homes. By 2005, 20 of these turbines will be sitting on the ocean floor, churning out enough energy to power 1,000 homes. 'We will be the first in the world to use tidal currents to generate electricity to be fed into the local grid,' says *Harald Johansen*, managing director of turbine operator Hammerfest Stroem. Hammedest Stroem expects its \$6.7 million investment will turn a profit in its second year.

How Can We Make Bio-fuel Cells for the Human Body?

Our bodies could one day power their own electronic implants. University of Texas, Austin researchers have created tiny batteries - biofuel cells - that can be implanted in the spine or under the skin to harness the energy created by our normal metabolism. The energy that's produced in our bodily fluids is not yet sufficient to operate any-

thing as large as an artificial heart, but it's enough to run small, medical devices, like a miniature sensor that monitors the blood sugar of diabetics. Biological fuel batteries have been around for nearly 40 years, but to be medically useful, the cells need to be tiny yet powerful, work at body temperature, and be able to withstand the human body's acidity and salt content. These are the first to do all these things, say *Adam Heller* and colleagues. But don't ask for these batteries at your drugstore just yet. Human bodily fluids are chemically more complex than the fluids that have been used in the tests. Researchers will need to "clean up the chemistry," says Heller, before bio-fuel cells can be put to use in medicine."

A Canine Blood Drive?

The University of Pennsylvania has started a blood drive for dogs. As more owners opt to prolong their dogs' lives through surgery, the university's veterinary school has been performing about 10 transfusions of dog blood every day. So the veterinary school has begun touring the Philadelphia area with a canine bloodmobile, collecting blood at drives organized by breeders, dog clubs, and veterinarians. Donated blood is drawn from the dogs' jugulars and kept at an animal blood bank. "These dogs are good tempered dogs that are not stressed by the procedure," says *Urs Giger*, head of the school's transfusion program. When dogs are done donating, they get a bowl of doggie chow. "That's the orange juice and doughnuts," says veterinary technician *Wendy Hatchett*.

How Can We Make an Anthrax Detector?

University researchers around the country are teaming up to develop a

portable, advanced anthrax detector. Current bio-detectors call for time consuming biological and chemical analysis, and require that the anthrax be handled. The detectors under development will use ultraviolet light and be small enough to carry. When the light hits bio-agents, they glow, emitting a distinct color spectrum. This detection method would be far quicker and could be done remotely detecting anthrax through a suitcase wall, for example. Two Kansas State University physicists have already made the ultraviolet-light-emitting diodes, but they aren't quite bright enough yet. "If the light source is brighter, the detection of anthrax particles will be easier," says *Jingyu Lin*. "Otherwise it will not work." Researchers at several universities are now working on developing ultra bright diodes. But a prototype could still be years away.

How Can a Fabric "Listen"?

A soldier's tent could soon serve as a warning system. Engineers at Virginia Tech are designing e-textiles - cloth interwoven with electronic components - that can be fashioned into military equipment such as tents and nets. Wires and sensors in the fabric pick up faint sounds emitted by distant vehicles and transmit them to computer screens, which can show via images where the sounds are coming from. E-textiles have an advantage over other kinds of detection equipment: They utilize less power and don't rely on radio waves, which can be detected by the enemy. Plus they're highly flexible. "We can easily and cheaply make large pieces of cloth, light and strong, that can be stretched over frames into any desired shape," says researcher *Robert Parker*. Electronic fabrics could also have civilian applications; for instance, they could

be made into shirts for blind people that would help them avoid bumping into things.

How Can We Transplant a Tongue?

A 42 year-old man has received the world's first tongue transplant. The patient had suffered from a malignant tumor on his tongue, rendering him unable to open his mouth, speak, or swallow. In a 14-hour operation, the tongue was removed by a team of doctors at Vienna's General Hospital who then attached a tongue from a brain dead donor. So far, the patient has shown no signs of infection or of rejecting the new tongue. Though it's unlikely the man will regain his sense of taste, surgeons hope the new tongue will allow him to eat and speak. It "looks as if it were his own," according to **Dr. Rolf Ewers** "It's as red and colorful, and getting good blood circulation." Traditionally, patients who lose their tongues to illness or accident have them replaced with a piece of their small intestines - which leaves them unable to speak clearly or swallow without a tube.

How Can We Get Water from an Exhaust System?

