

Our Allegiance to the Pledge

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Most American schoolchildren begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance. But the U.S. Supreme Court is now considering whether the phrase “one nation under God” renders the pledge unconstitutional. How long have Americans been pledging allegiance?

The pledge was originally written by a 37-year-old socialist minister named Francis Bellamy. Bellamy, a Northern Baptist from Boston, was prominent in the Christian Socialist movement, which taught that capitalism bred the un-Christian vice of greed. After years of condemning the evils of capitalism, Bellamy was forced from his pulpit for sermons with themes such as “Jesus the Socialist.” Out of work, the preacher was hired by a friend, the publisher of a popular family magazine. The Youth’s Companion, to help with public relations. The magazine had made a cause of promoting flags in public schools, and Bellamy wrote the pledge as part of that campaign.

The version of the pledge that the magazine published, unsigned, on Sept. 8, 1892, is remarkably similar to the one we know today. It read: “I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

As a socialist, Bellamy believed in a strong national government; his primary concern, he would later write, was to foster national unity in a country where the wounds of the Civil War were still fresh. The opening words, “I pledge allegiance,” just tumbled onto the paper, he said, with the following 20 words flowing after “two hours of arduous mental labor.” To make the “one nation’ idea clear,” he explained, “we must specify that it is indivisible.” Bellamy was tempted to appropriate the slogan of the French Revolution - “Liberty, equality, fraternity.” He rejected that, though, as “too fanciful, too

Published monthly by:
Thomas E. Ollerman, Ph.D.
INNOVA, Inc.
**1749 S. Westwood
Mesa, AZ 85210**
480-838-4854 • Fax 480-897-6180
<http://www.innovainc.com>
email: tom@innovainc.com
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Executive Trivia Question...

In 1884, this monitor of the American economy was published. What was it?

many thousands of years off in realization.” But, he said, if America was not yet ready for equality, “we as a nation do stand square on the doctrine of liberty and justice for all.”

The Youth’s Companion was the largest-selling periodical of its time, with a circulation of 500,000. The magazine urged schools to incorporate the pledge in flag-raising ceremonies marking the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ arrival in the New World. President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation making the flag ceremony the focal point of the Columbus Day celebration, and 12 million American schoolchildren recited the pledge for the first time on Oct. 21, 1892. It proved to be such a popular and uplifting event that thousands of schools made the pledge a daily ritual.

It has been amended twice, lengthening it from 23 to 31 words. In 1924, the Daughters of the American Revolution campaigned successfully to replace the phrase “my flag” with “the flag of the United States of America.” With millions of immigrants flooding into the U.S., the DAR and other patriotic groups were concerned that some ungrateful immigrants might, when pledging allegiance to “my flag,” think of their former homelands. The pledge remained intact until 1954, when the Knights of Columbus, a lay Catholic fraternal group, spearheaded a drive to insert the phrase “under God” after “one nation.”

It was the height of the Cold War, and anti-communist passions were running high. Advocates said the pledge should make a clear

distinction between the U.S. and the godless communists.

Congress and President Eisenhower quickly agreed. “From this day forward,” Ike declared, when he signed the change into law, “millions of our schoolchildren will daily proclaim, in every city and town, every village and rural schoolhouse, the dedication of our nation and our people to the Almighty.” Since then, atheists and civil libertarians have mounted a long succession of legal challenges to the added phrase, on the grounds that it’s an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion. But the opponents never got anywhere until last year.

An atheist in Sacramento sued his local school district on behalf of his second-grade daughter, arguing that if she refused to recite “under God,” she would be “branded an outsider” in violation of her constitutional rights. In a ruling that stunned the nation, the famously liberal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in California ruled in favor of the dad. Public school students are a captive audience, the court reasoned, so requiring them to recite the pledge clearly pressures them to conform to a belief in God. It’s no less neutral, said the court, than if the pledge spoke of one nation “under Jesus,” “under Zeus,” or “under no god.”

The ruling is being appealed, and the Supreme Court will hear the case early in 2004. Defenders say the founders made frequent references to “the Creator” and clearly believed our rights were derived from God. Besides, they say, the pledge’s brief mention of God can be considered “symbolic”

or “ceremonial, like the phrase engraved on U.S. currency: “In God We Trust.”

