NO KIDDING

VK OR SWIM: Young children who take swimming lessons are less likely to die of drowning than those who don't take lessons, found a study published in the March issue of the Journal of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine. Researchers, who studied the families of 88 drowning victims in six states, concluded that study did not explain why the correlation exists, but noted that "it is a reasonable assumption that at least part of the protective effect is due increased swimming skills."

THE EAGLE symbolizes freedom—unless its name happens to be Eddie.

In that case it represents the National Rifle Association and the inflexibility of U.S. trademark law. It does not represent the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse. Not anymore.

In 1989, La Crosse changed its team nickname from the Indians to the Eagles, a fitting moniker, says Chancellor Joe Gow, given the abundance of eagles along the nearby Mississippi River. When Mr. Gow arrived in 2007 and asked about the mascot’s name, he says Joe Baker, the athletic director, replied, "Right now the eagle’s name is ‘the’"

Last December students and employees at La Crosse voted to call it Eddie.

"Eddie the Eagle," the chancellor muses. "It had a nice alliteration."

The NRA thought so, too. It already had its own Eddie Eagle, a kindly ambassador who warns schoolchildren via the Eddie Eagle Gun-Safe Program not to indulge their curiosity in mislaid firearms. It’s "OK to take an old gun, and destroy it, or give it away, but not to touch it!" But the NRA says its Eddie and its mascot are not the same. The NRA, the school points out, is headquartered in Virginia; Mr. Gow tells the Story of the blunder, and the dispute continues.

The Colbert Retort

P OETRY is all about economy. Words are used with precision and thrift.

But not all poetry is about economics. In fact, almost none of it is, and that is a tragedy, says Stephen T. Ziliak, an economics professor at Roosevelt University. "An economics without poetry, he says, "is an economics that is blind."

To supplement their studies, Mr. Ziliak encourages his economics students to compose haiku, the Japanese poetry that consists of three lines of verse in a 5-7-5 syllabic order. He assigns haiku challenges for bonus points on exams, and even holds haiku workshops as part of a course on rhetoric in economics.

Mr. Ziliak has a paper on "Haiku Economics," forthcoming in the International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education. We recently asked him a few questions about pedagogy, economic theory, and the financial crisis—In haiku, of course.

Q: How does writing verse help your students understand mathematics?

A: Thought transportation—Newton’s laws might still abide.

Listen: Einstein’s train.

Q: A labor union protects workers from abuse—But what does it cost?

A: “Green Knights of Labor, free Haymarket Anarchists, cost less than Madoff.”

Q: Debt plus recession—Which is the better move: saving or spending?

A: Treasury shoppers choose plain bread over duck soup. Nudge this paradox.

Q: Regarding Wall Street, do virtues of laissez-faire apply as elsewhere?

A: Traders are human, swapping vices for virtues and vice versa.

Q: Mom and Dad, I’m home!
The job market is nasty—Where is my bedroom?

A: Invisible hand:
Mother of inflated hope,
Mistress of despair!

Q: Haiku might seem, dumb, to beat counters and stuffed shirts—Students disagree!

A: In this other world, wild orchids freely blossom—haiku GDP.

—STEVE KOLOWICH