Thirsty soldiers of the future may be able to refill their canteens from the tailpipes of their vehicles. Researchers at the British defense lab Qinetiq are developing a gadget that turns exhaust into drinkable water. The combustion engines of cars and other vehicles produce a mixture of carbon dioxide and dirty water. The Qieatiq team is testing a refrigeration device that is attached to the tailpipe and condenses water from the exhaust. A prototype mounted on the back of a truck

extracted 4.5 liters of a watery black condensate from 5.1 liters of diesel burned by the engine. This dark goo was then poured through a carbon filter in the neck of a soldier's water bottle. The resulting water was clear, but too acidic to drink. The lab is now working on refining the purification technique. If successful, the technology could spare armies the chore of airlifting water to battlefields where combat has disrupted water supplies.

How Can We Build a Better Mousetrap?

Engineers in Great Britain think they've come up with a better mousetrap, and it tastes great, too. While mice are known for their taste for cheese, it's chocolate that really gets their mouths watering. Researchers at the University of Warwick mixed a type of plastic with chocolate essence and molded it into a classic mousetrap. Unlike other traps, though, this one needs no bait. Mice follow their noses to the back of the trap, where the scent is concentrated, and the snap device is triggered. The sweet-scented death trap is manufactured by Sorex Ltd. of Cheshire.

How Can Kids Protect Mothers From Alzheimer's Disease?

Moms may say the kids are driving them nuts, but in fact, having a few kids could protect women from Alzheimer's. Pregnancy bathes the brain in protective hormones that could stave off dementia, says **Craig Kinsley**, a psychologist at the University of Richmond in Virginia. He found that rats that had raised two or more litters of pups did much better on tests of memory and skill than rats that had had only one litter or that had never been pregnant.

Kinsley believes the same may be true for humans. "It's rat data, but humans are mammals just like these animals are mammals. "They go through pregnancy and hormonal changes." After watching the rats for two years, Kinsly dissected their brains. Rats with several pregnancies had lower levels of a protein called amyloid precursor, which has been linked to the development of Alzheimer's in humans. "Nature," says Kinsley, seems to provide the mother with a boost to enable her to care, long term, for the most important and costly genetic and metabolic investment she will ever make - her offspring.

How Can We Make a 20-Minute HIV Test?

A fast and easy-to-use HIV test should be available in hospitals and health clinics by the end of the year. The FDA just approved the OraQuick test, which, like a common pregnancy test, produces results in only 20 minutes. It currently can take up to two weeks to get results, and the delay can be costly. Every year, at least 8,000 people test positive for the virus, but never return to the clinic to get the results. That means they may unwittingly put their sexual partners at risk. Scientists believe the new test will dramatically reduce the number of people who unknowingly spread the disease. It will also allow HIV-positive patients to begin drug therapy earlier, prolonging their lives. "The test is simple, it's accurate, and it's fast," Health and Human Services Secretary **Tommy Thompson**. In order to make OraQuick more widely available, he has urged its manufacturer, OraSure Technologies Inc., to seek special permission to sell the tests to small doctors' offices and even mobile testing vans.

Kids Ask the Hardest Questions

By Thomas E. Ollerman

Why is there an E on Top of the Eye Chart?

Professor *Hermann Snellen*, a Dutch professor of ophthalmology, put the E on top of the eye chart in 1862. Although his very first chart was headed by an A, Snellen quickly composed another chart with E on top.

Snellen succeeded *Dr. Frans Cornelis Donders* as the director of the Netherlands Hospital for Eye Patients. Donders was then the world's foremost authority on geometric optics. Snellen was trying to standardize a test to diagnose visual acuity, to measure how small an image an eye can accept while still detecting the detail of that image. Dr. Donders' complicated formulas were based on three parallel lines; of all the letters of the alphabet, the capital E most closely resembled the lines that Dr. Donders had studied so intensively. Because Donders had earlier determined how the eye perceives the E, Snellen based much of his mathematical work on the fifth letter.

The three horizontal limbs of the E are separated by an equal amount of white space. In Snellen's original chart, there was a one-to-one ratio between the height and width of the letters, and the gaps and bars were all the same length (in some modern eye charts, the middle bar is shorter).

The E, unlike more open letters like L or U, forces the observer to distinguish between white and black, an important constituent of good vision. Without this ability, E's begin to look like B's, F's, P's or many other letters.