Twenty eight states now require public schools to begin the school day with a recitation of the pledge, and seven more officially encourage it. Many of these laws were passed in the surge of patriotism following Sept. 11, 2001. Supporters of the pledge say that no child is forced to go along - and in theory, at least, that’s correct, in 1943, several Jehovah’s Witnesses students filed a lawsuit arguing that being forced to say the pledge violated their religion’s ban against praying to a false idol. The Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling in the case, prohibiting the government from requiring citizens to vouch loyalty to anything. “If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation,” the court stated, “it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.”

But in recent years, there have been dozens of court cases in which students have claimed that they were punished for refusing to join in. In one recent case, high school senior Michael Holloman of Alabama refused to say the pledge and stood silent with his fist raised in protest. The principal called Holloman into his office, expressed his disappointment, and ordered him to apologize to the entire senior class. Holloman was then given a choice of three days’ detention, which would have forced him to miss graduation, or corporal punishment. Holloman chose punishment, and was paddled.

From the Institute for Collaborative Alliances
www.icalliances.com
Greece's Olympic Gamble
From: THE WEEK, May 28, 2004

The Summer Olympics are set to begin in Athens in less than three months. But construction of athletic venues, security systems, and transportation is way behind schedule.

Why did Athens land the Games?

For one reason - history. Greece is both the birthplace of the ancient Olympic Games (back in 776 B.C.) and the site of the first modern Games, in 1896. In making its pitch to the International Olympic Committee in 1997, Greece heavily played its tradition card. Some events would take place at Olympia, the site of the first ancient Games and their namesake. The marathon would, start on the plains of Marathon - where the 26.2-mile race got its name - and would follow the original route taken by the Greek messenger who ran to Athens, in 490 B.C., to declare victory over the Persians. Cyclists would pedal past the Acropolis, the birthplace of Western civilization. The Greeks also promised to be ready with the modern infrastructure and venues the Games now require. "We are proud of our heritage and history," said **Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki**, the chief Olympic organizer. "But we want to show what we are able to do now."

What has Greece shown? The Greeks joke about a national proclivity for procrastination, and they have been true to form. The then ruling Socialist government let three years slip by without making much progress. The biggest projects were eventually contracted to internationally respected companies, but much of the work was subcontracted to politically connected Greek companies - to a "cousin of a cousin of a minister," as one paper put it. Many of these firms used low-paid, inexperienced workers. The work has been so amateurish that more than 100 workers have died in construction accidents. Some projects were held up by the discovery of archaeological treasures, others by bankruptcies. The cost of the Olympics has spiraled to \$6.6 billion, \$1.2 billion over budget. "What we are seeing is Greece's incompetence being laid bare," said **Costis Hadjidakis**,

a prominent conservative politician.

How bad is it? With fewer than 100 days

before the lighting of the Olympic flame, on Aug. 13, Athens is one vast construction site. Roads and squares are filled with gaping holes and piles of dirt; a frantic procession of cranes and mixers has brought the city's traffic to a standstill. As of last week, only 15 of 39 sports venues were ready. Track for the trams that connect Athens' city center to the coastal sports venues and that link the airport to the main subway system has not been fully laid - prompting fears that the Games will be paralyzed by gridlock. At the main Olympic Stadium, an elaborate \$250 million glass and steel roof was finally installed last week. But the 75,000-seat stadium still has no seats. Nonetheless, Greek officials swear they'll be ready for the 10,500 athletes, 21,500 journalists, and millions of spectators expected to invade this city of 4 million.

How is that possible? In March, national elections were held and the Socialists were ousted by the Conservatives. The new premier, **Costas Karamanlis**, personally took charge of Olympic preparation, vowing to cut through the red tape and cronyism. "The entire image of modern Greece will be judged" by the Games, Karamanlis declared. For the last few months, crews have literally been working around the clock, while officials have conducted a massive triage, downscaling some projects and eliminating others. They abandoned plans to put a roof over the swimming arena, prompting complaints from swimmers that their performances would suffer in the hot summer sun. But such concerns pale in comparison with those raised over the Games' vulnerability to a terrorist attack.

How real is that risk? Most intelligence experts think it's very real. Greece has notoriously porous borders and lies at the volatile crossroads of Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Al Qaida and affiliated Islamic terror groups, the experts fear, may view Athens as a convenient place to strike a blow against Western nations, by targeting their athletes or large groups of their citi-

zens. Authorities are also concerned about more than a dozen Greek leftwing and anarchist groups that have set off dozens of bombs in recent years, killing 23 people.

What steps are being taken?

