



Tori Spelling - Our Hero

Weekly Idiot 98

"How often does your paper come out?"

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ALL NEW FOR '98



Welcome to the Weekly Idiot 98 upgrade. Please familiarize yourself with the newest features of WI98:

- *New Masthead!*
- *More graphics!*
- *More vile and disgusting articles!*
- *More capacity for idiocy with new, improved Human98!*

Wednesday December 24 10:02 AM EST

Woody Allen Marries Soon-Yi

By Serena Nordio

VENICE, Italy (*Reuters*) - Filmmaker Woody Allen married Soon-Yi Previn, the adopted daughter of his former lover Mia Farrow, in Venice Tuesday.

The newlyweds appeared in public together Wednesday -- and took a Christmas Eve gondola ride through Italy's lagoon city.

Allen, 62, and Previn, 27, were married at a quiet civil ceremony Tuesday afternoon, officiated by Venice Mayor Massimo Cacciari at the imposing Palazzo Cavalli near Venice's white-stone Rialto Bridge on the Grand Canal.

"I married them at 5 p.m. yesterday," Cacciari told Reuters Wednesday. "It had been planned a while ago and we were able to keep it a secret."

The couple were spotted strolling near the onion-domed St Mark's Cathedral before embarking in a gondola for a ride through Venice's many canals.

Asked by reporters about his wedding, twice-married Allen said: "I have nothing to say. I am happy to be in Venice."

Witnesses saw the couple kissing and hugging as the gondolier maneuvered his boat out of sight.

Allen and Previn spent the night at the famous Hotel Gritti in central Venice and were to leave the city later Wednesday, hotel staff said.

Venice airport officials said board a private flight to Paris at not immediately known whether the United States.

Allen and actress Farrow relationship in 1992 after she found Korean-born adopted daughter, in

The split sparked a widely custody of their two children.

Leslee Dart, Allen's statement that Allen and Previn had decided six years ago to get married in Venice, a city she called "very meaningful to them."

Mayor Cacciari said the bride and groom were informally dressed for their wedding and that Previn "wore her hair down with no special hair style."

After the ceremony attended by three other people, a city hall representative gave the newlyweds a glass vase depicting Venice's 18th century La Fenice opera house, the mayor said.

Allen, a frequent visitor to Venice, started a fund-raising campaign for La Fenice, shortly after it was gutted by fire in January 1996.

The film director, who enjoys widespread popularity in Italy, last December unveiled his first musical "Everyone Says I Love You," partly set in Venice, at a fund-raising gala for the opera house.

La Fenice, which means "Phoenix" in English, first opened in 1792 and was rebuilt after a fire in 1836. Considered an architectural jewel with its gilded and tiered interior, La Fenice staged premieres of some of Italy's most famous operas.

La Fenice should be restored by 1999 after reconstruction costing an estimated \$53 million.

The gondola trip was a moment of deja-vu for Allen and Previn who were screened taking a similar trip in a documentary on Allen's life, "Wild Man Blues," screened at this year's Venice Film Festival.

Honoring Allen for his work to raise cash for La Fenice, organizers opened the film festival in August with Allen's latest film "Deconstructing Harry," which was not part of the competition.

***"I have
nothing to
say. I am
happy to be
in Venice."***

the couple were expected to around 4 p.m. on Wednesday. It was they were to board a flight there for

ended their decade-long nude photographs of Soon-Yi, her Allen's apartment.

publicized battle over the

spokeswoman, said in a

Friday December 19 12:03 PM EST

Police dream of dry Xmas for Aussie Santas!

SYDNEY (*Reuters*) - Santa may be coming to town, but police in the Australian steel city of Newcastle have warned the ruddy-faced old man not to bring any booze in his sack.

Any Santa found with alcohol in his bag of goodies during the annual Santa Claus Pub Crawl along the city's hotels on Friday night will be fined A\$550 (US\$360).

"We have had a lot of trouble with the Santa Claus Pub Crawl in the past, with property damage in Newcastle for the past 10 years and normally attracts a crowd of 10,000 onlookers.

Thursday December 11 11:31 AM EST

Tiny, insect-like satellites proposed for space!

SAN FRANCISCO (*Reuters*) - Swarms of tiny, insect-like satellites weighing about half an ounce apiece could provide a cheap new alternative for space exploration, scientists reported this week.

Los Alamos National Laboratory researchers have designed new "microsatellites" with control systems based on simple animal neurons which they say could make complex, bulky spacecraft obsolete.

