

news of the weird

Lead Story

Edible "dirt" has recently appeared on the menus of several of the world's most renowned restaurants (e.g., the top-rated Noma in Copenhagen, Shakuf in Tel Aviv, Gilt in New York City). "People are really wowed to see dirt on their plates," said Gilt's head chef. Actually, the "dirt" only looks and feels like dirt. Each chef creates signature tastes from dried or charred powders with the appearance and consistency of sand, soil or ash — from a base of plants, vegetables or eggs, or even dried beer. Said a reviewer, "These chefs are reminding people where food actually comes from."

Can't Possibly Be True

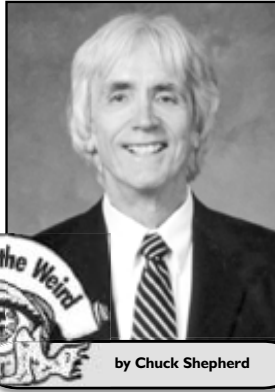
— Until August, Nettleton Middle School near Tupelo, Miss., had a strict policy for election of class officers for 6th-, 7th- and 8th-graders: Only white students could be president, and only black students could be vice president. (Other officers were segregated by race, as well.) Officials explained that it was one way to assure black representation even though three-fourths of the students are white. A school memo was leaked to The Smoking Gun website in August, and a day later the school district rescinded the

policy.

— After two Mexican fishermen were dragged from their boats and "chewed so badly that their bodies could not be identified by their own families," according to a Daily Express review of an August British TV documentary, warnings were issued along the Pacific coast about the northern migration of Humboldt squid. They grow to 8 feet long, weigh up to 100 pounds, travel up to 15 mph, have eight swim/hold tentacles -- and two "attack" tentacles that are studded with 40,000 or more razor-sharp "teeth"-like nubs that help each devour almost seven tons of fish a year. Furthermore, female Humboldts are capable of laying 30 million eggs.

It's Good to Be a British Criminal (continued)

— Briton Tania Doherty believed in 2008 that she was finally rid of ex-boyfriend Kawa ali Azad, who had stalked and assaulted her (once beating her unconscious) after she ended their affair in 2006. Azad had been arrested and ordered deported to his native Iraq, but when Iraq refused to take him, he applied to stay in



by Chuck Shepherd

Britain and, pending an immigration decision, was released by a judge sensitive to the "human rights" of someone seeking international "asylum." Azad immediately resumed harassing Doherty (who was chagrined to learn of the breadth of her violator's "human rights").

— Notorious killer Jon Venables, convicted in 1993 at age 11 of the torture-murder of a 2-year-old Merseyside boy, was held until age 18 and then released on conditions and with a new identity to protect him from harassment. In July 2010, after violating the conditions, Venables was sentenced to two years in jail for possessing and exchanging "violent" child por-

nography. According to a Daily Telegraph report, the Ministry of Justice has accepted that it will have to supply Venables yet another new identity upon his eventual release (with set-up likely to cost the equivalent of almost \$400,000 and security to run the equivalent of an additional \$1.6 million a year).

Unclear on the Concept

— Police in New Albany, Ind., arrested two alleged counterfeiters in August but believed that a much bigger operation was in play. Subsequently, the Indiana State Police made a public plea for informants, focusing on the people most likely to be cheated by counterfeit money: local drug dealers. "What we are asking today," said ISP Sgt. Jerry Goodin, "is we want all the drug dealers to call us. We want to get all of your information and exactly what happened in (any of your dealings)." Goodin added, "Trust us."

— In June, Raytown, Mo., farmer David Jungerman mounted a sign on a tractor-trailer denouncing "parasites" who "always have their hand out for whatever the government will give them." Following news reports about the sign, the Kansas City Star reported that

Jungerman himself had received more than \$1 million in federal crop subsidies since 1995. (He later explained that a "parasite" pays no taxes at all yet seeks handouts. By contrast, Jungerman said, he pays taxes.)

— The administrative staff for Queen Elizabeth II, running a budget shortfall in 2004 (according to recently released documents), asked the governing Labour Party if the royal family's palaces could qualify for government home-heating subsidies. The documents, obtained by London's The Independent, indicated that the Labour Party was initially receptive but then rejected the idea.

— Playboy magazine has long published an audio edition, and the Library of Congress produces a text edition in Braille. However, as a Houston Chronicle reporter learned in August, a Texas organization (Taping for the Blind) goes one step further, with volunteer reader Suzi Hanks actually describing the photographs — even the Playmates and other nudes. "I'd say if she has large breasts or small breasts, piercings or tattoos," said Hanks. "I'll describe her genitalia. ... I take my time describing the girls. ... Hey, blind guys like pretty, naked girls, too!"

Art for 'bright kids' foundation sets fundraiser at Powerhouse

BY MELANIE ADDINGTON

When Ole Miss art professor Brooke White went to Uganda the first time, she knew she had to give back to the community that helped shape her as an artist. Traveling to Africa numerous times over the years to photograph the landscapes that make up a good portion of her artwork, White chose to get involved with an orphanage as a volunteer. In 2010 she formed a foundation to help support the efforts of the Bright Kids orphanage. The first official fundraiser that includes a photo exhibit featuring children of the orphanage is set for Oct. 13 at the Powerhouse.

"Over the years, I have met so many people who have helped me make the

work I make today and in some way I have always wanted to give back to a region that has influenced my work," White said. "In 2005 when I was first introduced to Victoria Nalongo, the director of Bright Kids Uganda orphanage, I knew that she was someone who was trying to help the children of Uganda, many of whom who are former child soldiers, on a very small budget. I was moved by her dedication to the kids especially since she had very little to give them financially."

The exhibition and fundraiser will feature the photographs of White in a series called "Commuters", which documents the children of Bright Kids coupled with images of the landscape of Uganda. All the proceeds raised from the exhibition will go toward costs related to education for the kids at Bright Kids. During the

opening on Wednesday, Oct. 13, there will be a brief presentation about Bright Kids Uganda and there will be T-shirts for sale and all the photographs will also be for sale.

"It is our hope to raise \$1,500 during the month while the show is up so that the students will be able to continue their schooling for this academic year," White said.

After working with the orphanage for four years, White knew that creating a non-profit would be the best way to help the orphanage succeed.

"Victoria receives no funding from any large donors. She is primarily independent, receiving small donations from individuals only and because of this I felt like any fundraising effort I could do to help her would be felt in a large way at the orphanage," White said.

A U.S. based board of directors was formed, including Oxford locals Meg Shannon and Nina Rifkind, and the group is working to complete their federal non-profit status.

In 2010 Bright Kids Uganda Foundation, U.S.A., which is based in Oxford, was formed as a way to support the efforts of Victoria Nalongo the director of Bright Kids Uganda orphanage in Entebbe, Uganda. Since 2009 Bright Kids Uganda Foundation, U.S.A. has raised money to send children to school, sent two interns from the University of Pittsburgh to the orphanage to help with specific projects and are committed to raising funds that will help each child attend school on a regular basis. The ultimate goal is to make sure each child is sponsored.

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