Authorities have put together a team of 50,000 security personnel and a policing budget of \$1.2 billion - three times the amount spent in Sydney four years ago. A \$320 million security network of cameras, sensors, and computers is supposed to give police and security officials a view of every inch of the city. But U.S. officials doubt that it will be of much use. Fiber-optic cable is still being laid, leaving little time to debug the system or to teach security officials how to use it. I think the security situation is a work in progress," said Sen. **Gordon Smith**, who chairs a Senate subcommittee with Olympic oversight.

What if Greece isn't ready? At this point, it's hard to see how they can run smoothly. Last month, the International Olympic Committee took the unprecedented step of purchasing cancellation insurance for \$170 million. But the Greeks say that while a few minor problems may crop up during the Games, all will turn out well. "We are similar to the non-favorite runner in a marathon who is not noticed as he struggles somewhere in the middle," said Athens **Mayor Dora Bakoyanni**. "But we are optimistic that this runner bursts ahead in the final laps, surprising the world and, perhaps, even himself."

No matter how the Olympics turn out, the ancient city of Athens will never be the same. A new \$2 billion airport has opened southeast of the city. The government has invested more than \$2 billion in new subway lines and extensions beneath the central city. A \$1.4 billion highway project represents Athens' first modern "ring road" freeway system, and new train lines (when they're done) will for the first time connect downtown to the Saronic Gulf by rail. The bulk of the sports venues - including stadium for track and field, swimming and baseball, and a canoe/kayak slalom course - were constructed from scratch. The power grid and sewer system received desperately needed updates.

The Idea Incubator

By Frank Helton

How Can a Pill Prevent Trauma?

A traumatic event triggers a rush of hormones in the brain that engraves the experience indelibly on a person's memory. That's why people tend to remember exactly where they were when the World Trade Center towers fell or when John E Kennedy was shot. It's also one of the reasons victims of trauma suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Hormones such as norepinephrine released by our adrenaline-fueled "fight or flight response," are responsible for converting terrifying memories into vivid flash backs. But a drug commonly used to treat hypertension could keep memories of rape, accidents, or shootings from becoming overwhelming, says **Dr. Glenn Saxe** of the Boston Medical Center. A dose of clonidine, would suppress the production of norepinephrine, making traumatic memories more like memories of tying a shoe. "It would have enormous public health relevance," Saxe says. Critics worry that suppressing fearful responses could be damaging. "If medication delays your dealing with the event," says **Rachel Yehuda**, the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, "maybe you'll pay for it later."

Is the California Earthquake Overdue?

Southern Californians should be prepared for the worst, say geolo-

gists. A major earthquake along the San Andreas fault is way overdue. By digging trenches along the 800-mile fault that divides the North American and Pacific tectonic plates, scientists were able to establish a 1,500-year record of the region's temblors. Since A.D. 534, there have been 14 earthquakes of at least a 7.5 magnitude - a massive quake. The average interval between these violent quakes has been 105 years, with the shortest break being 62 years and the longest 192 years. It has now been 145 years since the last one shook the 225 miles of ground between Parkfield and San Bernardino in 1857. "It's pretty likely that during our lifetime there's going to be a large earthquake on the southern San Andreas," says geologist **Tom Fumal** of the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park. "and almost certainly within the lifetime of our children." **Guy Morrow** of Risk Management Solutions says that if a quake with a magnitude of between 7 and 8 strikes the region and its 13 million residents, it will kill several thousand people and do \$50 billion worth of damage.

How do Seals Know When to Run?

Harbor seals, like humans, can learn from experience. Scientists studying the seals in the northern Pacific found that they came in contact with two populations of orcas - one that feeds exclusively on fish and ignores seals, and another that hunts seals whenever it sees them. When scientists played tape recordings of the calls

of the seal-eating whales to a group of harbor seals, they fled in terror. But when they heard tapes of the harmless whales, they stayed put. Scientists also played a third set of calls from harmless whales from another region and the seals fled. This means the seals had a predisposition to flight that they learned to overcome. That's smart thinking, **Volker Deecke** of the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre in British Columbia because then seals don't waste energy fleeing from every whale they hear. Scientists previously thought that the ability to learn from experience at this level of sophistication was uniquely human.

How did the Greeks Excel in the Long Jump?

Paintings of Olympic long jumpers on ancient Greek vases show the athletes holding pairs of heavy weights, made of lead or stone, in their hands. These weights, called halteres, were evidently used to enhance performance. While it's counterintuitive that weight could improve a jump, scientists at the Manchester Metropolitan University in England have finally figured out how halteres worked. Using computer models and real-life simulations, the researchers found that halteres improved the length of the ancient long jump in several ways. The Greeks did their jumps from a standing start. From that position, leg muscles work better when they are contracting against a force, such as a weight. Second, swinging the halteres overhead before a jump allows long

jumpers to shift their center of gravity forward as they lean over the starting line. Finally, swinging the weights back at the last minute produces a counter-reaction, propelling their feet forward. The result is that halteres can improve a 10-foot jump by 7 inches. Today's long jumpers don't need rocks - they get to take a running start.

