

Police fight video release

Criminal cop caught on tape

By Ian Wishart

A new police corruption scandal has tonight seriously damaged the credibility of both Police National Headquarters and the Independent Police Conduct Authority – and the police are refusing to hand over video evidence of the crime at the centre of it.

TGIF Edition applied under the Official Information Act for the police file on a shoplifting case at Dunedin's Mitre 10 Mega last summer. Even more significantly, we applied for a copy of the store surveillance video. Both requests have just been refused.

The real reason for the refusal? The offender apprehended by store security at Mitre 10 in possession of stolen items was senior Dunedin Police officer Darren Buist, a veteran of the Aramoana siege and occasional police DPS bodyguard to former prime minister Helen Clark when she travelled to Dunedin.

To make matters worse, *TGIF Edition* has been told that Dunedin Police have made veiled threats to the owners of the city's Mitre 10 Mega, the Dippie family, warning them of the consequences if they insisted on pressing charges against police officer Buist.

Martin Dippie drives a distinctive Porsche luxury car, and was informally warned to back off or face increasing scrutiny himself from local police on the road or elsewhere. Specifically, Dippie was warned that officers loyal to Dunedin's corrupt cops were aiming to entrap Dippie on enough traffic violations that they could seize his driver's licence.

Despite having initially told a number of his friends about his store security catching a police officer shoplifting, and the police refusal to charge, Dippie suddenly changed his tune after the threats

and told those still inquiring that he was happy with the outcome and that the police officer was welcome back in his store "any time".

The police file, however, contains a copy of a trespass notice served on Senior Constable Darren Buist, which remains in force to this day, banning him from the store.

Dunedin media nearly broke the story last year because of the buzz the case was creating in some circles, but pulled back when Martin Dippie became intimidated by the police threats, and refused to co-operate with the media inquiries.

Writing to *TGIF Edition* under the authority of Police Commissioner Howard Broad, the National Manager for Professional Standards at PNHQ Jon Moss told us:

"I refer to your Official Information Act request of 25 November 2008 for a copy of shop surveillance

[Continue reading](#)

The slaughter of Gaza's 'innocents'

By Ian Wishart

The Palestinian terror group Hamas appears to be winning the propaganda war in the news media, and it's damaging informed debate on the Gaza crisis.

While pictures of slaughtered children and other civilians have emerged from the warzone, few media outlets have attempted to balance Palestinian claims with the reality that Hamas has been using kids as cannon fodder for years, even deliberately placing them in harm's way.

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MIRACLE IN MANHATTAN

They survived this
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BABY WARNING

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Big Maggot burger claim disputed

WELLINGTON, JAN 16 – The investigation into whether a Whangarei McDonald's served a Big Mac with maggots has been "inconclusive", the Northland District Health Board says.

Isaac Tansley, 15, bought the Big Mac from the Bank St restaurant on New Year's Day and his dislike of gherkins may have spared him an unpleasant mouthful, his mother Lianne said.

"He took the top bun off to take out the gherkin, and then he said, 'my God, Mum, look at this'. The whole patty was moving as if it was alive. It was gross," she told the *New Zealand Herald*.

The restaurant apologised and gave Ms Tansley \$135 in vouchers, although she said her family would not be eating there again.

McDonald's national communications manager Kate Porter told the newspaper it was unlikely maggots had hatched in the beef patties, as there were strict hygiene rules and the meat was cooked from frozen when orders were placed.

The burger was sent to the DHB's public health unit, but "due to the storage conditions and time delay (before) receipt of the food item", it could not say at which point the maggots had found their way in.

DHB health protection officer Paul Reid said "a number" of recommendations had been made to McDonald's Whangarei in relation to food processing, but they were not "critical food safety matters".

McDonald's said it welcomed the report as staff had been "mystified" as to how maggots could hatch in the kitchen environment.

"The burger was 13 days old when it was received by the health board, however the report suggests the maggots were probably less than a week old," McDonald's managing director Mark Hawthorne said.



He said patties were cooked on hot-plates at around 200degC, and the report indicated it was unlikely the maggots were subjected to heat.

"We have thoroughly reviewed and investigated food safety records in our Whangarei Restaurant.

"We assure members of the public that our restaurants are safe and clean to eat in."

He did not say whether McDonald's would be asking for the vouchers back.

– NZPA

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off BEAT

A WING AND A PRAT

YUMA, Arizona — **TGIF EXCLUSIVE** A Crop Duster light aircraft had a very close call with an 18 wheel big rig while flying dangerously low across a state highway. The small plane missed the enormous truck by a matter of inches. Video footage here (Apple Quicktime format) 

POLICE: BOY'S TONGUE STUCK TO METAL POLE

HAMMOND, Ind., Jan. 16 (UPI) — Police in Northwest Indiana said they were called to the scene when a 10-year-old boy stuck his tongue to a freezing streetlight pole.

Officers said the boy, a fourth grader at Field Elementary School in Hammond, mumbled to police that he had licked the pole after a friend dared him, *The Northwest Indiana Times* reported this morning.

The boy yanked himself away from the pole before an ambulance arrived and police said they gave the boy's mother, who was described as pretty upset by the incident, instructions on how to care for his bleeding tongue.

"You'd think everybody in the country had seen *A Christmas Story* by now," a police officer at the scene said, referring to a scene from the popular holiday movie depicting a child sticking his tongue to a metal pole. "Remember what happened to Flick."



POLICE: MAN STOLE SHARK WITH BARE HANDS

LYNBROOK, N.Y., Jan. 16 (UPI) — Police in Nassau County, N.Y., said they have arrested a man who allegedly grabbed a shark out of a fish tank in a pet shop and hid it in his jacket.

