

Sidelights

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

By Brandon Bosworth

Recently discovered documents reveal that **al-Qaeda recruits sign a contract specifying salary, vacation, and home leave travel benefits.** ☛

Over 70 percent of Americans and Chinese, 66 percent of Britons, and 65 percent of Germans believe that the free market is the best system available, according to polls by GlobeScan. Only 36 percent of the French share that belief. ... *The Economist* reports that about **three quarters of young French people want to become civil servants.**

☛ A fifth of Americans believe winning the lottery is the “most practical” way for them to accumulate \$200,000, according to Opinion Research Corporation. ☛ A small Italian company has launched a line of **blue jeans made specifically for Muslims.** “Al Quds”—Arabic for “Jerusalem”—jeans are cut baggy to ensure comfort during the frequent kneeling required in Islamic prayers. ☛

Within the next few years, members of **racial minorities will constitute the majority of residents in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area,** according to a report from the *Washington Post*. Racial minorities currently make up 47 percent of the residents in the metro area. ... 45 percent of minority households in greater D.C. earn at least \$75,000 each year, more than in any other metropolitan

area. ... The *Washington Times* reported recently that the largest number of immigrants in the Washington, D.C. metro area come from El Salvador. ... 1.6 million U.S. businesses were owned by Hispanics in 2002, a rise of more than 30 percent from 1997.

Americans spent \$14.3 billion on dog food in 2004, according to the *Washington Post*. That is \$10 million more than was spent on baby food. ... Americans **spent over \$34 billion on coffee** in 2005, an increase of 8.7 percent from 2004. ☛ Research by the firm Swiss Re determined that insurance losses from Hurricane Katrina totaled \$45 billion, the largest single-disaster amount in post-WWII history. ☛ A Gallup Poll found that **64 percent of Americans believe the United Nations is doing a poor job**—the worst rating of the U.N. that Gallup has ever measured. ☛ The *New York Times* reported that the average American spends 30

minutes preparing dinner daily, versus two and a half hours in the 1960s. ☛ If current trends continue, nearly half of all children in North and South America will be overweight by 2010, according to a report in the *International Journal of Pediatric Obesity*. ... A study in the journal *Pediatrics* determined that more than a quarter million U.S. children aged six and under are **too fat to use child-safety seats.** ☛ Americans downloaded 352 million songs in 2005, up from 143 million in 2004. ☛ Actress Eva Longoria, known for her role in TV’s “Desperate Housewives,” told NBC’s Stone Phillips she grew up hunting with her father and still hunts with him to this day. “I can handle a gun.... I could skin a deer, **I could skin a pig. I can pluck a quail**—you name it, I’ve done it.” ☛ Nearly three fourths of Americans say they encounter profane language in public, according to an Associated Press-Ipsos poll. Two thirds believe people swear more now than they did 20 years ago.

... Sixty percent of men and 74 percent of women said they were sometimes bothered by profanity. ☛ **A third of American males between the ages of 22 and 34 live with their parents.** ☛ The newly crowned 2006 Homecoming King at Maryland’s Hood College is Jen Jones, a lesbian. She beat out seven men for the title.