How Can Location Improve Healthy Eating?

Good nutrition may depend on easy access. A new study from the University of North Carolina shows that people eat more fruits and vegetables when they live near a large supermarket; indeed, the more supermarkets there are in a neighborhood, the more fresh produce its residents consume. The correlation is especially evident in predominantly black neighborhoods. African-Americans eat 32 percent more fruits and vegetables for each additional supermarket in their neighborhood. People in mostly white neighborhoods only increase consumption by 11 percent per additional supermarket. That could be because they have three times the access to cars that blacks have so nearby markets make a bigger difference to blacks. "There is an assumption that we all have access to healthy foods, and that when people aren't eating healthy, it's because they choose not to," says lead researcher **Kimberly Morland**. "But this demonstrates that the availability of food varies between neighborhoods, and it's related to the affluence and the race of the neighborhood." Most of

the black neighborhoods in the study are served by small groceries, which offer few healthy options.

How Can Herbal Tea be Stressful?

People who have abandoned their morning cup of coffee for a healthier cup of herbal tea might want to think again say British researchers. They found that many herbal teas seriously damage teeth by eroding protective enamel. Many of the herbal teas tested were found to be more erosive than orange juice says the University of Bristol researchers report in the Journal of Dentistry

Dentists often advise patients to avoid drinking too much fruit juice, because its acids and sugars can damage teeth. Some herbal teas were three times as acidic as juice.

This is something dentists should be telling their patients. A spokesman for Twinings teas says saliva dilutes and neutralizes any acid in herbal teas. "Fruit and herbal teas have been proven to many benefits to mind and body.

How Can Sleep Make You Smarter?

When you're working on a knotty problem, it actually does help to sleep on it. A German study found that our brains continue to work on baffling problems while we sleep, allowing us to wake up with new insights. Researchers at the University of Luebeck gave subjects math problems that involved transforming a string of eight numbers into a new string, according to two mathematical rules. A

third rule - a shortcut to solving the problem - was hidden in the puzzle. After working on the problem for a while, some subjects slept for eight hours before resuming their efforts, while others stayed awake all night. A third group tackled the problem in the morning and then returned to it after an eight-hour break. The sleepers were almost three times more likely to figure out the shortcut than either of the two groups that hadn't slept. The results suggest that the brain "restructures memories" during sleep, according to researcher **Jan Born**, so we wake up with a fresh perspective. The study, he says, underlines the importance of getting a good night's rest.

Can We Change a Person's Gender?

Gender is not simply a matter of social conditioning, a new study suggests. Scientists tracked 16 genetically male children, ages 5 to 16, who had been born without a penis. Typically, the solution is to remove the testes, construct a vagina, and raise the patient as a girl. But researchers found that eight of their subjects, who had been raised as girls, later declared themselves boys, including four who were unaware of their surgical transformations. The findings, **Dr. Eric Vilain** of UCLA show that sexual identity is largely biologically determined, and not easily overridden through rearing. "It's difficult," Vilain says, "for nurture to overcome nature".

Kids Ask the Hardest Questions

By Thomas E. Ollerman, PhD.

Why Does It Seem that The Moon is Following You Around When You Ride in a Car at Night?

The moon looks larger on the horizon than up in the sky, even though the moon remains the same size. Clearly, our eyes can play tricks on us.

Without reference points to guide us, the moon doesn't seem to be far away. When you are driving on a highway, the objects closest to your car go whirring by. Barriers dividing the lanes become a blur. You can see individual houses or trees by the side of the road, but, depending upon your speed, it might be painful to watch them go by. Distant trees and houses move by much more slowly, even though you are driving at the same speed. And distant mountains seem large and motionless. Eventually, as you travel far enough down the highway, you will pass the mountains, and they will appear smaller.

If you think the mountain range off the highway is large or far away, consider the moon, which is 240,000 miles away and bigger than any mountain range (more than 2,100 miles in diameter). We already know that our eyes are playing tricks with our perception of how big and far away the moon is. You would have to be traveling awfully far to make the moon appear to move at all. Without a highway or expanse of landscape to give you reference points this illusion of nearness coupled with its actual size and distance makes the moon appear to follow you wher-

ever you go.