Investigators said Elbert Starks, 30, entered the Total Aquarium store in Lynbrook Dec. 12 and grabbed the \$350 nurse shark out of its tank with his bare hands, *Newsday* reported this morning. He left the store with the shark concealed in his jacket, police said.

Starks is also alleged to have stolen a cashier's wallet Jan. 2 at Pet Barn in Franklin Square and used a credit card from the wallet to buy a \$300 eel at Parrots of the World in Rockville Centre hours later.

A police spokeswoman said Starks, who is charged with felony grand larceny and misdemeanor petty larceny, was keeping his pilfered fish in a 200-gallon personal home aquarium.



WOMAN TOOK PICTURES OF FLASHER

DES MOINES, Iowa, Jan. 16 (UPI) — Police in Des Moines, Iowa, said a quick-thinking woman took pictures with her cell phone when a man allegedly exposed himself to her.

Investigators said the victim was offered a ride home while a remote starter was being installed in her car Jan. 5 at Elite Styling and Sound, the *Des Moines Register* reported Thursday.

The woman told police Kyle Matthew Thompson, 20, showed up at her home to drive her back to the business later in the day when the work on her car was completed. She said that when she entered the vehicle, Thompson's pants were unzipped and he began driving in the wrong direction.

Police said the woman pretended not to notice and used her cell phone to take pictures of Thompson with his pants unzipped. They said Thompson jerked the wheel across all lanes of traffic on the freeway to head back in the direction of the store after a friend phoned the woman and she casually gave her location.

Thompson was in court today charged with indecent exposure and taken to the Polk County Jail in lieu of \$5,000 bond.

FROM FRONT PAGE

video from Mitre 10 Mega in Dunedin obtained by police during the course of an inquiry into the activities of Dunedin Police officer Darren Buist in that shop in an incident last year [late 2007]. You also sought a copy of the police file on the case.

"Your request is declined pursuant to section 9(2)(a) to protect privacy interests; and section 9(2)(h) to maintain legal professional privilege.

"The decision not to prosecute was made by Police following a full Police investigation. This matter was independently reviewed by the Independent Police Conduct Authority, who agreed with the decisions taken by Police," wrote Moss to *TGIF*.

If true, the agency tasked with investigating police corruption has again failed dismally, just six months after whitewashing Police Commissioner Howard Broad's drink driving offence.

The IPCA has so far not published any report into Senior Constable Darren Buist's arrest on shoplifting charges and subsequent non-prosecution, but *TGIF* has learned IPCA simply accepted at face value an "independent" investigation on its behalf by a police officer in nearby Gore, who — like his Dunedin colleagues — felt Buist should not be charged.

Not all Dunedin Police are bent, however. Some have remarked that the evidence against Buist was rock-solid and more than strong enough to support a criminal conviction for theft. Privately, they've expressed surprise and disappointment at the corrupt decision by their bosses, and supported by PNHQ, to cover up the crime.

The video, for example, which police are refusing to release, shows Buist making several attempts to exit Mitre 10 despite setting off the store alarms. After security guards caught him and forced him to empty his pockets he attempted to secrete the stolen items back on the customer side of the counter but

was caught on camera doing so. Police were called. Buist then returned a few hours later with a letter of explanation about his actions. He was subsequently handed a trespass notice.

Despite thousands of New Zealanders being prosecuted for shoplifting without video evidence as strong as this, Dunedin Police, and the IPCA 'investigator', decided Buist should be allowed to walk free and keep his police job as well because Buist's offending "did not meet the criminal threshold".

That's the same line recently used by Police National Headquarters to defend their decision not to prosecute Assistant Commissioner Rob Pope for perjury, despite finding his actions were wrong.

The police file into the Mitre 10 shoplifting discloses that the only reprimand Buist suffered was to be counseled about the "unwiseness of his actions" which, in the eyes of corrupt Dunedin Police, is probably code for "you were a fool to get caught".

The store security team who caught Buist were featured in a trade newsletter soon after the December 07 incident, where one of them, described as "employee of the month" by Mitre 10, stated that catching a shoplifter redhanded was a highlight, tempered by the disappointment at finding out the criminal was a long-serving police officer.

Much more serious than catching a police officer shoplifting, however, is the perversion of the course of justice involved in intimidating Dunedin businessman Martin Dippie into not pressing charges, and the benefit of the doubt police are continually giving their own when ordinary citizens would face prosecution.

There are witnesses prepared to give first hand testimony of police corruption to a Commission of Inquiry into the Police, if the new government agrees to abandon the previous administration's tacit tolerance of police corruption and establish one.

New Zealand is virtually the only major western

NEW ZEALAND IS VIRTUALLY THE ONLY MAJOR WESTERN POLICE FORCE IN THE PAST 30 YEARS THAT HAS NOT HAD THE BENEFIT OF A FULL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ITS PRACTICES

police force in the past 30 years that has not had the benefit of a full Commission of Inquiry into its practices.

"Premiers, police ministers and police commissioners... have one thing in common," wrote Australian criminologist Colleen Lewis in *Investigate* in July 2007, "they rarely support calls for commissions of inquiry into police. History shows that governments will resist establishing an independent inquiry for as long as it is politically possible to do so.

"[Yet] despite assurances over a number of years from police ministers and police commissioners that a commission of inquiry into Queensland or NSW police was not necessary, both inquiries exposed systemic police corruption, abuse of police powers, inefficient and inappropriate work practices and, in the case of Queensland, a less than arms-length relationship between the police and the government."

The Wood Commission into NSW police corruption found — just as *Investigate* magazine's inquiries in New Zealand have — that corruption "grew out of a culture that thrived on verballing of witnesses, fabrication of evidence and bribery... the boys' club of the NSW police force", noted an NSW parliamentary report two years ago. [Back to the front page](#)



Police cordon off the the camping ground where a pair of Dutch tourists were sexually assaulted and robbed, Tuatapere. NZPA / Dianne Manson

Arrest in Dutch tourist attack

WELLINGTON, JAN 16 — A 25 year old man will appear in court tomorrow charged with the rape of a Dutch tourist yesterday.