Of course, Snellen couldn't make an eye chart full of only E's, or else all his patients would have 20-10

vision. But Snellen realized that it was important to use the same letters many times on the eye charts, to insure that the failure of an observer to identify a letter was based on a visual problem rather than the relative difficulty of a set of letters. *Ian Bailey*, professor of optometry and director of the Low Vision Clinic at the University of California at Berkeley, says that it isn't so important whether an eye chart uses the easiest or most difficult letters. Most eye charts incorporate only ten different letters, ones that have the smallest range of difficulty.

Today, many eye charts do not start with an E - and there is no technical reason why they have to - but most still do. *Dr. Stephen C. Miller*, of the American Optometric Association, suggests that the desire of optical companies to have a standardized approach to the production of eye charts probably accounts for the preponderance of E charts. And we're happy about it. It's a nice feeling to know that even if our vision is failing us miserably, we'll always get the top row right.

Why Do We Call our Numbering System "Arabic" When Arabs Don't Use Arabic Numbers Themselves?

The first numbering system was probably developed by the Egyptians, but ancient Sumeria, Babylonia, and India used numerals in business transactions. All of the earliest number systems used some variation of 1 to denote one, probably because the numeral resembled a single finger. Historians suggest that our Arabic 2 and 3 are corruptions of two and three slash marks

written hurriedly.

Most students in Europe, Australia, and the Americas learn to calculate with Arabic numbers, even though these numerals were never used by Arabs. Arabic numbers were actually developed in India, long before the invention of the printing press (probably in the tenth century), but were subsequently translated into Arabic. European merchants who brought back treatises to their continent mistakenly assumed that Arabs had invented the system, and proceeded to translate the texts from Arabic.

Why Do New Fathers Pass Out Cigars?

"What this country needs is a good five-cent cigar" might have been first uttered in the early twentieth century, but in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, cigars cost much more than five cents. In fact cigars were so rare and treasured that they were sometimes used as currency.

Two hundred years ago, a baby boy was considered a valuable commodity. He would work the fields all day and produce money for the father, whereas a baby girl was perceived as a financial drain. At first, precious cigars were handed out as symbol of celebration only when a boy was born.

By the twentieth century, some feminist dads found it in their hearts to pass the stogies around even when a girl was born. Now the ritual remains a primitive but relatively less costly act of male bonding - a tribute to male fertility while the poor mother recovers alone in the hospital room.

Thought To Ponder...

Only in America can a poor black boy grow up to be a rich white woman.

Red Buttons .

The World At A Glance

Thomas E. Ollerman, Ph.D

- Plumbers get 60 percent more calls the day after Thanksgiving than they do on a normal day.
- About \$4 billion worth of plastic gift cards to retail stores were never redeemed last year. Many people put them aside after Christmas and lose them.
- Last year, 70 percent of the Christmas trees in American households were fake.
- The landlocked Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan is poised to become the world's first smoke-free nation. Nineteen of the country's 20 districts have already banned tobacco on religious grounds. Health officials are currently working on steps to extend the ban to the 20th, the capital city of Thimphu.
- Surgeons in the U.S. performed 25,800 gastric bypasses and other operations on morbidly obese people to help them lose weight in 1998. This year, the figure is expected to rise to 103,200.
- Italian mothers who give birth between now and the end of next year will win a cash prize of more than \$1,000. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world, at 1.2 children per woman. In an effort to boost that rate, the government will pay women who already have at least one child to have another. A first child already guarantees a state payout. Some opposition leaders said the program was racist, since only Italian women - not immigrants - qualify for the child bonus.
- About 400,000 human embryos are being stored in freezers in fertility clinics throughout the U.S. Most are leftovers from previous fertility treatments and will never be used. President Bush has prohibited the embryos from being used in stem cell research, and most couples would prefer to keep them frozen indefinitely, rather than destroy them.
- Fifty percent of all lingerie purchases are returned to the store, according to the market research firm NPD.
- Obesity costs the nation an estimated \$117 billion a year, \$10 billion more than all forms of cancer. Yet the National Institutes of Health spends 17 times more money to fight cancer.
- Workers in the U.S. will be taking 10 percent less time off this year than last. The average U.S. full-timer takes 8.1 days after one year on the job, and 10.2 days after three years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Also, American vacations are the shortest in the industrialized world.
- The number of organ donations from the living now surpasses that from the dead. While the majority of living donors are helping a relative or friend, a growing number are donating to strangers.
- Suicides in Japan are linked to job losses as bankruptcies hit a record high last year, with 7,940 Japanese taking their lives because of economic difficulties - an 18 percent increase over 2001. Overall, 32,143 Japanese killed themselves in 2002, marking the fifth year in a row that the suicide total in Japan has exceeded 30,000.
- Elephants in New Delhi have been outfitted with reflectors on their backsides to avoid being hit by cars. The elephants are used for commercial work, such as clearing fallen trees, and often labor at night.