"These microsatellites can go where expensive, big satellites can't go and they can perform a class of business and science missions that no other platform can do," researcher Kurt Moore said in a news release at the American Geophysical Union meeting.

"Nobody knows how little you can go," he said. "That's what we aim to find out."

The little satellites, measuring just three inches across, could be sent on missions to measure solar wind and map different parts of the Earth, the team said.

They could prove more reliable than conventional, large satellites because their simple robotic controllers have been built to survive in almost any environment -- and can work in concert, enabling the swarm to continue even if one individual unit fails.

Calling the microsatellites "the logical end of one evolutionary trend in space exploration," the researchers explained that their control system reproduces a pulse similar to an animal's instinctive twitch.

Simple enhancements of the control system produced "a walking, insect-like robot with remarkable survival skills", the team said, adding that the micro-bugs appeared "nearly impervious to

electrical or mechanical fault and surprisingly capable of self assembly and collective behavior."

Tuesday December 16 5:01 PM EST

Meteorite suspected in fatal house fire!

BOGOTA (*Reuters*) - A meteorite may have triggered a fire that killed four small children in central Colombia, local media reports said Tuesday.

Bogota's El Espectador newspaper quoted witnesses, including the children's father and local firefighters, as saying "fireballs" had been spotted raining down from the sky in the impoverished area of Huila province where the children died in the house fire on Sunday evening.

The children, all under six, were alone in their ramshackle house when the fire broke out and authorities initially suspected a candle or electrical short circuit.

But Capt. Carlos Augusto Rojas of the fire department in Pitalito, a town three miles from the village where the fire occurred, said the house had no electricity and other possible causes of the blaze -- including a candle or gas lamp -- had been ruled out.

Speaking in an interview with the Radionet all-news radio program, Rojas said he saw three distant fireballs in the sky when he arrived to fight the blaze.

He said a hole, measuring about 10 inches in diameter, was discovered in the zinc roof of the house, along with traces of a sulfur-like substance that was being studied in a local laboratory.

The hole in the roof had been punched from the outside, Rojas said, adding that everything seemed to indicate the children were the unwitting victims of a meteorite

"If it attacks, present an arm or something that isn't vital."

-- A game officer in Florida, offering advice for anyone encountering Nala, the escaped lion.

Thursday December 11 11:25 AM

Hitler remains honorary citizen of famed spa!

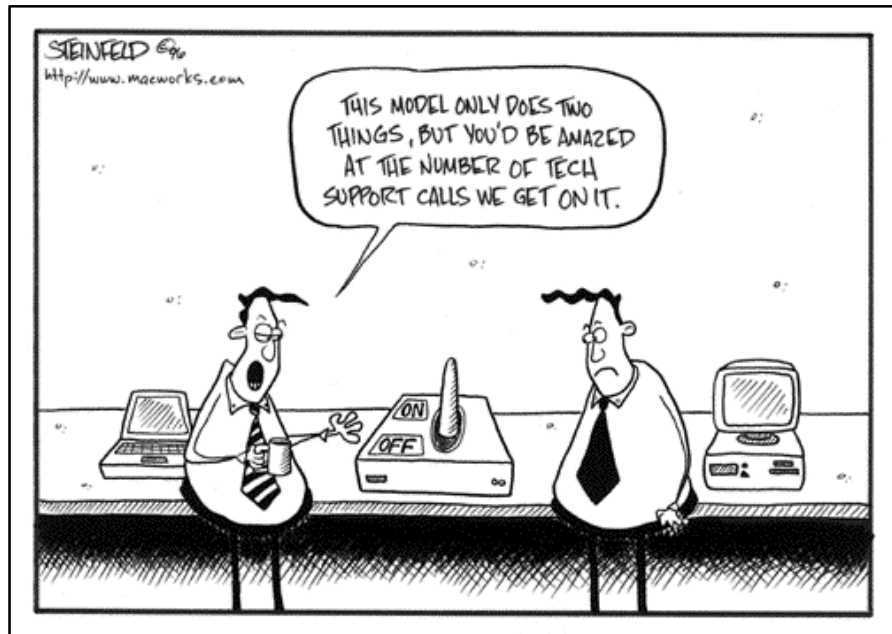
PRAGUE (Reuters) - Adolf Hitler remains an honorary citizen of one of the Czech Republic's most famous spa towns, Karlovy Vary, the jewel of the German-populated Sudetenland that he annexed in 1938, a Czech newspaper reported on Thursday.