Police have spent 48 hours hunting the man who attacked two Dutch tourists as they slept in their station wagon, raping the woman at knifepoint and robbing them, but the breakthrough came after a strong public response offered a number of good leads.

The tourists, a 25-year-old man and 22-year-old woman, were staying at the Tuatapere camping ground, west of Invercargill, when the man entered their car at 6.40am yesterday.

Sergeant David Nelson said there had been an "extremely good response" from the public and police had been following up on "a number of posi-

tive lines of inquiry" this afternoon.

A filleting knife, believed to have been used by the attacker, was found close to the scene and police were calling for anyone with information on where it had come from to get in touch.

Police released a description of the attacker, but the couple had been unable to provide much detail as his face had been covered.

"We are able to say that he has a 'square-shaped head' and is believed to be an olive-skinned Caucasian or light-skinned Polynesian or Maori," Mr Nelson said earlier. The victims were being looked after "in the traditional Southern way" and by other agencies including Tourism New Zealand, Victim Support, the Holiday Parks Association and the Dutch Embassy, he said.

They planned to continue their trip around New Zealand.

The incident was a reminder of a 2006 attack on a Dutch couple in their campervan while they honeymooned in the Bay of Islands.

The couple were handcuffed and gagged, then the woman was raped and the man forced to give the attackers their bank card and PIN number.

The main offender Keith McEwen received a sentence of preventive detention and Christopher Manuel was jailed for nine years.

The man arrested in this latest case will be formally charged in the Invercargill District Court in the morning.

— NZPA

Sex mum tries to stay mum

CHRISTCHURCH, JAN 16 – A Christchurch mother-of-two is continuing her fight to keep her name out of the media after admitting having sex with a 15-year-old boy.

Judge Stephen Erber refused to continue the suppression order when the woman pleaded guilty in Christchurch District Court today.

But defence counsel Gilly Ferguson said there would be an immediate appeal to the High Court for continued suppression.

She said the 35-year-old woman did not seek suppression for herself but for her two daughters, aged 10 and 15.

“The school term is about to go back,” Mrs Ferguson said.

“It would be foolish to think that if her name is published her daughters would not be subjected to jokes and very cruel remarks.”

However, Judge Erber refused interim suppression.

“This offence carries 10 years imprisonment. It is not a minor matter. Had the defendant been a male and the complainant female, I doubt very much suppression would have been granted no matter what the circumstances.”

But because the appeal was being filed, he granted suppression until 5pm on Monday to allow the application to be lodged with the court.

Once the papers were filed, the name would remain suppressed until the appeal was heard in the High Court.

At an earlier appearance, Mrs Ferguson said she was seeking medical reports on the woman. They could point to significant mental health issues, and there could be drug and alcohol problems.

She also said the woman had been told that because of the sensitive nature of her work, her employers could dismiss her if their name became public knowledge.

The woman today admitted the charge of having sexual connection with a boy aged 15 about September 6.

Police prosecutor Al Manco said the woman had been at a Linwood address with the boy on an evening when they had alcohol and the party pills, benzylpiperazine (BZP). They then had sex.

“The defendant was spoken to in October and admitted having sex with the boy. She said it was the biggest mistake of her life and she was extremely remorseful,” he said.

She said the boy had helped himself to the BZP tablets and had initiated the sex.

Since the offence, she had sought help for alcohol dependency, he said.

Judge Erber remanded the woman to March 6 for a pre-sentence report, a victim impact report, and sentence.

He said he would not seek the report that would allow her to be granted home detention or community detention.

– NZPA

More remains found at AIR NZ crash site

WELLINGTON, JAN 16 – More remains have been found at the Air New Zealand Airbus A320 crash site off the French coast.

French authorities this week formally confirmed the names of the four New Zealanders and two Germans whose remains have been recovered from the crash site Airbus accident off the coast of Perpignan.

The New Zealanders were Captain Brian Horrell, 52, from Auckland; Christchurch engineers Michael Gyles, 49, and Noel Marsh, 35; and Civil Aviation Authority airworthiness inspector Jeremy Cook, 58, of Wellington.

The body of Murray White, 37, an Air New Zealand engineer, from Auckland, has not yet been recovered.

“There’s I guess some degree of fear or anxiety about how difficult this process is going to be, and we all spent time talking about Murray White who’s still missing, and that’s pretty heavy on everyone’s hearts as well,” Air NZ chief executive Rob Fyfe told TV3.

“They’re still searching – in fact they’ve found remains in the last week, so we do hold quite genu-



FILE

ine hope that the site may still give up Murray,” Mr Fyfe said.

The families of the New Zealanders have arrived in France to take the bodies of their loved ones home following a final memorial service on the beach near where the crash happened this weekend.

Caskets will be handed over to the families of the

four men tomorrow.

The families will also be briefed by French authorities investigating the cause of the crash.

“Now that the information is being interpreted off both the voice recorder and the data recorder, that will be invaluable, and we remain very confident that they will be able to highlight the cause or

causes that resulted in this tragedy,” Mr Fyfe said.

A preliminary report is due by the end of this month. The voice recorder, one of two black boxes recovered from the Airbus A320 after it crashed into the Mediterranean off the southern coast of France on November 28, was badly damaged and had to be sent back to the American manufacturers before it could be examined.

The French investigation team has now begun to analyse data from the voice recorder, which was hoped would contain vital clues about the crash, but it could take weeks to complete the examination.

