

CLIENT / CONTACT BULLETIN 8-06

Just in case it matters to you:

- **THE NEWEST SPIN-OFF FROM THE SUB-PRIME MORTGAGE MESS: AN ARSON BOOM.** “As the housing crisis continues to unfold, the insurance industry is bracing for an increase in arson among homeowners who see setting the house afire and collecting the insurance payment as an alternative to foreclosure... California’s state insurance division reports that the number of ‘questionable residential fires in 2007 increased 76%.’ Countrywide, Allstate insurance has reported a jump in arson among homes in foreclosure while FBI crime data also shows a rise in suburban arson. [FORTUNE – Jan 21, 08]
- **GEN Y (aka MILLENNIAL) VOTERS MAY HOLD THE ELECTION WILD CARD.** Aged 18 to 29, they’ve grown up “during the greatest period of wealth creation in modern history, but watched their elders consume resources and run up deficits as if the party would never end. Then came the dot-com crash, terrorism, war, climate change – epic uncertainty in their world view... They’ve inherited an economy in which many of the things their parents took for granted are evaporating: company-provided health insurance, attainable housing, social security, affordable education, well-paying jobs... They don’t need an economics degree to understand that the middle class is squeezed. They lived through the mass layoffs during the corporate scandals earlier this century and saw their parents get burned... No group has ever started life so deeply in the hole, due mainly to mounting college costs, dwindling financial aid, and credit-card debt. (The average college student now graduates with \$20K in loans... Millennials also have to contend with the fact that the quality of jobs produced in the U.S. is not what it was. When their parents came of age, the paternalistic corporation was the dominant employer, offering career paths with generous, lifetime benefits and middle-class salaries. Today’s biggest job growth is among the service jobs held by the working poor; the largest employer, Wal-Mart. No wonder this generation is so obsessed with structure, savings and security.” In a recent Pew Research poll, more than 2/3 of these voting age kids ranked Health, Economy, Education and Jobs as their ‘very important’ issues. “Weaned on self-esteem and jacked up on Digital Age entitlement, they take themselves seriously – and expect their elected representatives to do the same.” It should be an interesting election. [BUSINESSWEEK – Jan 21, 08]
- **“EXERCISE IS AS EFFECTIVE AS DRUG THERAPY FOR TREATING DEPRESSION,”** according to a new Duke Univ. study which compared Zoloft, home-based exercise, supervised exercise and a placebo for over 200 depressed adults. “Since anti-depressants don’t work for everyone (and they carry crazy side effects such as increased suicide risk, impotency, and abdominal bleeding),” exercise appears to be a viable alternative.” // Being unstressed and rested is also important, so be aware that eating carbohydrates four hours before bedtime (such as rice or whole-grain toast) “can shave 10 minutes off the amount of time it takes to fall asleep... by increasing serotonin circulation, which has a calming and relaxing effect,” according to researchers at Univ. of Sydney. [BEST LIFE – Feb 08]
- **A NEW INTERNET-DATING SERVICE NOW MATCHES PEOPLE BY THEIR BODY ODOR,** based on research at the Swiss University of Bern which demonstrated that human sweat correlates with sexual attractiveness, and that analysis of genes somehow translates into preferences for particular mates. “The biological compatibility created by complementary immune systems apparently promises better orgasms, a lower likelihood of cuckoldry, more happiness and so on.” Accordingly, a new website (scientificmatch.com) offers, for \$2000 and a swab from the inside of one’s cheek, to utilize “patent-pending technology which matches DNA to find others with a natural body fragrance you’ll love, with whom you’d have healthier children, a more satisfying sex life, and... a deep spiritual bond, to complete your path to truly amazing relationships.” Beauty is apparently not only in the eye of the beholder, but also the nose. [THE ECONOMIST – Jan 12, 08]
- **“DECODING YOUR GENETIC PAST AND SPOTTING POTENTIAL DISEASE VULNERABILITIES”** is yet another new internet gene matching opportunity. For \$1000 and a plastic tube of your spit, an interactive website (23andMe.com) will decode DNA to “shed new light on your distant ancestors, your close family and most of all, yourself,” showing inheritance lines of different traits from food preferences to sleep habits to athletic ability. Sort of ‘Genes-R-Us.’
- **THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: “Asking dumb questions is easier than correcting dumb mistakes.”**