The daily Mlada Fronta Dnes quoted city hall official Zdenek Musil as saying Karlovy Vary -- Karlsbad in German -- had no plans to cancel the honor granted to Hitler and to 'Sudeten German' leader Konrad Henlein.

"Both men are part of the 20th-century history of Karlovy Vary," he said. "Destroying memorials is undignified and, what's more, rescinding citizenship would only be a formality."

Many people in the city's majority ethnic-German population welcomed Hitler's forces when they occupied the German-speaking Sudetenland region in Czechoslovakia following the Munich Agreement with western European powers.

But most reminders of the Nazi occupation -- such as street names and public monuments -- were changed or removed by the subsequent communist government. Many communist-era names and memorials were in turn removed or changed after the 1989 democratic revolution.



The New York Times reported in August that more than a third of all bottled water sold in the U.S. is merely filtered tap water and that several cities soon will put their municipal water on store shelves. "What comes out of the tap is truly excellent water," said the public works director of Houston, Tex. Wrote the Times, "Thus, the marketing plans dare consumers to pay as much as \$1.00 more for a quart of water in a bottle that could be drawn from their own taps and placed in a refrigerator for less than 1/10 of a cent." (The Times reporter, tasting Houston's water, wrote, apparently without irony: "Bold, full-bodied, provocative.")

* * * *

Well-to-do Frederick, Md., plastic surgeon Lorin F. Busselberg, 54, slumped rapidly after a 1995 divorce ended his 20-year marriage. He has been jailed since May for failing to pay \$25,000 in child support, and according to a July Washington Post story, he now denies ever being married to the wife, and in fact constantly corrects officials that he is a different man, "Lorin Fred Busselberg." His employees quietly shut down his office after he failed to contact them from jail, and he told a judge in July that he had sold the practice for a million yen to a Japanese man, but no record exists of the sale.

Cult leader Charles Manson, has been denied parole for the ninth time. According to AM NewsAbuse he claimed it was perfectly 'cool' with him because he was 'involved in too many things,' and (ah hem) 'I have a Web page I'm working on.'

Jennifer Lee RoGala, 30, was arrested in March in Anthony, Ala., and charged with aggravated child abuse after she playfully chased and wounded three neighborhood children by shooting them with an air-powered pellet gun. According to the neighbor who called the police, RoGala was unremorseful: "She said they used to do it all the time up North and couldn't understand what the big deal was about shooting kids with pellets."

According to testimony in June in Chicago in a kidnapping trial, Richard Romero, 36, had befriended a local 13-year old boy in an Internet sex chat and had arranged to whisk him off to St.Petersburg, Fla. An acquaintance of Romero, self-described faith healer Kim Wistey, said Romero told him he was a mutant who was genetically engineered and programmed by the federal government to die at age 30 but that a benevolent alien race called the Vagans had proved that "extracting the energy from pornography" could stop his cells from dying. Romero allegedly said that if Wistey would put him up for a while, he'd work on computer databases to find a cure for Wistey's mother's cancer. Romero was also enthusiastic, said Wistey, about the "Five-Cent Plan," by which the two men would get rich tapping into the IRS fund that contains a nickel from each tax return ever filed. Said Wistey, after the prosecutor asked if he believed all of this: "I didn't want to be closed-minded."



Wednesday December 24 11:18 AM EST

Court upholds Satanists' stiff sentences!

ATHENS, Greece (*Reuters*) - An appeals court upheld stiff prison sentences Tuesday for two young Satanists, convicted of rape and murder in grisly black magic ceremonies that shocked Greece.

"In making our decision we followed the public prosecutor's proposals," presiding Judge Christos Baltas said.

Three cult members were appealing 1995 convictions for kidnapping, raping and murdering a 30-year-old woman and a 15-year-old girl in occult ceremonies at deserted

buildings near Athens.

The court upheld life sentences on two counts of rape and murder and one count of kidnapping for Asimakis Katsoulas, 24, and Manos Dimitrokalis, 23, also known by their cult names Amon and Enigma.

Katsoulas' former girlfriend and "high priestess" Dimitra Marieti, 22, was again found guilty as an accessory to murder but the court reduced her prison term of 18 years and four months by one year. Appearing with heads bowed and silent, they tried to convince the court they had seen the light and had now turned to God. But testimonies by would-be cult members reminded the court of the hideous crimes in the name of ancient demons that appalled Greece when the case broke.

"I walked into a room where a naked woman was lying on the floor and was told to kill her with a

knife. I couldn't do it. My initiation ceremony was ruined," Vassillis Michos, a youth who had flirted with the cult, told the court.