New Zealand’s Transport Accident Investigation Commission deputy chief investigator Ken Matthews, who was part of the investigation team, said some of the information on the cockpit voice recorder may never be released because of its sensitivity.

An interim report on the contents of the cockpit voice recorder could be ready in two or three weeks.

“But that timing is flexible, depending on what they have got,” Mr Matthews told NZPA.

– NZPA



Good news for homeowners

WELLINGTON, JAN 16 – ASB and Westpac both announced cuts to some fixed home loan rates and their variable home loan rates today.

Westpac is cutting its variable rate by 66 basis points to 7.49 percent, effective for new customers on January 20 and for existing customers following notification.

ASB is cutting its variable home loan rate to 7.45 percent.

Westpac is also cutting its four and five-year fixed mortgage rates to 6.99 percent, effective January 19.

ASB is cutting its fixed mortgage rate for 18 months through to 60 months to 6.95 percent. “With forecasters predicting a global downturn far worse than the early 1990s and wholesale rates falling in expectation of another cut to the Official Cash Rate (OCR) at the end of the month we are in a position to be able to pass through some relief to our customers,”

Brian Hayr, head of product management, said.

Swap rates in the interest rate market have been at record lows every day this week, taking the three-year, four-year and five-year swap rate below 4.25 percent, National Bank of New Zealand said in a commentary today.

Fixed mortgage rates tend to reflect trading in the swap market. ANZ National, Kiwibank and BNZ have all cut mortgage interest rates this week.

Banking analysts are not calling the cuts a mortgage rate war as the margins that mortgage rates sit above wholesale interest rates such as swap rates remain at high levels. The margin narrowed considerably in previous so-called mortgage wars.

Deposit rates are also falling with ASB now offering 5.25 percent for terms of two to five years and withdrawing a special of 5.75 percent.

– NZPA



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Share market rises on offshore recovery

WELLINGTON, JAN 16 – The New Zealand share market rose today as offshore markets recovered but the flow of local corporate news remained light.

US stocks rose overnight as investors bet the government would provide fresh capital to crisis-hit banks, including the Bank of America, while falling oil prices buoyed hopes that lower energy costs would spur business and consumer spending.

The benchmark NZSX-50 closed up 9.325 points, or 0.34 percent, at 2752.16.

Grant Williamson, director at Hamilton, Hindin, Greene, said there was little news today and even the low NZ dollar failed to move stocks that usually benefited from it.

“The word is that the interest rate cut at the end of the month is going to be bigger than originally

thought so investors are continuing to concentrate on the high-yielding stocks,” he said.

“Conditions in the economy are still looking reasonable rough so investors are still cautious,” he said.

Top stock Telecom was unchanged at 235 and Fletcher Building was also unchanged at 585.

Fisher & Paykel Healthcare was down 3c to 325 and Contact Energy was up 2c at 732.

Port of Tauranga was down 2c at 630 on a day it emerged that Ports of Auckland was a customer of a would-be new terminal operator at Tauranga.

Freightways was down 4c at 282 and Tourism Holdings was down 3c at 68. Air NZ was down 2c at 89.

Sanford was down 10c at 525 and Rakon was down 6c at 115.

Auckland Airport rose 8c to 179.

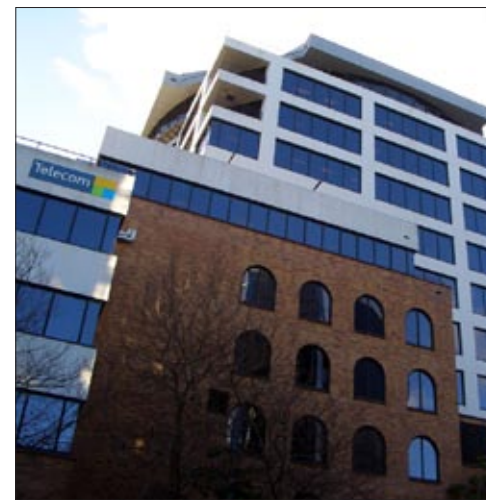
The Warehouse rose 2c to 360 and Pike River Coal rose 2c to 102.

US stocks rose on Thursday on optimism the government will act to prevent the year-long recession from deepening, offsetting worries about banks.

Shares of Bank of America and Citigroup plummeted on fears the embattled banks may need more government help to deal with soaring credit losses. Bank of America shed more than 18 percent, while Citigroup lost more than 15 percent.

The Dow Jones industrial average added 12.35 points, or 0.15 percent, to 8212.49. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index rose 1.12 points, or 0.13 percent, to 843.74. The Nasdaq Composite Index was up 22.20 points, or 1.49 percent, at 1511.84.

– NZPA



Ancient site yields eagle bones

WELLINGTON, JAN 16 – Scientists and technicians probing New Zealand's most important archaeological site, the Wairau Bar, have made some stunning finds.

They have found the faint outline of a 700 year-old building and its post holes – only the third of this age to be located, after one at Palliser Bay and one at the mouth of the Rakaia River.

The building had a “back porch” made of natural cobblestones as a working surface for a craftsman to make adzes. The stone area was worn smooth by human feet and was even littered with an unfinished stone tool pieces of stone chipped from earlier work.

The site is unusual because it provides evidence of people living permanently enough over several decades to bury their dead, with a range of taonga and burial offerings unmatched by any other burials ever recorded in New Zealand.

And the archaeologists have also found evidence that people living at the site co-existed with the

huge Haast's eagle.

“We found a couple of bones of Haast's eagle – this is one of the earliest sites where people arrived in New Zealand,” said Paul Schofield from the Canterbury Museum. Both of the bones had been shaped into artefacts, possibly because of the bird's reputation.

