



Monday, November 30, 2009

At This Church, Parishioners Wear Collars, Too



Los Angeles -- When a Los Angeles pastor decided his church needed a boost in membership, he did a little soul-searching and decided man's best friend should be part of the fold. Now, his Sunday service at Covenant Presbyterian Church is attracting new parishioners — and their faithful pooches. On a recent Sunday, you can see that most of those arriving are not regular churchgoers. For one thing, it takes them a while to get settled in their seats "Good boy! Sit!" Emma Sczesniak says to her dogs, Marley and Midnight, both on leashes. Midnight is a black, fluffy dog who towers over Marley, who may have some terrier in him. "They're both rescue dogs," Sczesniak says. "My pets have always been my babies, so [the service] seemed like something I might be interested in." Another parishioner, Vicky Rambow, is tethered to Sadie and Mac. Both dogs are low to the ground. Rambow guesses they're corgi and ... something. She says a church service that welcomes dogs is just what she was looking for. "I'll come as long as they do it," she says, adding that she doesn't regularly attend church — but "this has caused me to come back." Sadie and Mac tangle their leashes on their way into the

small chapel located next to the church's main sanctuary. A few of the parishioners are in pews, but most are in folding chairs next to doggie beds of various sizes. The music begins, and the congregation is getting a little rambunctious. Someone steps in the water dish, and a border collie wants to play with the poodle mix. It takes a few resounding commands of "Stay!" — and then it's time to pray. "Thank you for all the gifts that you have given to us, including our four-footed



friends," prays the Rev. Tom Eggebeen, the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church. ([Listen to Story](#))

Woman's Long Lost Dad Is a Woman

UK -- A British woman who tracked down her long lost father that she had never met was in for quite a shock when they finally met -- he was now a she. Emily Wallis, 22, managed to find Clive Harrison several years after her mother told her the man who had raised her was not her real father, according to the Mirror . Her mother described Wallis' biological

father as an "Italian Stallion." She said he was a tattooed boxer who had moved to Australia before she could tell him that she was pregnant. But when Wallis finally met Harrison he was in the process of transforming himself into a woman and called himself Chloe. "Chloe was squeezed into a silver dress and wearing make-up and a wig. I had no idea what to do so I said, 'You look better than me ... and I really like your shoes.'" Wallis said she had hoped her mother and real father might get back together, but all that changed after she met Chloe. But Wallis wasn't angry, she was happy to finally know her real father. "We hugged for ages and couldn't stop crying. Then I noticed we had the same chin. Chloe kept saying she was sorry," Wallis said. "He looked glamorous and I was surprised by how feminine he was in a wig and silver dress." Wallis added that she was proud of Chloe and will be at her hospital bedside when she has the full sex change operation. In August, British boxer Rob Newbiggin said he "lost every friend he had" after revealing he was planning on undergoing a sex change .

Jamaican dog musher trains for the Iditarod in Alaska



Alaska -- Jamaican dog musher Newton Marshall arrived in Alaska on Sunday to begin a kind of three-month Iditarod boot camp with reigning champ Lance Mackey. Mackey, who plans to lend Marshall his lead dog from last year's winning team, is a blunt-talking cancer survivor who's won the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race three years in a row. Marshall took up the sport on a Caribbean island where it never snows. Singer Jimmy Buffett is his main sponsor. In other words, Hollywood might as well start casting the movie now. After training with three-time Yukon Quest champion Hans Gatt last year, Marshall placed 13th of 29 mushers in the 1,000-mile race from Whitehorse to Fairbanks. Now it's Mackey's turn as mentor, and his family spent three months building a cabin next to their Fairbanks home, where Marshall will live and train until the Iditarod in March. "He's going to be

doing everything that we do," said Mackey, who is also a four-time Yukon Quest champion. "From cleaning dog crap to cutting meat. Prepping for the races. Obviously the training part of it. Everything that it takes to make this household run, he's going to be involved in," Mackey said. Mackey's wife, Tonya, greeted Marshall with a hug at the Anchorage international airport Sunday afternoon as the family prepared to climb into the black Dodge pickup Lance won at the last Iditarod for the hours-long drive back to Fairbanks. Mackey waited at home where he'd been running dogs until about 2 a.m. Marshall, 26, said he met the champion musher in Toronto earlier this month for a fundraiser for the fledgling Jamaica Dogsled Team. The visit included a Buffett concert where the "Margaritaville" singer dedicated a song to the young musher, said team founder Danny Melville. Marshall sometimes sings reggae songs to himself on the trail to keep his spirits up, he said. As the training begins, Mackey hopes that kind of crossover appeal brings more worldwide fans to dog mushing. He's also getting paid for his troubles, though Mackey and Melville declined to say what the Jamaican team is paying for the training. "We're trying to get as much recognition for this sport as possible," Mackey said. "In return, it opens doors for potential sponsorships, and anything I can do to stand out a little bit, to maybe come up with some of them corporate sponsors, this is maybe one of those stunts." That said, the musher says Marshall came to Alaska to get a job done and is already a veteran of the Quest -- a race billed as the toughest in the world. A Quest race marshal who said he initially dismissed Marshall's entry as a publicity stunt later awarded him the race's Challenge of the North award, Melville said. "At the end of the day, people knew he was a musher," he said. ([Watch Video](#))

New technology to prevent BRIs (bagel-related injuries!)