This phenomenon is called the parallax and is used to determine how the apparent change in the position of an object or heavenly body may be influenced by the changing position of the observer.

Astronomers can determine the distance between a body in space and the observer by measuring the magnitude of the parallax effect.

And then again, maybe the moon really is following you.

Why Do We Need Two Nostrils?

The shifting of clogged nostrils is a protective effort of your nasal reflex system. Although the nose was probably most important to prehistoric man as a smelling organ, modern humans' sense of smell has steadily decreased over time. The nose is now much more important in respiration, breathing in oxygen to the nose, trachea, bronchi, lungs, heart, and blood, and ultimately the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

A fantastic system of reflexes which originate in the inner nose sends impulses to the heart and indirectly to every cell in the body. These reflexes, coupled with the resistance of the nose, increase the efficiency of the lungs and improve the effectiveness of the heart action.

We tend to think of the nose as one organ, but we smell or breathe through the nose in stereo, just as we hear through two ears or see with two eyes. Each lung is controlled by one of our "two noses". Without a flow of oxygen from a nostril for a prolonged period, the well-being of the corre-

sponding lung is threatened.

The most common reason for congested nostril switching is the sleep process. When we sleep, our body functions at a greatly reduced rate. The heart beats slower and the lungs require less air. Patients commonly complain that at night when they lie on one side, the dependent side of the nose becomes obstructed and they find it necessary to roll over in bed to make that side open. Then the other side becomes obstructed, and they roll over again.

When the head is turned to one side during sleep, the "upper nose" has the entire load of breathing and can become fatigued. One nostril doing solo duty can fatigue in as little as one to three hours, and internal pressures cause the sleeper to change his head position to the opposite side. The body naturally follows this movement. In this way, the whole body, nose, chest, abdomen, neck, and extremities rest one side at a time.

When Does a Calf Become a Cow?

The calf's equivalent of a bar mitzvah occurs after it stops nursing, usually at about seven to eight months of age. After they are weaned and/or when they reach twelve months, they are referred to as yearling bulls or yearling calves. Calves don't achieve full-fledged bullhood or cowhood until they are in production. We normally refer to a first calf heifer at twenty-four months of age or older, as just that, and after her second calf as a three-year-old, she becomes a cow.

Bulls don't usually reach maturity until they are three. After they wean from their mothers, they are referred

to as “yearling bulls,” or “two-year-old bulls.”

Why Don't Traffic Signal Light Bulbs Ever Seem to Burn Out? Can We Buy Them?

To answer the second part of your question, you can buy the same bulbs that light our traffic signals. But you probably wouldn't want to buy them.

Yes, the bulbs found in traffic lights do last much longer than standard household bulbs. The traffic light bulbs are rated at eight thousand hours, compared to the standard one thousand hours. Incandescent lights can be manufactured to last any length of time. However, the longer life a bulb has, the less efficiently it burns.

The incandescent light is like a candle. If you burn it dimly, the candle will last a long time. If you burn the candle on both ends, you get a lot of light but short life. The traffic signal light must use 100 watts to get 1,000 lumens [units of light]. To obtain the same 1,000 lumens a household lamp needs only 60 watts. At an electric rate of \$0.10/Kwh, the electric cost for 100 watts is \$10.00 per 1000 hours. For the 60 watts the electric cost is \$6.00 per 1,000 hours. Thus, the consumer saves \$4.00 per 1,000 burning hours [or 40% by using a household light bulb rather than a traffic signal light bulb.

Traffic signal bulbs are also specially constructed and are filled with krypton gas rather than the less expensive argon gas used in standard bulbs. Municipalities obviously feel the added expense

of the special bulbs is more than offset by the cost of labor for replacing burned-out bulbs and the fewer dangerous situations created by malfunctioning traffic signals.

What Exactly Is One Hour Martinizing?

Countless millions have passed dry-cleaning stores with the words ONE HOUR MARTINIZING emblazoned on the sign and wondered: What the heck is “Martinizing”? Can it really be done in one hour? Is it painful, and if so, can an anesthetic be administered?

Martinizing is a service mark of Martin Franchises, Inc., the largest chain of franchised dry-cleaning establishments in the United States. Martinizing was first registered with the U.S. Patent Trademark Office in 1950 by the Martin Equipment Corporation, a manufacturer of dry cleaning machines.