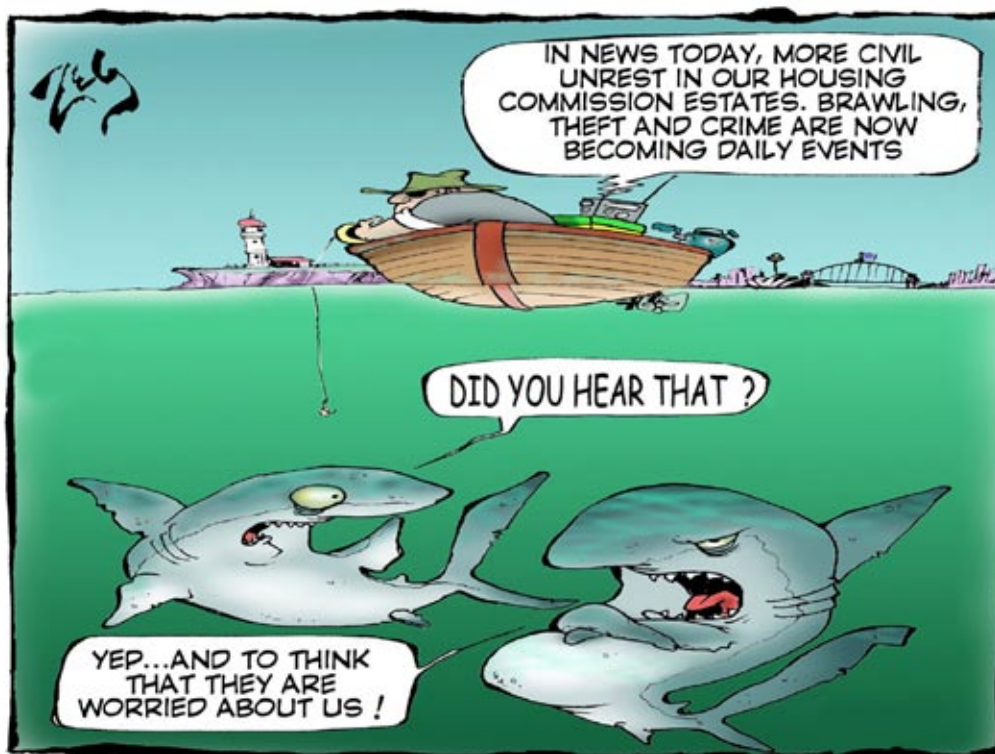
“We think that one of the reasons they went to so much effort over these fairly innocuous bones was that they recognised that the giant eagle was something pretty awesome,” he said.

One focus of the Otago University-led dig is to find out more about life in one of the country's first settlements.

The Haast's eagle is thought to have died out about 700 years ago – as its main prey, moa, were exterminated.

The eagle had enough strength in its talons to kill a moa weighing 180 kilograms, attacking at up to 80kmh, or even to attack a human.

– NZPA



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‘Groundhog Day’ driver back in court

TAURANGA, JAN 16 – A motorist who was banned indefinitely from getting behind the wheel 14 years ago appeared in Tauranga District Court today on his 11th charge of driving while disqualified.

“What is the problem with you getting a driver's licence?” Judge Christopher Harding asked Eugene Thomas, 46, of Papamoa.

“Nothing really, your honour,” Thomas replied.

He had been stopped at Mt Maunganui last October 25 for speeding. Police seized his vehicle.

Thomas told the judge he had “done the drug tests” needed before he could apply to re-sit his

licence, but added that the process for gaining a current licence costs money.

Judge Harding said: “You know what happens: You come back (to court) and you get disqualified for another year.

“All I am able to do is disqualify you again for 12 months – and that is all I will do.”

He urged Thomas to do something about it.

“You need to know that if you come up again you will go to prison.”

Thomas said: “Aw, that's not nice.”

– NZPA

Editorial

Importing hatred and stupidity

The news this week that a Muslim Turkish café owner in Invercargill refused to serve two Jewish women because they were Israeli has set tongues wagging and talkback buzzing.

There are some apologists on the left who somehow think they can “understand” how Mustafa Tekinkaya must feel, having to serve Israelis, when carnage is taking place in the Middle East.

What a pity Mustafa wasn’t so exercised by the daily lobbing of rockets on residential Israeli neighbourhoods by Hamas that he banned all Muslims from his coffee shop.

Because that’s how ridiculous his stand is.

Post 9/11, New Zealanders were lectured ad nauseum by the politically correct Clark administration how we shouldn’t judge all Muslims by the actions of al Qa’ida, and promising to throw the book on those who committed “hate crimes” against Muslims.

So now Mustafa thinks that whilst Muslims should not have been stereotyped over 9/11, somehow it’s OK to stereotype New Zealand Jews over events in Gaza, 18,000 kilometres away?

If Invercargill is a village, Mustafa is its idiot.

Presumably like him, one of the Jews was a Kiwi, and the other was her sister. Neither happen to be great supporters of the Gaza incursion, but then Mustafa never asked them, he just biffed them out anyway.

At one level we can all throw up our hands and lament that this is the danger of allowing in immigrants who hate, but that’s a little too simplistic.

Turkey, after all, is a moderate democracy at present, and such vehemence from a Turkish migrant is more likely due to personal stupidity than anything institutionalised back in the old country. After all, when Turkey suffered devastating earthquakes in the 1990s, it was specialist Israeli rescue teams who were among the first on the scene, helping to save hundreds of Muslims from the rubble.

One would think the spokesman for the Federation of Islamic Associations in NZ, Javed Khan, would know better than to say that he too “understands where Mr Tekinkaya was coming from”. Sure, Khan qualified it by then adding that New Zealand law forbade discrimination so he supposed Muslims should probably abide by the law.

