

DARWIN AWARDS

GRAVITY KILLS

A 22-year-old Reston man was found dead yesterday after he tried to use occy straps (the stretchy little ropes with hooks on each end) to bungee jump off a 70-foot railroad trestle, police said. Fairfax County (Virginia) police said Eric A. Barcia, a fast-food worker, taped a bunch of these straps together, wrapped an end around one foot, anchored the other end to the trestle at Lake Accotink Park, jumped ... and hit the pavement. Warren Carmichael, a police spokesman, said investigators think Barcia was alone because his car was found nearby. "The length of the cord that he had assembled was greater than the distance between the trestle and the ground," Carmichael said. Police say the apparent cause of death was "major trauma." An autopsy is scheduled for later in the week.

LAUNCHED ON THE FOURTH OF JULY ...

Three young men in Oklahoma were enjoying the coming fourth of July holiday and wanted to apparently test fire some fireworks. Their only real problem was that their launch pad and seating arrangements were atop a several-hundred-thousand-gallon fuel distillation storage tank. Oddly enough, some fumes were ignited, producing a fireball seen for miles and miles. They were launched, no doubt, countless thousands of feet into the air and were found dead 250 yards from their respective seats.

DON'T ASK GOD TO PROVE HIMSELF, HE JUST MIGHT...

A lawyer and two of his buddies were fishing on Caddo Lake in Texas. A lightning storm hit the lake and most of the fisherman immediately headed for the shore. But not our friend the lawyer. He was alone on the rear of his aluminum bass boat and his buddies were in the front. This gentleman stood up, spread his arms wide (crucifixion style) and shouted: "HERE I AM LORD, LET ME HAVE IT!" Needless to say, God delivered [well, wouldn't you?]. The other two passengers on the boat survived and are said to have immediately joined the Ministry.

CATCH!

A man in Alabama died from rattlesnake bites. Big deal, you may say, but there's a twist here that makes him a Darwin Award candidate. It seems he and a friend were playing catch with a rattlesnake. You can guess what happened from here. The friend (a future Darwin Award candidate) was hospitalized.

THEY SAY THOSE THINGS WILL KILL YOU . . .

Not much was given to me on this unlucky fellow, but he qualifies nonetheless. You see, there was a gentleman from Korea who was killed by his cell phone, more or less. He was doing the usual "walking and

talking" when he walked into a tree and managed to somehow break his neck. Keep that in mind the next time you decide to drive and dial at the same time.

GIMME A LIGHT!

Several years ago, in a west Texas town, employees in a medium-sized warehouse noticed the smell of a gas leak. Sensibly, management evacuated the building, extinguishing all potential sources of ignition - lights, power, etc. After the building had been evacuated, two technicians from the gas company were dispatched. Upon entering the building, they found they had difficulty navigating in the dark. To their frustration, none of the lights worked. Witnesses later described the vision of one of the technicians reaching into his pocket, and retrieving an object that resembled a lighter. Upon operation of the lighter-like object, the gas in the warehouse exploded, sending pieces of it up to three miles away. Nothing was found of the technicians, but the lighter was virtually untouched by the explosion. The technician that was suspected of causing the explosion had never been thought of as "bright" by his peers.