

Brickbats

To attract new recruits for the traffic police, British officials planned a TV commercial extolling their good works. To film the spot, they cordoned off part of a major highway at rush hour, backing up traffic for miles in several directions. ☐

When Florida Highway Patrol officer A.J. Renard pulled over a Nissan Maxima for speeding, he felt that the driver, who was of Middle Eastern origin, behaved strangely. "Some people yell at us, and some don't say a word. But this man was laughing, and I felt it was suspicious," Renard said. When the man drove away, Renard started hyperventilating and became dizzy. He called for help and was taken to a local hospital, decontaminated and tested for various chemicals and germs. The diagnosis: The patrolman had had an anxiety attack. ☐

Hoping to foil potential terrorism, officials in New York's Dutchess County have removed the names from several government buildings, most prominently the County Office Building in Poughkeepsie. Presumably, the extra security around the buildings, including barriers and restricted parking, will never clue anyone in to the structures' actual importance. ☐

Germany is notorious for its censorship of violence in video games. Many violent games are heavily edited for the market. Others are banned entirely. But that still isn't enough for officials in Goettingen. They've slapped a 700 percent higher tax on violent arcade games than on ones they deem non-violent. ☐

About 20 percent of China's Internet users get their access through Internet cafés. But their ability to view uncensored

news and entertainment is being seriously curtailed by a government crackdown on such spots. Some 40,000 police officers have swept across the nation, shutting down almost 2,000 cafés. ☐

London's five "metric martyrs"—arrested for weighing their wares in pounds instead of kilos—are fighting in court to overturn their conviction. Not even the tyrannical Henry VIII tried to prohibit the sale of bananas by the pound, they argue. ☐

For centuries, the children of farmers have pitched in with the family business. For one British union, that constitutes exploitation. "In no other industry do we allow children in the workplace," says Barry Leathwood, of the Transport and General Workers' Union. The union wants minors banned from farm work and placed in "child care facilities" instead. ☐

The original opening sequence to *I Love Lucy* hasn't been seen in almost 50 years. And thanks to federal rules, it may never be seen again. For the 50th anniversary of the show's debut, the cable channel TV Land wanted to restore the original intro, showing an animated Desi and Lucy climbing ropes down the side of a pack of Phillip Morris cigarettes, the show's sponsor. But TV Land had to change its plans. "Phillip Morris said 'because of FCC regulations and because of all the different rules...we cannot give you permission to use that in your opening,'" said a TV Land spokesman. ☐

Charles Oliver

› infrastructure.

In the meantime, Bombardier Inc., the builder of Amtrak's high-speed Acela trains, has sued the railway for \$200 million. Bombardier accuses Amtrak of failing to describe accurately the poor quality of its track and failing to complete a new electric traction system between New Haven and Boston on time. Because of these problems, says the company, the new "high-speed" trains are anything but. Indeed, the upgraded trains are forced to make turns at the same 35 mph clip of older trains.

Bombardier further claims that Amtrak took two years to decide on draperies for windows, 18 months to choose door chimes, and two years to determine where appliances would go in galley cars. ☐

Drug war idiocy

Testing Frenzy

Sara Rimensnyder

THE TECUMSEH SCHOOL District of Oklahoma doesn't have a documented drug problem. Nevertheless, it has one of the strictest school drug-testing policies in the United States—so strict, in fact, that the Supreme Court will decide this spring whether it violates the Constitution.

The district requires that high school students undergo drug tests if they want to participate in any extracurricular activities, including such well-known dens of drug-related vice as the choir and the quiz team. Once students test clean, they also have to agree to random drug testing throughout the year.

Heading up the dissent are 16-year-old Lacey Earls and American Civil Liberties Union attorney Graham Boyd, who will argue the case in Washington. Says Boyd, "Drug testing represents the wholesale elimination of Fourth Amendment rights for all students that are subjected to it," adding that about 90 percent of students participate in after-school activities.

