

# National

# Python tries to eat owner

## Boy flooded with offers to replace stolen bike

United Press International  
CLEVELAND — Donald's parents are crippled, but they were determined their son should have a bicycle — even though it meant putting aside \$5 a month for almost two years from their \$503 monthly Social Security checks.

On Sept. 19, his dreams were realized with a 26-inch, black-and-blue 10-speed that cost \$99 at a local bike shop.

"For most kids, there's nothing special about getting a bike," said Shirrel Starkey, the salesman at Friedrich Bicycle Inc. "But I remember this kid. Over and over, he said, 'Gee, a new bike.' He was very carried away with it."

But six days later, while riding home after a shopping errand, a youth about 18 pushed Donald off his bike and rode off.

"Get off the bike and gimme it or you get beat up," the thief told Donald.

The police report said the man kicked Donald before he rode off on the bike.

"I don't need a bike right away," the boy later told his mother. "It was just a good thing I didn't get hurt."

Now, the 12-year-old "straight A" student is getting a new 10-speed bike thanks to a local department store, after word of his plight brought dozens of offers of help from people throughout northeast Ohio.

"At least you know there are some good people in the world," said Donald, whose parents have asked their last name not be publicized out of fear some other bandit might get the idea to victimize them.

A newspaper story about the

robbery prompted nearly 100 people — from construction workers to an entire eighth-grade class at a suburban parochial school — to offer to replace the stolen bicycle.

One offer came from a pregnant woman who said she could no longer use her 10-speed and Donald was "welcome to it." Another came from a retiree who said his bicycle was stolen decades ago and he remembered what it was like.

There also was an electrical contractor who said buying a new bike for Donald "will make the boy feel good, but it will make me feel even better."

Donald accepted the Higbee Co.'s offer to present him with a new \$110 10-speed bike, saying he and his parents were simply overwhelmed by the outpouring of public generosity.

United Press International  
GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Monty the 14-foot python, disdaining a mere bite of the hand that fed him, tried to swallow his owner whole.

As a result, Monty's intended lunch, J. Bennett Boggess, 23, has put his thankless serpent up for sale. The immediate response was less than overwhelming.

Boggess said he wanted to sell Monty, rather than give him away, so he could buy a smaller snake, which presumably would have a smaller appetite.

Boggess' girlfriend, Rosemary Russell, said the sight of Monty trying to swallow Boggess head first was "the most horrible thing I have ever seen."

"The snake was attached to his

head. I thought he was choking so bad, with blood coming out of his mouth, that he was going to die," she said Wednesday, recalling the incident last week.

Boggess, a billings clerk at Shands Teaching Hospital, was rushed to the hospital where three of the snake's teeth were removed from his skull, he was treated for shock and given tetanus shots.

Boggess, who kept Monty at his apartment, was about to feed a live rabbit to the snake drooped around his neck when suddenly it opened wide its jaws and began eating him instead.

Richard Frank, a friend who also happened to be in Boggess' apartment at the time, got a knife

and preparing to hack Monty but Boggess waved him off.

"All you could see was one eye and a nostril," Frank said. "You could see the blood going down

over his eyes." Boggess jabbed at the snake's eyes and throat and after a struggle of about six minutes, dislodged the reptile.

## Success rate for test tube babies improving

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Test tube baby pioneer Robert G. Edwards says this year may be the turning point for the birth of children from eggs fertilized in laboratory dishes and then implanted in the mother's womb.

By the end of the year, Edwards said, 15 to 20 such babies will have been born in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Edwards, who collaborated with gynecologist Patrick Steptoe to make possible the first test tube baby birth three years ago, said the British team has established 40 more pregnancies since resuming test tube baby work nine months ago. He said the majority of the fetuses are surviving.

"This is most encouraging for those couples who could not be offered any other form of corrective surgery and have so far been

without effective treatment (for infertility)," Edwards said in a status report in the Sept. 24 issue of Nature, the British science journal.

He said the implantation of eggs fertilized in the laboratory can be performed several times on the same woman and the success rate soon should exceed that obtained by some forms of surgery to repair fallopian tube blockage, a frequent cause of infertility.

The upbeat report countered a review by National Institutes of Health researcher Gary D. Hodgen who said in the Aug. 7 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association that the rate of success has been disappointing.

Hodgen, who heads the pregnancy research branch at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, said an

individual couple today has only a small chance of becoming parents utilizing test tube fertilization techniques.

Nevertheless, a dozen medical centers in the United States are beginning to try the procedure. The first was at the Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, where a successful pregnancy was announced last May with delivery expected in December.

A second test tube pregnancy has since been announced at the Virginia center.

The most recent test tube baby clinic to open was at the Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo, N.Y.

Edwards, of Cambridge University, said test tube baby methods will soon be introduced in many other countries around the world to alleviate infertility.

## Portable kerosene heater hot item on U.S. market

United Press International  
NEW YORK — A good example of the opportunities being missed by complacent American businessmen is seen in the success story of Bill Litwin of Kent, Conn., who is selling about \$100 million worth of portable precision kerosene heaters this year.

Litwin is an ex-airplane pilot for the Navy and Pan American World Airlines, who with his wife, Marcia, started a store in an old post office building at Kent to sell wood and coal stoves early in the 1970s.

He kept his job at Pan Am and on a trip to Japan discovered a precision portable kerosene heater on a friend's boat that struck him as having great possibilities for reducing the cost of home heating.

After buying such a stove and succeeding in halving his own home heating bill the following winter, he persuaded the Japanese manufacturer to let him sell the line in the United States.

He now has built the business up to a line of a dozen models designed to his specifications and this year his firm, KeroSun, will sell one million of these heaters.

Following his example, seven other American makers are now marketing small precision kerosene space heaters, all manufactured outside the United States, and Litwin said total sales this year will exceed two million stoves.

The missed opportunities arise from the fact that similar precision kerosene heaters have been made in the United States for the yacht market for years yet none of the manufacturers saw the opportunity to massmarket them for home use as Litwin did. In fact, Litwin said, one of the leading makers of marine stoves told him flatly there was no market for them in homes and he would be wasting his time and capital trying to sell them.

The marine stoves, of course, had to be precision units made of

costly materials, compared to the crude kerosene cooking and heating stoves usually used in the United States in the past.

The Kero-Sun heaters, for example, have suggested retail prices ranging from \$170 to \$290. They come in both radiant and convective types and various sizes. They are wick burners but their combustion has to be above 99 percent. They are electrically ignited by D-size batteries.

Their purpose is to supplement central heating: they can't keep water pipes from freezing in cold climates for example.

Although his stoves all are made in Japan now, Litwin told United Press International he would not rule out the possibility of manufacturing them in the United States at competitive prices.

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