SOCIAL STUDIES

MICHAEL KESTERTON *mkesterton@globeandmail.com*

THE GLOBE + MAIL

Fear can make you frisky

"After an attack on public safety – say, in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings – have you ever found yourself preoccupied with dirty thoughts?" asks the Boston Globe. "If so, you are not alone. In a recent study, college students who were asked to think about death were subsequently more interested in watching TV shows and movies that happened to have more sexual content. There was no effect from thinking only about physical pain, and there was no effect on interest in dramatic or violent content, nor was there any moderation of the effect based on subjects' sexual attitudes."

Why are sunsets beautiful?

Humans have evolved an aesthetic sense as part of the wider analytic faculties of our brain, writes Aaron Hacon in BBC Focus magazine. "Far from being skin deep, 'beauty' is a shorthand way of measuring the fundamental

'rightness' of a thing. ... The philosopher Dennis Dutton has suggested that the open rolling plains with occasional trees that are so often represented in landscape art are beautiful to us because they resemble the savannah of the Pleistocene epoch, when Homo erectus was first developing an esthetic sense. Red sunsets would have been a familiar part of these landscapes, and in an era when night was the most dangerous time, making sure you were safely back at camp to appreciate the last dying gasp of the day was probably especially important."

Is your puppy in danger?

"Despite harrowing urban legends of chihuahuas carried off by birds of prey while their owners looked on in horror, hawks and eagles don't present a threat to most dogs and cats," writes Rob Fergus in Backyard Birding magazine. "While eagles are physically capable of carrying off very small dogs, these raptors usually satisfy themselves with easier prey and they don't typically hunt near homes. Red-tailed hawks and other smaller raptors hunt in cities and suburbs, but they can't carry off anything larger than the smallest puppy. If you own dogs weighing less than two pounds, consider keeping them inside, or create a covered area for them to use outdoors."

Eating high on the hog

"A restaurant in Australia is offering a $120 egg-and-bacon roll this week as part of Bacon Week," United Press International reports. 4Fourteen, a restaurant in

Surry Hills, Sydn
extravagant bre
on its menu for
features award-
pan-fried duck
and smoked go
toes, duck foie
fraîche, shaved
lish cheddar squ
handmade brioc
served with a sid
chef Carla Jones
believe many pe
new menu item.

Life in the teen

"A DJ mixing sta
sleepover room
ways inspired b
fully tricked-out
arcade. You've
wing of the hou
dace Jackson o
Journal. "As pa
tive ways to k
ing out at hon
turning to an
architects and
result is a new
now showing