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Prank brings extra business to messengers

HOUSTON (AP) — A few more may be wearing a lot less, thanks to a local high-school student's woes.

Local "stripper-gram" messenger services are crediting a rise in business to publicity from a recent controversy involving Kingwood High School valedictorian Michael Woosley.

Woosley, 18, was suspended for the last six days of school, deprived of his honors and barred from commencement exercises for sending a stripper-gram to his physics teacher.

The stripper, dressed as a police officer, was stopped early in her performance before the class. "We had just been in our physics teacher's class for two years, and we liked him a lot," Woosley said. "It was just a joke. I think it was taken wrong, and I think it was wrong to do it."

Representatives of local messenger services say the publicity from Woosley's stunt has brought an increase in business. Other types of exposure, such as mention in a movie or on television, tend to boost the industry as well, they say.

About 20 different companies deliver singing and stripping telegrams in the Houston area. Greg Jett, owner of Singing Cavalier Balloons and Tunes, said it is a unique form of entertainment.

"(It) is a different kind of entertainment business, a fast-food entertainment business," he said.

Female strippers for Singing Cavalier are less risqué than those for some competitors, he said, only baring as much as corsets, garters and stockings. Messengers for Captain Telegram, the service which Woosley contracted, are more bold and may strip down to bikinis or pasties and G-strings.

Although the "stripper-gram" industry has been in Houston since about 1980, according to Jett, companies must be careful not to exceed certain taste standards which could damage all types of messenger services.

"It all started out very modestly with tuxedoed and costumed performers, and then belly dancers," he said. "But when you get into the strippers you run the chance of wrecking the whole industry."

Some businesses will not allow singing telegrams to be delivered on their premises because of past incidents, such as messengers baring almost all in a family restaurant, Jett said.

What's up

Tuesday

TAMU SAILING CLUB: will hold a membership drive day at Rudder Fountain and a meeting and novice class at 4:15 p.m. in 410 Rudder.
Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no less than three working days before desired publication date.

Heart association urges checkups every five years

DALLAS (AP) — The American Heart Association released a new blueprint for health Monday, recommending for the first time that healthy adults get periodic physical checkups starting at age 20 to help prevent heart attacks and strokes.

The recommendations for checkups at least every five years mark a broader approach to the silent diseases of heart attacks and strokes, said Dr. J. Alan Herd, a member of the committee that drew up the recommendations.

He said the AHA is urging doctors to tell patients about their test results and suggest appropriate diet or lifestyle changes.

"What this is doing is putting the responsibility on the individual patient and his physician," association spokesman Howard Lewis said. "Hopefully, it will get the physician who's actually seeing the patient more tuned in to practicing prevention at the same time."

Herd admitted the recommendations may bother some doctors, partly because of the five-year time period rather than the traditional one-year time frame.

"This is not really pitched toward changing physician practices," he said. "There's no question that we're taking a position that (yearly checkups) may be more than is appropriate."

Herd said the AHA took a cost-efficiency point of view on the length of time between checkups, judging that for most healthy adults a five-year checkup is the most efficient schedule.

The American Medical Association is in accord with the AHA study, although the five-year guideline

should be used only for patients at zero or minimal risk, Joseph Skom of Chicago, a member of the AMA's council on scientific affairs.

"Obviously, these tables have to be modified depending what your focus is and what family history is," Skom said.

"There are some people who need more frequent checkups; they need to be reassured that everything is all right," Skom said.

The push for heart checkups is inspired by successful public health programs about high blood pressure, said Herd, medical director of the Institute of Medicine at Houston's Methodist Hospital.

"The transaction should be something more than, 'You don't have heart disease now. You don't have diabetes now. You don't have cancer now,'" he said.

"We have learned that the physician's efforts in suggesting checkups that they should change more successful than we think," he said.

The AHA's recommendations were released at a news conference in Dallas-based organization's campaign of heart disease prevention and also urge patients to get about test results.

"We don't want to make you anxious about it, although I'd like to help," Herd said, adding that he all expect to live a healthy older years, it's a personal investment and the physician can help with that.

Exotic animal sale near Bastrop allows people to buy lions, tigers

BASTROP (AP) — Every year, people stand in line to take advantage of Ted Wenk's offer to take a baby lion, tiger, leopard or some other exotic animal off his hands during the spring clearance sale at the Wild World Animal Park.

The park, on Texas Highway 71, near Bastrop, 23 miles east of Austin, has all the animals it needs, so it sells most of the baby animals that are born each year, said Wenk, owner of the park.

According to an advertisement in state newspapers, the park, which breeds and sells wild animals, "will take anything of value" in payment for them.

"This is a roadside zoo, and we've just got all the big animals we can handle right now," Wenk said. "We've been selling our babies for the past couple of months."

"We've got four tigers, all 3 weeks old; three leopards, 4 weeks old; four monkeys, who range in age from 8 months to 10 years; two female hybrid wolves, 6 weeks old; and

a few baby pygmy goats. Everything else we had for sale has already been sold. We've sold all our baby lions."

"This is a roadside zoo, and we've just got all the big animals we can handle. We've been selling our babies for the past couple of months."

— Ted Wenk, owner of Wild World Animal Park

Nothing on the lot sells for more than \$2,000.

"You can buy a tiger for \$2,000 or less," Wenk said. "You can buy a leopard for \$1,800 or less. Lions are the cheapest because they breed like housecats. It seems like there's a glut on lions now. I've sold lions for as cheap as \$300, and I think the most I've ever gotten is about \$1,200."

Wolf cubs go for \$500, monkeys for \$500, the talking parrots for

\$350 and the pythons for \$150.

"A lot of our good customers wait," Wenk said. "We have been that pregnant now and we got three people who want to buy."

He tries to place the animals with other trainers and breeders, Wenk said. Other people buy his animals, since he breeds their own, he said.

"Some are bought by wealthy individuals who just want them for their own pleasure," he added.

Buying a baby lion or tiger pet "is a bit foolish and dangerous because someday it's going to grow up into a formidable animal," said. "But people still buy them."

Anyone can buy the animals, most municipalities won't limit exotic pets within city limits, they require special and expensive care, Stanley Davidoff of World Animal Park added.

About 90 percent of the animals sold to individuals are brought within the first two or three Davidoff said.

What's ON NOW With This Picture

REPO MAN
A Universal Picture July 22

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF
One man's struggle to take it easy. July 15

ET
THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL
June 10

MEL BROOKS IN HIGH ANXIETY
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