The equipment business and trademarks were later sold to the American Laundry Machinery Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, also a manufacturer of cleaning equipment. Although Martinizing was once part of the sales division of the American Laundry Machinery Company, it has spun off into a separate entity, still located in Cincinnati.

Today if an aspiring dry cleaner wants the know-how and name recognition that a franchise can provide, he or she will likely choose Martin, since it is the best-known name in the dry-cleaning field, and start-up costs are relatively low.

What's special about One Hour Martinizing? As far as I can tell, nothing. They use the same chemicals, solvents, and cleaning methods as other dry cleaners, and can Martinize in one hour, just as most dry cleaners can handle a job in one hour.

The folks are relying on the notion that if you patronize another establishment, you can say your clothes have been dry cleaned but you can't brag that they have been Martinized.

What Flavor Is Bubble Gum Supposed to Be? And Why Is It Usually Pink?

I have failed miserably at obtaining the constituents in bubble gum. The best I have been able to suggest is that “regular” pink bubble gum is a mixture of several natural and artificial fruit flavors.

I thought that the pink color of bubble gum would provide clues to the identity of the flavors, but I was disappointed again. Bubble gum was invented in 1928 by a lone entrepreneur, **Walter Diemer**, who was an accountant from Philadelphia. From the very beginning, Diemer artificially colored his gum pink. Why? “Because it was the only coloring I had handy at the time!” So much for the sanctity of pink bubble gum.

Now, of course, with Bubble Gum coming in flavors like Bananaberry Split and Checkermint, pink bubble gum looks old hat. But not quite yet. Good old pink bubble gum is still the best seller by far.

Stupid Criminals

Animal Whys?

by Jocelyn Little

- The horned toad, which is actually a lizard, squirts blood from its eyes when alarmed. Raymond Dittmars, a well-known herpetologist, watched a Mexican horned toad squirting a wall four feet away with blood that he said seemed to be coming from its eyelids.
- A salamander known as the hellbender breathes through lungs, gills, and also through its skin.
- Geckos have tiny hooks on their feet which are so effective they can walk across the surface of a mirror.
- The basilisk or “Jesus Christ lizard” can run across a surface of water on its hind leg. The lizard’s bodies are light and their feet large, and as long as they do not stop, they will not sink. Witnesses report seeing the lizards dashing over water a quarter of a mile or more in width.
- The American water shrew *Sorex palustris* can run across the surface of water, using air bubbles trapped in its foot hairs as floats.
- Porcupines float.
- Porcupines are born encased in a protective sac.
- Discus fish nurse their babies. Cells in the skin secrete mucous which the wee ones consume.

It seems that this genius decided to rob a bank - a BLOOD bank! (There must be a TON of cash there!) He cases the joint and figures that by breaking in on Friday night he would have all the time in the world because the place doesn’t open up again until 8 or so Monday morning. Somehow he came up with the bright idea to climb down an airshaft from the roof to not invite unwanted attention. His operation began sometime Friday night and was going as planned until he lost his grip and slipped down the 20-foot vertical shaft and came to an abrupt stop in the office. With one leg on either side of an office partition which ended less than a foot below the opening of the shaft from which he was now dangling. Unable to go up or down he remained there ‘til Monday where he was discovered. When they found him he was suffering from dehydration, delirious from pain, and his genitals were swollen to the size of grapefruits - each! After lowering him down they owner didn’t press charges because he said nothing could be more punishment than that.

A daring thief who stuffed a pair of live lobsters in his pants, learned that crime doesn’t pay when the frisky creatures gave him a vasectomy.

Police say that the 21-year-old shoplifter was leaving a Bristol, England, supermarket when he removed the lobsters from their tank and shoved them in his trousers. The man sprinted past stunned checkout girls but came to a screeching halt when he felt the lobsters clutching on his manhood.

The thorny creatures were finally removed when emergency medics pried them loose with a pliers. Doctors say the thief will fully recover from his frightening tangle with the lobsters but he will never be a daddy.

Basically, it was a do-it-yourself vasectomy, said the doctor “The patient’s sexual abilities will be restored in time, but he will not be able to father any children.”

The thief’s painful prank landed him in the hospital, where he is expected to remain for three or four weeks.. But thanks to is kind hearted supermarket manager, he will not be charged with any crime.

“The guy’s gone through enough pain,” said the store manager. “I think he has learned his lesson. I doubt if he’ll ever steal again.”

Thought To Ponder...

The intelligent man who is proud of his intelligence is like the condemned man who is proud of his cell.

Simon Weil

Executive Trivia Answer...

The Dow Jones Average.