

SHORT SUBJECTS

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U. OF WISCONSIN AT LA CROSSE

After the NRA said the U. of Wisconsin at La Crosse couldn't call its mascot Eddie, students voted to name it Colbert instead.

The Colbert Retort

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.

NO KIDDING

Occasional look at research results it didn't surprise us

WALK 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 interviewed the families of 88 drowning victims in six states, conceded that the study did not explain why the correlation exists, but noted that "it is reasonable to assume that at least part of the protective effect is due to increased swimming skills."

DOM EVERLASTING: After seven years of marriage? Will change after nine more, a study published last month in *Psychological Science*. In a study of married couples, researchers reported that boredom in the seventh year predicted less satisfaction the next year. Luckily, researchers found a way to save marriages from eroding by boredom: adding "novelty" to the relationship.

TOOTH: Those who wake up in the middle of the night to head for the refrigerator are more likely to be obese, reports a study in this month's issue of the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Verses of Economy

POETRY 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 a math-based science?

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 broth 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 bean counters and stuffed shirts—Students disagree?

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

—STEVE KOLOWICH