This is the same Javed Khan who was seen in all the newspapers and TV bulletins within hours of the Mumbai terror attacks, condemning these atrocities carried out in the name of Islam – oh, that’s right, I forgot: he didn’t issue a condemnatory statement at all and was criticised for his silence. Yet within hours of Israel’s Gaza incursion, Khan was waxing lyrical about the evils of Israel.

This is also the same Javed Khan, however, whose network of Islamic associations invited Muslim hate preachers to **lecture every year in NZ mosques**, which is where, possibly, a normally mild-mannered Turk has become just a little bit more radicalised.

Some talkback callers and hosts have suggested a boycott of Mustafa’s business. I disagree. The New Zealand way is not to join in but to lead by example. Instead, customers of his Invercargill business should continue to buy their coffees there, but let him know verbally how disappointed they are in his actions. By showing we can do business even if we disagree, we actually send a powerful message much needed in the Middle East right now.

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Comment



Ultrasounds may shift our point of view

By Lori Borgman

On my birthday this past fall, I received an e-mail from our son and his wife with the subject line HAPPY BIRTHDAY. Inside the e-mail was an ultrasound image of a 12-week-old foetus wearing a bright red and yellow party hat that screamed Happy Birthday. The ultrasound was courtesy of an obstetrician’s office; the party hat was courtesy of Photoshop.

In the digital age, this is how a woman receives notice she is going to become a grandmother. (Well, that and they dropped by with their dog which was wearing a shirt that said, “I’m the Big Brother.”)

Our children’s baby books all begin with the inky little footprints taken in the nursery shortly after they were born. Baby books these days begin with ultrasounds done before the babies were ever born.

This remarkable technology has made inroads into the animal kingdom as well. This month the National Geographic Channel aired *In the Womb: Dogs* and *In the Womb: Cats*. Using 4-D imaging, they tracked development of a wolf, three breeds of dogs, a lion embryo and a kitten embryo. The cats can be seen

running in place and stretching in the womb.

One cannot miss the irony of two documentaries on the wonder of life inside the womb debuting in January, the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

The abortion battle has been going on for nearly four decades now. Recently invited to a luncheon attended by people who have been deeply involved in the pro-life movement since the ‘70s, I couldn’t help but notice conversation was punctuated with questions like, “Is she still alive?” or “Is he well?” There is speculation, which follows every general election, that the debate itself is aging and dying.

Yet election polling by the Pew Research Group found younger people, who tend to be more liberal than their parents or grandparents on many issues, are more conservative than their older counterparts when it comes to abortion. Some analysts say the reason is because the pro-life side of the argument is couched in terms of “right to life,” and young people are all about rights.

But surely part of the leaning is due to technology. In the early days following Roe v. Wade, an argument was floated that the ethics of abortion were incon-

sequential because it wasn’t really a baby. Even as someone who was unsettled on the issue back then, I always wondered, if it wasn’t a baby, what was it?

A semi-truck? A hippo? I later learned it that it would feel like such things during labour and delivery, but it was, in fact, a human being. And now technology answers the question of life sharply, definitively and in living colour.

Here’s another thing I have noticed about the next generation. Because they are visual, early imaging causes them to form far more personal attachments with the baby while it is still in the womb. Many young couples are naming their babies before they are born, sharing the names with family and friends and referring to the pre-born baby by name.

It would be one thing to talk about aborting one’s foetus, but quite another to talk about aborting a Riley, Jackson or Grace.

Ultrasound imaging may be changing hearts in a way that the protests, shouting and placards never could. A picture really is worth a thousand words, or in some cases, a thousand lives.

Lori Borgman is the author *Catching Christmas* available at www.lori-borgman.com. Comments may be sent to lori@loriborgman.com.

Letters

Let the people decide

In May 2005 the Wanganui Council headed by Mayor Michael Laws initiated their first referendum. Each person listed on the Wanganui electoral roll was given the opportunity to prioritise 3 projects out of 14 capital funding proposals, voting was done by post with an astonishing 54 percent of voters returning forms.

The Wanganui Splash Centre extension came in first position followed by the Central City Waterfront Development and the Footpath upgrades. Although the referendums were non binding, Law’s said that the council considered itself bound by the results and therefore changed its capital project priorities and voted \$2.5 Million to the Splash Centre extension, \$600K to the riverfront development and an additional \$120K (annually) to the footpaths.

Perhaps more local Councils might also adopt a bit of real democracy like Wanganui has done and let the people decide what is important to them?

Steve Baron – Better Democracy NZ, Cambridge

Sanity in TGIF Edition

Well, the *NZ Herald* editorial page has stated that Israel should just commit suicide and there would be peace – and they think it would be a good thing.

If it weren’t for you, there would be no sane political reporting in New Zealand. I’m glad I’m in the States, as Obama will be controlled, and not living in that secular wasteland known as New Zealand.

G-d Bless you and keep you this year.

Joseph Scott, Minnesota

Abortion Supervisory Committee

Right to Life is concerned that the Abortion Supervisory Committee has withheld important statistical information from Parliament in their 2008 report. The Committee is appointed by Parliament and is accountable to Parliament. The Committee has a statutory duty to report annually to Parliament on the performance of abortion in New Zealand.

This duty is enshrined in the Contraception Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977, section 14. Functions and Powers of Supervisory committee, [1] [g], To obtain, monitor, analyse, collate, and disseminate information relating to the performance of abortions in New Zealand.

There are ten tables of statistics in the 2008 report, in the 2007 report there were sixteen tables which have been included in the Committee’s reports for many years.

