

Sidelights

If you do not have mirth you will certainly have madness—G. K. Chesterton

By Brandon Bosworth

There are at least 50 American colleges and universities that offer courses in “video game study.” ... Over three fourths of U.S. college students are registered to vote, though only half consider themselves interested in politics, according to a Harvard University survey.

☛ A Gallup Poll shows there are now more wine drinkers in America than beer drinkers. ☛ British churches sponsor more missionary work in France than in any other nation in the world. ... At least seven evangelical Christian churches have been established in Baghdad since the U.S. liberation. ☛ Saddam Hussein told his lawyers that if he is sentenced to death by the Iraqi government, his preference is to be executed by a firing squad. ☛ John Kerry stated that the Bush administration’s use of warrantless wiretaps is “a clear violation of the law,” and called for a special counsel to investigate the practice. He then declared in the same ABC interview that

Democrats are “prepared to eavesdrop wherever and whenever necessary in order to make America safer.” ☛ Suicide is the leading cause of death among China’s young adults, according to the Chinese government. A quarter million Chinese kill themselves annually. Three million attempt suicide every year. ☛ A recent survey by the European Commission found that support for the European Union is declining among its citizens—asked if their country’s E.U. membership is “a good thing,” an average of only 50 percent now say yes. ... Only

32 percent of Austrians and 33 percent of Britons believe being part of the European Union is a good thing for their nation. ☛ **The British are the most prolific shoplifters in Europe**, says a study by the Center for Retail Research. Britons stole \$6.3 billion from retail shops in 2004. In total, Europeans lifted \$36.7 billion worth of merchandise from their stores.

Sales of luxury goods in the U.S. have almost doubled in the last five years. Nearly **\$600 billion worth of luxury goods** were sold in the U.S. in 2005. ☛ *Money* reports that over half of Americans would stay at their current jobs even if their salaries were cut 25 percent. ☛ Divorce leads to a 77 percent reduction in an individual’s personal assets, according to a study by Ohio State University. “**Divorce causes a decrease in wealth** that is larger than just splitting a couple’s assets in half,” says study author Jay Zagorsky. Getting married, meanwhile,

increases a person’s net worth by about 4 percent per year. “If you really want to increase your wealth, get married and stay married.” ☛ Companies now earn around \$2 billion annually from licensing and **selling songs for use as ring tones** on cell phones. ☛ Over 80 percent of Americans believe in God, according to a recent Harris poll. Seventy percent believe Jesus is the Son of God. ... Ninety-three percent of Republicans believe in God, versus 81 percent of Democrats. ☛ Black baby girls born prematurely are more than twice as likely to survive as white baby boys born prematurely at similar weights, according to University of Florida researchers. ☛ Two out of three U.S. children between the ages of eight and 18 have a **television in their bedroom**, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation study. ... Based on a study of 523 Italian couples, researcher Serenella Salomoni has concluded that TV in bed is bad for adult intimacy: “If there’s no television in the bedroom, the frequency [of sexual intercourse] doubles.” ☛

The Danish government has launched a program to **pay prostitutes to service the disabled**. ☛ Residents of Gaywood Road in Contra Costa, California have had a fourth street sign stolen from the neighborhood. The local paper reports that the \$600 signs are “nabbed by pranksters humored by the name.” ☛ **Tired of giggles and snickers**, Hong Kong immigrant Fuk King Kwok of Chicago officially changed his name to Andy Kwok.