The Supreme Court has visited the topic of student drug testing before. In 1995, the

justices ruled that an Oregon school, whose jocks were reportedly using drugs and running amok, could test student athletes. But Boyd is confident the court won't extend that ruling to students in other after-school activities. Athletes, he will argue, "uniquely waive their privacy expectations by agreeing to other invasions of privacy," such as shared dressing rooms and physical exams.

While the Supreme Court teases out the legal issues, the Tecumseh school board could use a good, strong hit of common



sense: Kicking a kid out of choir—or discouraging him from ever signing up—only gives him more time to experiment in illegal extracurricular activities. ☐

Embargoed truths

Cuban Confusion

Sam MacDonald

HOW WELL HAS the decades-old U.S. embargo of Cuba worked? The official story is that the 39-year-old time-out imposed on our island neighbor to the south of Florida has successfully isolated Fidel Castro and friends from the rest of the world. Cuban officials are all too happy to agree: They need someone to blame for the foundering economic conditions that their people face.

A new study by the Cato Institute's Jonathan G. Clarke and the Hoover Institution's William Ratliff takes both sides to task. In "Report from Havana: Time for a Reality Check on U.S. Policy toward Cuba," Clarke and Ratliff detail their recent trips to Cuba and interviews with officials, dissidents, and regular citizens. The

Balance Sheet

Jeff A. Taylor

Question Time

Two Oregon cities refuse federal requests that they question 5,000 foreigners about terrorism. Officials in Portland and Corvallis say they cannot simply question people without cause. They argue further that police would be distracted from real live crimes during the dragnet.

Global Bargaining

International trade talks in Doha, Qatar, revive hope for freer trade. The U.S. admits that its anti-dumping laws need fixing and agrees to discuss ending all farm subsidies everywhere, something developing countries desperately want.

Broadcast News

Veteran CBS newsman Bernard Goldberg writes that network news not only has a liberal slant, but revels in it. His book *Bias* also details the contempt elite broadcasters have for their audience, a.k.a. "white trash."

Replay Official

SonicBlue stares down threatened lawsuits from TV networks and releases ReplayTV, a digital video recorder mated to a broadband pipe. The device allows users to share recorded programs with up to 15 others. SonicBlue says it's fair use, defying content lawyers who argue that fair use is null in the digital age.

Air Marshals

Burned by worldwide ridicule, Montgomery County, Maryland, backs away from a plan to regulate smoking in private homes. The county had planned fines of up to \$750 for people whose neighbors could smell cigarette smoke through the walls.

Ms. Fez

Lawmakers in Turkey update the nation's 76-year-old civil code to give women greater rights. Under the old code, husbands could legally forbid their wives from working outside the home.

Ukrainian Juggo

Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma blames the Internet when the headless corpse of a muckraking reporter turns up. "The Internet has become a killer. People can write whatever they like without signing their names," Kuchma says. Government officials consider licensing Web sites.

Mainline Justice

Despite official denials, talk of using truth serum on tight-lipped suspects swirls around the anti-terror probe. Proponents argue that injections are permissible if they prevent additional acts of terror.

Fast Capital

Washington, D.C., joins the list of cities using photo radar to catch speeders. The cameras are triggered when drivers go even 2 mph over the limit. Some consolation: Officers themselves have had to pay fines for tickets received while speeding to emergencies.

Raw Dealer

A Cobb County, Georgia, man is sued by a car dealer he complained about on a Web site. Jim Ellis Motors Inc. claims it was libeled when George Mantis posted that the dealer gave him the "worst service ever!" on his VW.

Name Game

As one of his last official acts, retiring Atlanta councilman Lee Morris tries to name streets for his kids. Morris introduced legislation changing the names of Dilbeck Place to Everett Lane and Junction Avenue to Jessie Junction. "The only thing they ever asked from me was this," Morris said.

Creepy Cakes

University of Maryland administrators force a student Web site, Terpldiots.com, to change names. "Terp" is a university trademark. Terpldiots was popular as a campus-wide discussion site with topics from fraternity reform to dating tips to academic ethics.