

Signals in the Static: Michael Jackson, Kate Gosselin, Sarah Palin, [Bernie Madoff](#), Lady Gaga, and Britney Spears are this year’s most popular Halloween costumes. **Barbie**, 50, will star in her first live-action film. Third place CBS anchor **Katie Couric’s** annual salary (\$15MM) is [more than the entire annual budgets](#) of NPR’s *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* combined.

American Girl introduces “[Gwen](#),” a “homeless doll.” Her accompanying story says she is a friendless girl whose father abandoned her and whose mother lost her job and then their home ((\$95). The **Hotel Erwin** on LA’s Venice Beach is offering an “Ink and Stay” special that includes a \$100 tattoo credit and a bottle of tequila for the pain. **JailhouseFire** hot sauce is made and sold by inmates in Florida’s Hillsborough County Jail (\$3/1.5oz). **Kyjen’s [Puzzle Plush Dog Toys](#)** aim to challenge and “sharpen cognitive skills” for their canine users. **Starbucks** tests an iPhone app that pays for your coffee. [16apps](#) is a new web service that scours users’ Facebook, Twitter, or FriendFeed accounts for information about interests and location and uses the data to make iPhone app recommendations. [Robo.to](#) lets users publish 4-second “calling card” videos that play as their call is incoming to the person on the receiving end. **Mountain Hardwear’s** lithium-powered [heated jackets](#) also power and recharge cell phones and iPods via a USB cable.

Recession Business Notes: Hotel revenue-per-available room is at its lowest point in 22 years. The average age of a car last year was 10.4 years, the highest since WWII. 72% of U.S. hair salons report a decline in customer spending during the past year. Men’s underwear sales have dropped 2.3% (a favorite [indicator](#) of Alan Greenspan). However, necktie sales are up 50% in 2009 and sales of potato chips have increased by 22% since the economy crashed.

Served at the Texas State Fair:

- **Green Goblins:** Cherry peppers stuffed with shredded chicken and guacamole, battered, deep-fried, topped with queso.
- **Twisted Yam:** A spiral-cut sweet potato, fried on a skewer, rolled in butter, dusted with cinnamon and sugar.
- **Deep Fried Peaches & Cream:** Served with a side of vanilla buttercream icing.
- **Fried Pecan Pie:** A mini-pecan pie battered, deep fried and served with caramel sauce, whipping cream and chopped candied pecans.
- **Country Fried Pork Chips:** Battered, thin-sliced pork loin, deep fried and served with sides of ketchup or cream gravy.
- **Sweet Jalapeno Corn Dog Shrimp:** Shrimp on a stick, coated with a sweet and spicy cornmeal batter, deep fried and served with a spicy glaze.
- **Fried Peanut Butter Cup Macaroon:** A peanut butter cup wrapped inside a coconut macaroon, fried and then dusted with powdered sugar.
- [Fried Butter](#).



Utility pole warmer on a NYC street corner by [Knitta](#), a group of anonymous knitters who use yarn or cloth to leave their “graffiti” on urban targets.