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Odd Stories from the Past Few Weeks

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE
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At times things seem to get out of focus. Maybe its just the fact that with the World Series over, and the NFL not yet in a full sprint to the finish, and neither basketball or hockey getting much attention, it is just a slow news day, but whatever it is, there seems to be more than the usual amount of goofiness in the air.

Take the heavyweight championship fight last Saturday night where the bout was interrupted by a paraglider who magically fell out of the sky onto the ropes in the seventh round. What is this? Is this the same guy who runs onto the field to get on television during a football or baseball game? Or was it some weekend skydiver blown off course? It was a sight that will be remembered long after the fight itself has been forgotten.

After paying a mere \$200 in bail this guy was back on the street and no doubt headed back into the sky to descend on someone else's parade. He was charged with "dangerous flying," a misdemeanor in Nevada that will bring little in the way of punishment. If that seems too lenient to some, just remember that the stalker who put a knife in Monica Seles' back, walked out of a German court a free man, having been judged to have lost control of his senses when he brought Seles' career to a halt.

And speaking of Germany the attack by skinhead neo-Nazis on the American Luge team in Oberhof was less than encouraging. Duncan Kennedy was punched and kicked by a group of 15 when he tried to protect a black teammate who was being racially harassed. This event took place on October 29, and finally this past Monday one arrest was made, after the courts rejected arrest warrants on two others. Germans maintain that this is a problem with a very small marginal group in the society. Let's hope so.

In Wisconsin on October 31 following a football game the 12,000 seat student section erupted and a small riot followed. Fueled by the usual mixture of alcohol and euphoria, thirteen people were left hospitalized with two in serious condition over a week later. It has been a long time since the Badgers had a winning football team, and certainly beating Michigan was a cause for joy, but once again craziness set in with relative ease and a crowd was out of control. The security people never knew what hit them, nor did many of the fans.

Then there was the story out of Texas, and it should be noted that this sort of story could come only out of Texas, that a high school cheerleading squad had been riddled by pregnancy. Talk about your team spirit. The most interesting element in this story is the fact that the pregnant cheerleaders were suspended from the squad, an action that brought out the forces of NOW to demand that this injustice cease immediately. I am not sure what section of the United States constitution guarantees the right of pregnant high school girls to be cheerleaders, but I am sure there must be one, at least in the Texas Constitution. Certainly it had to be part of the original intent of the founding fathers. If there is not such a guarantee, I say we urgently need a constitutional amendment. We ought to be able to rally the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders or the Texas Cheerleader Murdering Mom for such a worthy cause.

Closer to home where Shaq is king, it certainly came as some surprise when it was announced that the Shaq would not be part of the next U.S. Dream Team. The problem of course is not the Shaq's abilities, but rather the fact that the big guy endorses the wrong products. Shaq is a member of the Pepsi generation, while U.S. basketball has Coke and McDonalds as their chief sponsors. Maybe the old codger Avery Brundidge knew something afterall when he insisted that the Olympic movement be kept away from product endorsement. McNonsense reigns.

So it has been a particularly zany couple of weeks. I think there must have a full moon in there somewhere, but in fact the zaniness has not stopped. On Monday the Cleveland Browns announced that Bernie Kosar has been cut from the team. You may recall that it was just five weeks ago that Kosar signed a seven year \$27M contract with the Browns. Talk about a quick career turnaround. It really is hard to believe, when you consider that the Browns have essentially no backup to Kosar, as Vinny Testaverde is out with a shoulder separation. How could things turn so quickly? One thing is very clear, either someone in the Cleveland organization made a terrible mistake five weeks ago, or someone made a terrible mistake on Monday. Time may tell.

Finally in this week of odd snippets and fragments let me close by noting that on Saturday Florida State and Notre Dame will play this year's second game of the century. With Lou Holtz already having taken considerable luster off the golden dome, let us hope that first down Moses who stands pointing outside the Notre Dame Library is actually signaling that FSU is number one.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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