NORTHAMPTON, Mass. -- "On a Sunday morning, not entirely awake, I decided it was a good day for a bagel," Howard Rose said. "It turned out not to be a good day for handling a knife." Mr. Rose, an audio engineer, was at the Bruegger's bagel place in this New England town, recalling how he joined the ever-expanding ranks of BRI victims. A BRI is a bagel-related injury. After slicing a finger instead of the bagel (a Band-Aid took care of it), he signed up with another crowd: those who attempt to build bagel-control devices. "I

made a bagel vise from two chunks of wood," said Mr. Rose. "The prototype was OK. I never followed up." That's why he dines where "someone else cuts the bagel." But just a flight up from the Bruegger's, unknown to Mr. Rose, is the office of a man who did follow up. He's Rick Ricard, a carpenter of French-Canadian descent and inventor of the Bagel Guillotine. Slicing a bagel is more dangerous than slicing a potato. Bagel-related-injuries have inspired a generation of inventors to come up with dozens of bagel-control devices. WSJ's Barry Newman heads to Zabar's in Manhattan to try some out. "My guillotine isn't associated with death," Mr. Ricard said one afternoon as he dropped a bagel into a holder, positioned a viciously pointed plastic-encased blade above it, and shoved firmly downward, slicing the bagel humanely in half. The Bagel Guillotine, introduced 15 years ago, sells steadily at 80,000 a year. By Mr. Ricard's calculation, that makes it history's most successful bagel-control device. He says, "We achieved a paradigm shift in bagel cutting." He sees no need for new bagel slicers. And yet people keep inventing them -- people like Dennis Moss and his son Michael. As long as the BRI menace persists, they believe, bagel-safety technology is open to improvement. On a recent evening, Dr. Moss, a 66-year-old radiologist, was at home in Rochester, N.Y., watching his son saw through a bagel with their latest innovation: a slender knife fitted inside a molded-plastic guard. They call it the Brooklyn Bagel Slicer. "My dad and I have a mission," said Michael Moss, who is 36. Said Dr. Moss, "If we keep anybody out of the emergency room it saves health-care dollars." His son said, "Dad's against unnecessary procedures." They call bagel injuries "an epidemiological scourge." In 2008, according to an analysis of fingers cut by knives as reported in the government's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, 1,979 people appeared in ERs with a BRI. Chicken-related injuries (3,463) led the category, but recorded bagel injuries were otherwise exceeded only by potato, apple and onion injuries. ([Read Full Story and Video](#))

At This School, It's Marijuana in Every Class



SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — At most colleges, marijuana is very much an extracurricular matter. But at Med Grow Cannabis College, marijuana is the curriculum: the history, the horticulture and the legal how-to's of Michigan's new medical marijuana program. "This state needs jobs, and we think medical marijuana can stimulate the state economy with hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars," said Nick Tennant, the 24-year-old founder of the college, which is actually a burgeoning business (no baccalaureates here) operating from a few

bare-bones rooms in a Detroit suburb. The six-week, \$485 primer on medical marijuana is a cross between an agricultural extension class covering the growing cycle, nutrients and light

requirements ("It's harvest time when half the trichomes have turned amber and half are white") and a gathering of serious potheads, sharing stories of their best highs ("Smoke that and you are ... medicated!"). The only required reading: "Marijuana Horticulture: The Indoor/Outdoor Medical Grower's Bible" by Jorge Cervantes. Even though the business of growing medical marijuana is legal under Michigan's new law, there is enough nervousness about the enterprise that most students at a recent class did not want their names or photographs used. An instructor also asked not to be identified. "My wife works for the government," one student said, "and I told my mother-in-law I was going to a small-business class." ([Read Full Story](#))

Toothpick stagecoach to be Ripley's exhibit



WARSAW, Ind.-- He built a stagecoach out of toothpicks, and now a Warsaw, Indiana man is taking his labor of love to a national audience. NewsChannel 15 first introduced viewers to Terry Woodling and his creation last month. Now, it's headed for a "Ripley's Believe it or Not" Museum . "I'm bound to miss it, because it's been with me one-fifth of my life," said Woodling. Woodling, better known as "Mr. Toothpick", spent the past 15 years constructing the life-sized stagecoach replica entirely out of toothpicks inside his Warsaw garage. This week Ripley's officials are trying to figure out the best way to move the attraction from Woodling's home to

Orlando. Woodling says, "Our biggest worry, to me is just getting this down to Orlando, Florida in one piece." NewsChannel 15 aired Woodling's story in late October. The incredible video was picked up by the Associated Press and seen around the world. Woodling says emails, and phone calls from around the country poured in. But, it was actually a letter from Woodling to the company that caught the attention of Edward Meyer, Ripley Entertainment's Vice President of Exhibits and Archives. "Terry Woodling's toothpick stagecoach is the biggest toothpick model we've ever seen," Meyer told NewsChannel 15. "There is no other toothpick model anywhere to compare with this...it's in a league of its own." Woodling spent more than \$1,200 dollars for the toothpicks to build the stagecoach. The model has been appraised for a price ranging from \$135,000 to \$152,000, according to Woodling. Woodling sold the model to Ripley's for an undisclosed amount, which he tells NewsChannel 15 is less than \$100,000 dollars. "That was a big relief, knowing it had a home, and a nice home," Woodling said. "That's what you normally hope for, is having something like that. It'd be neat to be there when people are looking at it and just hear their comments." Meyer added, "Ripley's display's unique one of a kind, unbelievable, amazing objects, this fits all the descriptions." To prepare for the move, the stagecoach will have to be taken apart. Woodling says it can be dismantled into at least 25 pieces. ([VIDEO](#))

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