The five most dangerous jobs in America are:

- **Timber cutters** led the 2002 list by far, generating a fatality rate of 117.8 per 100,000 workers. That's "26 times that of the average U.S. worker."
- **Fisherman** posted a fatality rate of 71.1 per 100,000 workers. Stormy seas make Alaskan crab fishing "particularly perilous."
- **Pilots and navigators** died at a rate of 69.8 per 100,000. Most crashed prop planes in Alaska.
- **Structural metal workers** suffered a fatality rate of 58.2 per 100,000 while constructing "our skyscrapers and buildings."
- **Driver-sales workers** sustained a fatality rate of 37.9 per 100,000. Traffic accidents and robberies claimed these pizza deliverers and vending machine fillers.
- If elected, Sen. John Kerry would be the third-wealthiest president in U.S. history, after George Washington and John E. Kennedy. Most of the Kerry family wealth, estimated at \$525 million, comes from his wife, Theresa Heinz Kerry, who inherited a ketchup fortune from her late first husband.

Go For It, Stupid!

Animal Whys?

by Jocelyn Little

- Dogs in medieval times wore armor to go into battle. King Cambyses of Persia used bands of big shaggy dogs, attacking in formation, to conquer Egypt in 525 b.c. Roman legions, Attila the Hun, Japanese samurai, Spanish conquistadors, and American Revolutionary War soldiers all used dogs in battle. The Earl of Essex under Queen Elizabeth I took 800 bloodhounds to suppress the Irish revolt.
- Divers should be wary of the abalone, which can clamp down on their fingers and drown them.
- A mako shark was captured off the Bahamas with a 120-pound swordfish intact in its belly. That means the 730-pound shark swallowed it in one bite.
- Giant squids have tentacles as long as telephone poles and eyes the size of basketballs. They are actually rather shy, and avoid sperm whales, with which they have titanic fights.
- Oarfish, which live thousands of feet under the sea, have been captured occasionally when they are in distress. There is one in the San Diego Museum that is twenty-two feet long and weighs six hundred pounds. They are snaky-looking with two spikes on their head and a long ribbon-like fin down the back.

- A medical student was working in the toxicology department at the poison control center. A woman called in very upset because she caught her little daughter eating ants. The medical student quickly reassured her that the ants are not harmful and there would be no need to bring her daughter into the hospital. She calmed down, and at the end of the conversation happened to mention that she gave her daughter some ant poison to eat in order to kill the ants. The student told the mother that she better bring her daughter in to the emergency room right away.
- Seems that a year ago, some Boeing employees on the work field decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747s. They were successful in getting it out of the plane and home. When they took it for a float on the river, they were quite surprised by a Coast Guard helicopter coming towards them. It turned out that the chopper was homing in on the emergency locator that is automatically activated when the raft is inflated. They are no longer employed there.
- A motorist was unknowingly caught in an automated speed trap that measured his speed using radar and photographed his car. He later received in the mail a ticket for \$40 and a photo of his car. Instead of payment, he sent the police department a photograph of \$40. Several days later, he received a letter from the police that contained another picture of handcuffs.
- A woman was reporting her car as stolen, and mentioned that there was a carphone in it. The policeman taking the report called the phone and told the guy that answered that he had read the ad in the newspaper and wanted to buy the car. They arranged to meet, and the thief was arrested.
- As a woman exited her local convenience store, her purse was snatched by a fleeing man. The clerk promptly called 911 and the woman gave a detailed description of the suspect. Within minutes, the police apprehended the alleged snatcher. They took him back to the store and told him to stand there for a positive ID. The man did as was told and said: "Yes officer, that's the woman I stole the purse from."
- Paul Stiller, 47, was hospitalized in Andover Township, N. J., in September, and his wife Bonnie was also injured, by a quarter-stick of dynamite that blew up in their car. While driving around at 2 a.m., the bored couple lit the dynamite and tried to toss it out the window to see what would happen, but they apparently failed to notice that the window was closed.

Executive Trivia Answer...

Louise Joy Brown was born in England on July 25, 1978. Since then, over 1 million babies conceived through vitro fertilization have been born.