

A WEIRD YEAR

2008 had its share of odd and amusing moments

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BY RYAN E. SMITH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

These are historic times we're living in, and it has nothing to do with presidential elections or Wall Street bailouts. Instead, think: pregnant men and clones of dead pit bulls named Booger.

Yes, 2008 was a very weird year. Just ask Buck Wolf, the guide to weird news at About.com (weirdnews.about.com).

"Not a day passes when a guy is not arrested doing something in the nude," he said. "You learn a lot about society by what it's obsessed over."

For every story we read about Barack Obama, there was another with a mug shot of a woman in a cow costume. Were more people going bonkers or were we just drawn to these stories as an escape from all the other scary news out there? Decide for yourself as we recap some favorites from the past year and look forward to a 2009 filled with even weirder surprises.

OPENING ACT. Once again the most searched for item on Yahoo, Britney Spears starts things off in January by locking herself in a bathroom and refusing to hand her kids over to representatives of her ex-husband. She later is hospitalized for psychiatric evaluation. Now she is making a comeback with her album "Circus."

HACKED OFF. A voice-mail hacker in February changes the greeting for the city of Toledo's purchasing hot line from "Thank you for calling Toledo, the most liveable city" to "Carty Finkbeiner is a complete moron," in reference to the mayor.

DON'T GO IN THERE. A Kansas woman is taken to the hospital after sitting for two years on her boyfriend's toilet, despite protestations that she did not want to leave. The 35-year-old woman's skin had actually grown around the seat.

WAY OVER BUDGET. New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer resigns in March after reports surface that he allegedly spent \$4,300 — \$4,300! — for a tryst with a high-priced girl the night before Valentine's Day.

NO PRESERVATIVES? Fredric J. Baur, designer of the container for Pringles potato crisps and a University of Toledo graduate, dies in May and requests to have part of his cremated remains buried in one of the cans.

UNEXPECTED PREGNANCY. The so-called "pregnant man" gives birth to a daughter in June. Born a woman, Thomas Beatie underwent a sex change in the late 1990s but kept his female reproductive organs and eventually underwent artificial insemination. Now he is pregnant with a second child.

A SANDWICH CAN KILL YOU. That's the motto of a new fast-food restaurant in Lebanon. Called Buns and Guns, it is decorated like a military post and diners eat to the sound of gunfire rather than muzak. Menu items include the "rocket-propelled grenade," or chicken on a skewer.

STICKS AND STONES... A request by three residents of the Greek island of Lesbos to ban using the word lesbian to describe gay women is dismissed in court in July. The residents of the island, birthplace of the ancient Greek poet Sappho whose love poems inspired the term lesbian, argued the use insulted their identity.



DOGGONE IT. American Bernann McKinney pays South Korean scientists \$53,000 to clone pups from her dead pit bull, Booger. British tabloids recognize her face in August and say she is the same woman who 31 years earlier was accused of abducting a Mormon missionary in England, handcuffing him to a bed, and making him her sex slave.

DOGGONE IT, AGAIN. Toledo Mayor Carty Finkbeiner leaves his dog Scout in a city-owned vehicle with the air-conditioning on for more than 30 minutes. The incident occurs during a fair encouraging greener living among area residents.

BIG LETDOWN. Two self-proclaimed Bigfoot trackers claim to have found the body of a Sasquatch in the Georgia woods. The frozen corpse of the furry, ape-like beast is later determined to be a rubber costume.

WORKING OVERTIME. Unable to get its male employees from having affairs with women customers, Image Hotel in Turkey fires all of its male staff. The 27-room hotel in the popular Mediterranean hot spot is left with only four females employed there to take care of tourists.

NOT POLITICS AS USUAL. An Oregon town elects the country's first openly transgender mayor in November. Stu Rasmussen previously had been elected mayor in 1988 and 1990, but this time around he has breast implants and wears skirts, lipstick, and high heels.

BOSS'S DAY SURPRISE. Adolf Hitler's former maid, 91-year-old Rosa Mitterer, breaks her silence and calls the German dictator "a charming man" and "a great boss to work for." She had worked at his Bavarian mountain retreat before World War II.

SOURCES: About.com, AP, BBC News, CNN, Fox News, LA Times, Daily Mail, Reuters

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: ryansmith@theblade.com or 419-724-6103.

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