NO KIDDING

Occasional look at research results didn't surprise us

NK OR SWIM: Young children take swimming lessons are less likely to die of drowning than those don't take lessons, found a study published in the March issue of the *Jives of Pediatrics & Adolescent icine*. Researchers, who studied the families of 88 drowning victims in six states, conceded that study did not explain why the difference exists, but noted that it's reasonable to assume that it was attributable to the protective effect of the increased swimming skills.

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 that live 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 to avoid playing with guns.

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: 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 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 beant counters and stuffed shirts—Students disagree?
A: "In this other world, wild orchids freely blossom—haiku GDP."

STEVE KOLOWICH