A Florida woman who suffered a stroke found she had a British accent when she recovered the power of speech. Experts have diagnosed Judi Roberts as suffering from "foreign accent syndrome". Roberts' case is one of fewer than 20 reported worldwide since 1919, says the Sarasota Herald Tribune. The 57-year-old suffered the stroke while doing a crossword puzzle. She lost the strength to write with her right hand. Her right side was temporarily paralysed and she was left unable to talk. After months of therapy, she recovered physically and could make guttural sounds. But when her speaking voice finally returned, it wasn't her normal accent. Instead she spoke with what sounded like a higher, pitched, British accent. She had no idea where the voice came from. "I thought I was losing my mind," Ms Roberts said. Experts say the condition, which usually results from a stroke or head injury, causes patients to change their pronunciation to sound like non-native speakers.

Thieves Get a Very Smelly Christmas

A US university is covering its Christmas trees with the pungent scent that skunks spray - to discourage thieves. The University of Minnesota is going to spray between 400-500 pine trees with two gallons of the natural ingredient. Within hours of spraying, the cold weather masks the skunk odour, but if thieves took a tree inside, it would warm up and begin to stink, reports the Minnesota Daily. Grounds superintendent Les Potts said: "We are doing this to avoid a repeat of last year when thieves took seven small trees and hacked the tops off larger trees, leaving them deformed and awkward-looking. "We'll probably still lose some trees, but I have some satisfaction in knowing that it's not going to work out the way the thief thinks it will," Mr Potts said. Skunk scent is most commonly used by hunters as a cover-up their own smell while tracking animals.

Animal Sounds Around The World

THIS WEEK: FROG

Bengali: gangor-gangor
Norwegian: kvekk-kvekk
Turkish: vrak vrak
Japanese: kerokero
Thai: ob ob (with high tone)
Ancient Greek: brekekelex koax koax

A Texan man has stuffed the tails of nine live rattlesnakes in his mouth to beat his own world record. Jackie Bibby, 52, performed the stunt in a field behind his mobile home in Whiskey Flats, near Fort Worth. He had previously managed to put the tails of eight rattlesnakes in his mouth, reports the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. A Guinness Book of Records photographer was on hand to capture the event, although it's not known if the book will recognize Bibby's effort. He also holds the world record for sitting in a bathtub with the most live snakes - 75 - according to Guinness World Records. "I have to break my own records. Heck, there's nobody else who can do it. I think I could do 12 or 13, but probably no more. My mouth is only so big," he said. Bibby had hoped to break his record for sitting in a bath with 81 snakes, but the paper said the snakes wouldn't cooperate and Bibby had to quit after only about 40 were dumped on him.

New Course For Would-Be Dog Therapists

A new course has been launched in Japan for would-be dog therapists. The classes, set up by the Reflexology Association of Japan, will run for 98 hours and cost nearly $2,500. They will include dog massage, canine anatomy, behavioral science and dog psychology. "Many dogs suffer from both physical and mental fatigue because they are affected by various factors," school director Sayo Fujita told The Japan Times. Forty of the 60 places in the class, which starts next April, have already been taken. The association is also planning to open relaxation salons for dogs early next year.

Gameshow Leaves 'Hungry' Russians Stranded

A reality TV show has left 12 young Russian's to fend for themselves in Berlin with no language skills, food or money. Almost two weeks ago the contestants, six men and six women, were deposited in a container and forced to survive. They are being featured on a new Russian reality TV show called Golad, which means Hunger. After the first three weeks, the audience votes to eliminate one person each week until just the winner remains, having - in the words of the show's website - survived 100 days without food or money. The winner will get a guaranteed pension for life of $600 a month. The Hunger website says that Yana, 24, has managed to earn some small change by busking while another pair managed to scrounge some bread, cheese and ham. The shows producer Dmitry Troitsky says contestants won't starve because they can eat all the boiled pasta and potatoes they want, and are given a special vitamin drink.

Golden Nuggets

TIDBITS OF WISDOM FROM BRYAN'S FAVORITE SITCOM

Blanche: I never had to pay a penny in backtaxes. I have a way with auditors. The last time I was audited I even got money back from the government. Sophia: Blanche, it's not a refund when the auditor leaves two twenties on your nightstand.

Rose: My cousin Ingmar was different. He used to do bird imitations.

Blanche: What's wrong with that?
Rose: Well, let's just say, you didn't want to park your car under their oak tree.
SHOWDOG SHOWDOWN—Vote Now!
FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 24—28, 2003

SUBMIT
Got something to say, buddy?
Contact Bryan & Chris at
news@leverett.harvard.edu
by Friday evening for publication
in next week's issue

Man Mistook Phone Sex Line for Marriage Agency
A man who says he mistook a phone sex line for a marriage agency is to make an official complaint to his local phone company after running up a $9,000 bill. Kire Ilievski, 25, from Prilep in Macedonia spent more than 135 hours on the phone to a woman he thought could be his future wife. But he said he found out that he had been calling a sex line rather than an agency that puts people in touch with potential spouses when he got the huge bill.

He told local media: "I couldn’t believe my eyes when I saw the bill. I thought I was calling an agency for possible marriage connections, not a sex line.” He said that he would make an official complaint to Macedonian Telecommunications.

Harvard Summer School 2004 PROCTORSHIPS
Informational Meetings
The Summer School invites all interested Harvard College sophomores, juniors and seniors to attend one of the following House meetings to learn more about proctoring next summer. Summer school proctors receive free room and board and one 4-unit course tuition-free. Applications will be distributed and questions answered by Chris Queen, Summer School Dean of Students

Monday, December 1
7:00pm Dunster House, Junior Common Room
7:30pm Mather House, Dining Rooms A & B
8:00pm Lowell House, Junior Common Room
8:30pm Eliot House, Junior Common Room

Wednesday, December 3
7:00pm Pforzheimer House, Hastings Room
7:30pm Cabot House, Briggs Common Room
8:00pm Currier House, Poker Room
8:30pm Kirkland House, Junior Common Room

Monday, December 8
7:00pm Winthrop House, Owen Room
7:30pm Quincy House, Senior Common Room
8:00pm Leverett House, Junior Common Room
8:30pm Adams House, Conservatory

Wednesday, January 14
4:00pm 51 Brattle St., Grossman Common Room

The Leverett IFOCE Eating Challenge!
YOUR WEEKLY CHANCE TO BEAT THE BEST FROM THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF COMPETITIVE EATING
Think you’ve got the guts? Then dive into the salad bar and see how you stack up against these IFOCE heavyweight titles.

Cannoli
21 cannoli
6 minutes
Cookie Jarvis

Chicken Wings
134 chicken wings
12 minutes
Sonya Thomas

SHOWDOG SHOWDOWN—Vote Now!
CHALLENGER
Ch. Auburn Sham-Rocker

CHAMPION
Ch. Casbar Mezra Color Me Bad

Is the Sham-Rocker badder than Color Me Bad? Can sheer toughness triumph over elaborate grooming? Who will win this week? You decide. Submit your vote to news@leverett.harvard.edu today!!!