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Monday, March 23, 2009

Neal Rubin

Calculating prof can blow your mind with numbers



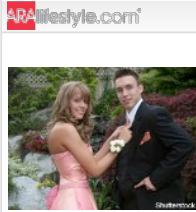
Professor Mike Bernacchi likes his calculator the way your kids like their Xbox.

For St. Patrick's Day, for instance -- and this will be of particular interest to those only now recovering from their hangovers -- he figured out that with 12 percent of the United States' population claiming Irish extraction, that works out to upward of 36 million people ... which is nine times the number of people who actually live in Ireland.

Then he moved on to President Obama's proposed national budget, with its 2009 deficit of \$1.75 trillion.

I hadn't given much thought to how much money that actually is, other than to recognize it's more than I can stuff under my mattress. Try this, says Bernacchi, who teaches marketing at the University of Detroit Mercy. A \$1.75-trillion deficit works out to:

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\$55,492.14 per second.

Those Chinese guys we're going to borrow the money from had better get to work. And they might want to ask those Irish folks to help out.

Elvis by the numbers

Another staggering number: Sherman Arnold of Monroe will celebrate his 69th birthday Saturday at the Al Matta Club and Hall in Dearborn.

Actually, that's an ordinary number. But it becomes remarkable when it's combined with this: He'll be performing his tribute to Elvis, just as he's been doing for 54 years.

In other words, he's been doing Elvis 12 years longer than Elvis did.

"I'm still rockin'," he says, "except I'm rockin' slower."

The show starts at 4 p.m. at 5121 Oakman Blvd., and tickets are \$10 for adults or \$5 for the 11-and-unders. Call (313) 582-7877. It's billed as "A Legend Tribute to the Stars," and includes loving impersonations of a flock of dead entertainers and a few live ones: Buddy Holly, Andy Gibb, Johnny Cash, Neil Diamond, Toby Keith, Ray Charles, Roy Orbison.

I'm wondering how someone figures out he does a spot-on Andy Gibb, or how the rest of us are supposed to tell if he doesn't. But I think I'll wait until he turns 69 to ask.

Zoo beats 7-Eleven

I once spent a summer working the graveyard shift at a 7-Eleven so far out in the sticks I was hoping to get robbed, just for the company.

That same summer, my friend Von worked for a company called Denver Mud Jack. There was this junior high school in our area -- named for Isaac Newton, ironically -- and the civic geniuses in our area built it on a landfill.

In a shocking development, the zillion-ton building atop the big pile of eggshells and milk cartons began to sag. So Denver Mud Jack was hired to prop it up, a process that involved tunneling through not only mud but muck, slime and coffee grounds.

Compared to those gigs, I'm thinking a summer job at the Detroit Zoo sounds pretty good.

The zoo says it needs cashiers, salespeople, guest relations assistants, ride operators, security workers and camp teachers and aides. In addition, the zoo's concessionaire needs food servers, trinket sellers and a few custodians and groundskeepers. For more information, visit www.detroitzoo.org/Jobs/Jobs/Jobs

Smiling, energetic, friendly and enthusiastic applicants will be given preference over frowning, sluggish, pessimistic grumps.

Reach Neal Rubin at (313) 222-1874 or nrubin@detnews.com.

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Sherman Arnold has been "doing" Elvis longer than Elvis did Elvis -- 54 years. (MySpace)

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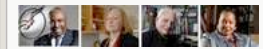
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