The three confessed after their arrest in December 1993 that they led a 20-member satanic cult that had conducted animal and human sacrifices on the outskirts of Athens for three years.

The case mesmerized Greece and television paraded experts -- from psychologists to church witch-hunters -- to determine whether the youths believed in Satan or merely used the occult to rape, kill and obtain money.

Convicts serving life terms can request to be released after serving at least 20 years. The death penalty was abolished in Greece in 1993.

The International Advertising Association has been bombarding over 200 countries with \$300 million worth of ads touting the virtues of commercials. Typical are these two ads just recently introduced to U.S. audiences. In the first we see a rock band performing in front of logos for Shell, Pepsi, Xerox and British Airways. A voice then asks, "Have you ever wondered why most pop concerts are sponsored? It's really quite simple. Without the ads, the beat would not go on." Then one by one everything disappears until we are left with the announcer's voice proclaiming "Advertising. Your right to choose." But even dearer to my heart is this next ad on brand names. We see a woman at a grocery check out counter unloading familiar names when The Voice tells us: "A friend is someone you know about, someone you can trust. A brand's a bit like that. You meet this friend through advertising.... Without advertising, how would you recognize your friends?"

In May, Scripps Howard News Service profiled former lawyer James Kelley of Washington, D.C., one of a small group at his local church who are enthusiastic Episcopalians but who do not believe in God. Said Kelley, "We all love the incense, the stained glass windows, the organ music, the vestments, and all of that. It's drama. It's aesthetics. It's the ritual. That's neat stuff. I don't want to give all that up, just because I don't believe in God."

"We interrupt this commercial message for another commercial message." It was only a matter of time before advertisements would start reproducing and spawn their own commercials. This historic step has finally been taken by MarkeTVision. These producers of infomercials now include ads for other products in their half hour shows. There is even a technical phrase to describe the adding of commercials on top of commercials. It is called "revenue - enhanced programming". MarkeTVision has found that revenue from the "image spots" (or short commercials) can cover the costs of the longer infomercial. The idea was tested recently with an infomercial on Grateful Dead products. MarkeTVision plans to "take the idea of revenue - enhancing programming and introduce it to the Fortune 500 companies and their agencies." We can hardly wait.



Christmas is on the way out. "Nobody puts Merry Christmas on their shopping bags anymore," says Ann Pinkerton, spokeswoman for shopping bag maker Continental Extrusions.

Archway cookies is replacing its traditional bells, wreaths and candles with "a more generic look of winter scenes." Coors Beer is even replacing the red and green on its Winterfest beer with gold and silver. The reason? Why are Santa and Rudolph giving way to Norman Rockwell style snow covered landscapes? Very simple. The generic winter look stretches the shelf life of the product. The

problem with Santa (whose image was first marketed in the 1920's by Coca-Cola) is that, in Ms. Pinkerton's words, "the buying season is considerably longer." Christmas imagery is out in January. So we've progressed from Christ's birth to the fat elf on a sleigh to Hallmark Cards' "Happy Holidays" to the all-purpose Winter Consumption Season.

Hospitals Expand Their Horizons!

First it was our manufacturing jobs going to foreigners, now it's even our hospital beds. U.S. hospitals are now actively recruiting foreign patients (make that wealthy foreign patients) because they pay up front in cash and come free of HMO's, medicare and insurance hassles. Hospitals compete in what John Hutchins, a director at Johns Hopkins describes as the "delicate business" of soliciting foreign patients. Johns Hopkins, for example, has been specializing in casualty patients from various wars, a field Mr. Hutchins describes as "a new and expanding market niche." Other hospitals advertise "health vacations" with golf and tennis lessons thrown in or package deals on coronary bypasses. This ambulance chasing abroad is defended by Stanford Medical Center President Peter Van Etten: "Industry has certainly approached international markets as a normal part of their operations, so why shouldn't hospitals?" Absolutely. When we can no longer conceive of medicine as a service or a calling, why not? (WSJ 10/7)

* * * *

Richard Gallagher had a score to settle with the Herricks High School administration. He held a job as a custodian there, but was let go about a year ago so he figured a good revenge would be to blow the place up. But he couldn't do it alone. His solution? To call up congressman Peter King and ask for some help. According to police reports an intoxicated Gallagher phoned King and said, "This is Richie. Herricks is going up in flames tomorrow." He then hung up, but called back a little while later. Police were already at Kings house because of the first call, so King arranged to meet Gallagher at a bar. They met and Gallagher was arrested after he offered King \$2,000 to help him blow up the school. Gallagher thought King would help him out because King was "was one of the boys". King has no idea what that means, stating "It's bizarre".

