

# Sidelights

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

By Brandon Bosworth

At present, 33 billionaires live in Moscow, versus 31 in New York City. ☛ Seventy-four percent of Europeans and 51 percent of Americans favor the promotion of democracy as a foreign policy objective, according to a study by the German Marshall Fund. ☛ Money provided by the United Nations was used by the **Palestinian Authority** to produce thousands of banners, bumper stickers, mugs, and T-shirts bearing the slogan, “Today Gaza, tomorrow the West Bank and Jerusalem.” ☛ The Saudi government has approved plans to destroy **Mohammed’s birthplace**. In the last 20 years, the Saudis have destroyed over 90 percent of the ruins in Mecca and Medina that date from the time of Mohammed. Avoidance of “idolatry” is the stated reason. ☛ French police detained nine members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, suspecting them of planning attacks on a Paris airport, the metro, and the headquarters of France’s domestic intelligence service. . . . About three fourths of **anti-Western terrorists** are from the middle or upper classes, economically, reports the *New York Times*. ☛ Among the top 250 **political blogs**, conservatives have a 157 to 93 advantage over their left-leaning counterparts, according to a study by the liberal New Politics Institute. ☛ The number of children **born to unmarried American women** reached record levels in 2003, according to research conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics. 1.4 million babies were born to unwed mothers, accounting for over 34 percent

of all U.S. births. . . . The Census Bureau reports that only 22 percent of U.S. households are currently in the configuration of traditional nuclear families. ☛ A committee in Spokane, Washington is planning a special “gay business district” in the city. “It can look like those districts that are already established,” stated committee member Melvin Reguindin. “It would just be more gay.” . . . Berlin’s flamboyantly homosexual mayor, Klaus Wowereit, welcomed a **sadomasochism festival** to the German capital, going so far as to write the official greeting for the event’s program.

A poll by the Democracy Project found that over 40 percent of **American Hispanics** think illegal immigration is hurting the nation. Over a third of all Hispanics believe there are too many immigrants in the U.S. ☛ Half of all engineering graduate students in the U.S. are foreigners. ☛ The trend of “white flight” out of Washington, D.C. is

reversing itself. According to the Census Bureau, the white population of the District increased by 7 percent between 2000 and 2004. ☛ The **cheapest gasoline** in the world—12 cents a gallon—is sold in Venezuela. The most expensive is in the Netherlands, at about \$6.48 a gallon. ☛ A study by Copenhagen Economics and a Danish ministry found that tariffs cost European Union consumers about \$181,000 per job “saved.” ☛ *USA Today* reported that the number of **homeschooled children** in the U.S. rose from 850,000 in 1999 to about 1.1 million in 2003. . . . At least 2.2 percent of American children are now home-schooled. ☛ The U.S. Patent Office received nearly 400,000 applications in 2004, a new record. ☛ According to *Money*, over half of all MBA students enrolled in real estate classes in 2004, up from 30 percent in 2000. . . . Two out of every three jobs created by U.S. businesses since 2001 have been connected to the real estate boom. ☛

Japanese firm Sanrio released a unique diamond-encrusted “Hello Kitty” pendant, priced at \$50,000. It sold within two minutes of going on sale at a Tokyo store. The buyer paid cash. ☛ Eleven percent of American teenagers have their own credit card. ☛ A hospital in West Yorkshire, England banned visitors from cooing at newborn babies over fears that the infants’ human rights were being violated. ☛ In South Korea, a 28-year-old man collapsed and **died after playing video games** for 50 hours straight. The police suspect heart failure.