Three of the omitted tables of particular importance are the table listing the reasons for the authorisation of the abortions. This table in previous reports revealed that 98% of abortions were authorised on the grounds of mental health. These statistics were of critical importance in obtaining a favourable judgment of the High Court in the Judicial Review of the performance of the Committee which declared that certifying consultants were using mental health grounds to provide an unlawful abortion on demand in New Zealand. Table seven listing the ethnicity of the women having an abortion has been withheld, as is table 15 which lists the procedures used for abortions. We are also concerned that table 8, Induced Abortions by Previous Abortions has been drastically changed to omit the number of repeat abortions after two. In the 2007 report it provided information on the number of abortions a woman had including up to six previous abortions, this information was also of importance in our Society’s Judicial Review in the High Court.

We believe that Parliament and the public of New Zealand have a right to the statistical information that has been withheld. It is the view of this Society that the information withheld impedes a fuller understanding by Parliamentarians and citizens of the performance of abortion in New Zealand. This important issue raises important questions;

- Why is the Committee withholding this important statistical information from Parliament?
- Is the information being withheld in order to prevent Parliament from concluding that certifying consultants are using mental health grounds to provide an unlawful abortion on demand?

Right to Life requests that the Committee urgently present a supplementary report to Parliament to include the statistics withheld. We also request that the withheld statistical tables be re-instated in the Committee’s 2009 report to Parliament.

Ken Orr, Right to Life New Zealand Inc

Letters to the editor can be posted to:
PO BOX 302188, North Harbour, North Shore 0751 or
emailed to: letters@tgifedition.tv



Iran needs Hamas to win

By Liz Sly

Chicago Tribune

BEIRUT—Looming over the Gaza conflict is the long shadow of Iran, which has much to win or lose from the outcome of the battles raging three weeks after Israel launched its devastating onslaught to stop Hamas rocket attacks.

For Iran, which provides funding and training to Hamas, the crisis represents an almost existential battle in its quest to become a regional superpower, in which Hamas plays a key role as an extension of Shiite Iranian influence.

“Iran stands to gain more influence if Hamas survives, because Hamas is a direct auxiliary for Iran — an Iranian foothold on the Mediterranean,” said Oussama Safa, a Mideast analyst who heads the Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies.

“Crushing Hamas in Gaza means chasing out the influence of the Iranians from this part of the region.”

With the current fighting representing a battle in a wider struggle for regional dominance, Iran’s intentions will be key in determining whether the conflict remains confined to Gaza or escalates into a wider war that would almost certainly embroil its other chief ally, Lebanon’s militant Hezbollah movement, analysts say.

So far, Iran has not indicated any desire to see an escalation. Noisy displays of outrage on the streets of Tehran and other Iranian cities may have offered a useful diversion from the country’s economic woes, which is to the benefit of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who is up for re-election this year.

At the international level, Iranian leaders have confined their fiery anti-Israel rhetoric to efforts to pressure Arab and world leaders to push Israel to accept a cease-fire, one that would enable Hamas to survive.

After claims by hard-line student groups in Iran that 70,000 young men had volunteered to carry out suicide missions against Israel, Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, forbade them from travelling.

Iran also dispatched to Beirut its top national security adviser, Saeed Jalili, who met with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Jan. 3. Though the substance of their talks has not been disclosed, the Arab daily *Al-Hayat* said they focused on “ways to stop the aggression” — but not on an escalation.

Hamas is no puppet of Iran’s — it came into being without Iranian support and its goal of retrieving territory for a future Palestine would continue without Iran, said Hilal Khashan, a political scientist at the American University of Beirut. It would also not

serve Hamas’ interests to be supported by Iran too publicly, at a time when many in the mostly Sunni Arab world view Shiite Iran with deep suspicion, he said.

That’s another reason Hamas, a Sunni fundamentalist movement, is important to Iran — because it helps give Iran credibility among Arabs, said Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, of the Lebanese American University. “Playing the Palestinian card is a way of winning Arab hearts and minds. Hamas is a bridge for Iran to the Arab Sunni world,” she said.

She does not rule out the possibility that Iran would open a second front in the Gaza conflict, by encouraging its well-armed Hezbollah ally to take action along Israel’s northern border if Hamas appeared to be in danger of collapse.

“If Hamas were to be defeated, it would be a grave blow for Iran,” she said.

Analyst Safa thinks it unlikely that Hezbollah would intervene: The Shiite movement is participating in June elections, which it hopes to win, and its chances could be jeopardized if it precipitates another war with Israel like the one that killed over 1,000 people in 2006, he said.

“Iran is very cool-headed. Iran doesn’t get angry, it gets even,” Safa said.

But with Iran still defiantly pursuing a nuclear program that the West alleges is intended to build weapons, many wonder how long it will be before there is a full-scale showdown with Israel. As Israel’s chief ally, and with over 170,000 troops stationed on Iran’s borders in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. would almost certainly risk becoming involved.

President-elect Barack Obama reiterated last weekend his intention to seek a negotiated solution to the standoff with Iran.

“I have said in the past, during the course of the (election) campaign, that Iran is a genuine threat to U.S. national security,” Obama told reporters in Washington. “But I have also said that we should be willing to initiate diplomacy as a mechanism to achieve our national security goals.”

At a forum organized last week by the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, however, former Defense Secretary William Perry warned that Iran’s quest for nuclear weapons appears unstoppable and will likely present Obama with his first major foreign policy crisis.

“It seems clear that Israel will not sit by idly while Iran takes defiant steps toward becoming a nuclear power,” said Perry, who served under Bill Clinton. “As a result President Obama will almost certainly face a serious crisis with Iran. Indeed, I believe that crisis point will be reached in his first year in office.”

“SO FAR, IRAN HAS NOT INDICATED ANY DESIRE TO SEE AN ESCALATION. NOISY DISPLAYS OF OUTRAGE ON THE STREETS OF TEHRAN AND OTHER IRANIAN CITIES MAY HAVE OFFERED A USEFUL DIVERSION FROM THE COUNTRY’S ECONOMIC WOES, WHICH IS TO THE BENEFIT OF PRESIDENT MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD, WHO IS UP FOR RE-ELECTION THIS YEAR

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OLYMPUS

Walker's World

Two dead rulers hold key to recovery

BERLIN — Few men become the best historical examples of their own great insights into the human condition. One who did wrote the following lines:

"The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist."