* * * *

The Hungarian newspaper Blikk had some technical problems with a recent interview with Madonna. Apparently, the papers questions were translated into English for her, then her answers translated into Hungarian for the papers readers. Finally, the whole thing was translated back to English for an American publication.
Samples of the text:

Paper: "Budapest says hello with arms that are spread-eagled. Are you in good odor? You are the biggest fan of our young people who hear your musical productions and like to move their bodies in response."

Madonna's response "Thank you for saying these compliments. Stop with taking sensationalist photographs until I have removed my garments for all to see. This is a joke I have made."

The paper then asks about her pregnancy with her "love servant", to which she replies, "It is a scientific fact that the baby was made in my womb. But as regards these questions, I am a woman not a test mouse!"

According to the memoirs of the late Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, Cuban president Fidel Castro decided on the important post of head of the National Bank of Cuba in 1959 by asking his assembled aides, "Tell me, friends, which of you is an economist?" Che Guevara, assuming that Castro had said "Communist," replied, "I am." Whereupon Castro said, "Okay, you handle the economy."

A man in Providence, R.I. has been arrested for distribution of gambling devices. John Perrotta, 29, was hauled in following a three week investigation during which authorities discovered that he was using his vending machine business as a front for an unorthodox gambling ring. He would allegedly deliver gumball machines to various locations, and people would eagerly pump quarter after quarter into them. They would do this because Perrotta had allegedly filled the machines with small plastic balls which contained bills ranging from \$1 to \$10.

In Burbank, California, in February, a 55-year-old man who placed an ad in a local bondage and discipline magazine arranged a liaison in his home with another man. When the man answered the door, the date forced him to crawl

through his house to his bondage room, where the man was tied, nude, to a "proctologist table." According to police, the date and his accomplice, waiting outside, then stole the man's sofa, leather chair, TV set and other items. (4/11/96)

James Mascetta, 40, was charged with dispensing a narcotic in December in Nashua, N.H. Bailiffs caught Mascetta handing a packet of heroin to a woman sitting at the defendant's table in a courtroom while she was awaiting arraignment on another drug charge. (4/11/96)

A district court in southern Sweden fined Elizabeth Hallin \$680 for naming her 5-year-old son "Brfxccxxmnpccclllmmnprxvclmncckssqbb11116." She said the name is pronounced "Albin." The Hallins said they would appeal the fine, arguing that the name is "a pregnant, expressionistic development that we see as an artistic creation." (5/15/96)

In Ireland, a man staggered into the emergency room of Belfast Hospital with a wind-up turtle attached to his testicles, explaining that his young son had dropped the toy into his bath. "A mechanical joint connected to his tender bits and jammed solid," a nurse said.

Maryland police reported that after James D. Padgette Jr., 35, turned into a parking lot to make a U-turn, his door came open and he fell out, then was run over by his car. He wasn't seriously hurt but reportedly tried to drive away in a car that looked like his but wasn't. The owner called police, who charged Padgette with driving while intoxicated. (2/21/96)

When a Philadelphia house caught fire, neighbors Don and Cynthia Stephens ran to help, leaving their front door open to air out the smoke. While they tried to get into the burning house to save the Jameses inside, police said family member Kenneth James, 29, entered the Stephenses' open door and helped himself to their winter coats, a cellular phone, a video camera, cameras, jewelry and about \$100. Don Stephens said he spotted James with their belongings but continued his rescue efforts. James's sister and 9-year-old cousin died in the blaze. (4/10/96)

In Somerset, Pennsylvania, in July, Mr. Ali Burke, 25, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct at a McDonald's after he squirted ketchup on the nose of the Hamburgler and licked it off. (12/7/95)

In November, Knight Ridder New Service reported that the government in Nanning, China, was levying fines of about \$1.50 for anyone ordering more food in restaurants than he or she can eat. (3/14/96)

In February, a 44-year-old man was killed on the shoulder of I-95 in Rhode Island after being hit by a truck while standing between two other trucks, one hauling granite for tombstones and the other belonging to the Yates Casket Co. (3/7/96)

Houston police arrested a 46-year-old man in February and charged him with molesting his 12-year-old granddaughter. Police officers and social workers suspect that the man is not only the father of the girl's mother, but of the girl, too, and, noting that the granddaughter is five months pregnant, also suspect he is the father of what would be his own great-granddaughter. (The suspect denied all accusations.) (3/21/96)

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