The author was British economist John Maynard Keynes, and the key to the world's current financial predicament lies in the argument and interplay between Keynes and another defunct economist, the American monetarist Milton Friedman.

Keynes was a British Liberal and progressive of the first half of the 20th century who Europeans would now call a moderate social democrat, or in American terms, a centrist Democrat. He believed that governments could and should act as lenders of last resort and use deficit spending to create jobs and haul a country out of depression.

Friedman was initially a supporter of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and worked for it as a young economist. He was also a follower of Keynes, and it was he, rather than Richard Nixon, who originally said, "We are all Keynesians now".

A moderate conservative, Friedman was appalled by the way promiscuous use of Keynesian policies during non-depression periods had led to inflation and increased government intervention in the economy. Friedman became a critic (but remained an admirer) of Keynes and developed an alternative grand theory of economics that became known as monetarism. Its core contention was that inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon and that therefore the control of the money supply by the central banks was the key to getting into and out of depressions.

"The Fed was largely responsible for converting what might have been a garden-variety recession, although perhaps a fairly severe one, into a major catastrophe. Instead of using its powers to offset the depression, it presided over a decline in the quantity of money by one-third from 1929 to 1933," he wrote. "Far from the depression being a failure of

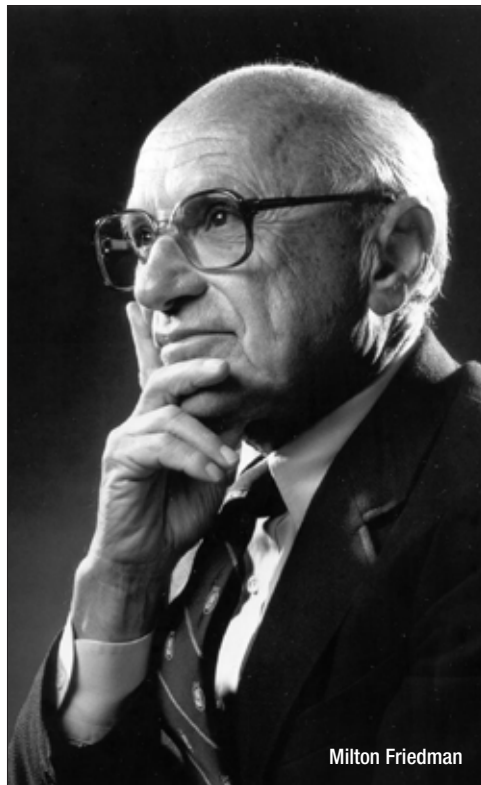


John Maynard Keynes

the free-enterprise system, it was a tragic failure of government."

Broadly speaking, the global economy for the past 60 years has been run by apostles of these two men. Until the coming of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, most finance ministries and central banks pursued Keynesian policies, sometimes to unsustainable extremes. Thereafter, they increasingly tended toward Friedman's thinking, but probably to equally unsustainable extremes.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the current financial crisis is that we are trying both remedies. So far, thanks to Ben Bernanke at the U.S. Federal Reserve and Mervyn King at the Bank of England, we have pursued Friedmanite policies, flooding the markets with liquidity and shoring up the banking system. Along the way, the Fed in the past year has increased its balance sheet from US\$700 billion to \$2.3 trillion.



Milton Friedman

Bernanke, in a 2002 speech honouring Friedman on his 90th birthday, acknowledged the Fed's role in the Great Depression when he said to Friedman, "You were right, we did it. But thanks to you, we won't do it again."

But now comes Barack Obama with his vast \$800 billion (or higher) stimulus package, which is straight out of the playbook of Keynes, as expressed in Keynes' famous open letter to the new President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933: "As the prime mover in the first stage of the technique of recovery I lay overwhelming emphasis on the increase of national purchasing power resulting from governmental expenditure which is financed by loans and not by taxing present incomes. Nothing else counts in comparison with this."

"It is beyond my province to choose particular objects of expenditure," Keynes went on. "But preference should be given to those which can be made to

mature quickly on a large scale, as for example the rehabilitation of the physical condition of the railroads. The object is to start the ball rolling. The United States is ready to roll towards prosperity, if a good hard shove can be given in the next six months."

"I put in the second place the maintenance of cheap and abundant credit and in particular the reduction of the long-term rates of interest," Keynes added.

This second place priority of Keynes and the unblocking of the credit markets is now what Bernanke's Fed is trying to achieve.

So the thinking of the two great economic minds of the 20th century is now the lodestone of the key decision-makers who are seeking to haul us out of this recession before it becomes another Great Depression. The problem is that the theories of Keynes and Friedman are not really compatible.

Keynes believed that government and only government could, in the last resort, get us out of trouble, and that is also what Obama and most of the Democrats in Congress and most European policymakers believe.

Friedman, by contrast, was deeply suspicious of government and far from convinced of its wisdom and skill in crafting and implementing economic policy. He once said of himself, "I am a libertarian with a small 'l'" and claimed that his proudest accomplishment was helping to replace conscription with a professional military because the draft was incompatible with a free society. In a perfect world, Friedman also noted, he would like to abolish the Fed.

This may go too far for many of today's Republicans in Congress, but on the whole they share Friedman's suspicion of big government. And since there are sufficient Republican senators to block Obama's legislative programs, it is an open question just how free Obama will be to apply Keynesian remedies. Republicans already have signalled their opposition to much of Obama's planned stimulus program.

For better or worse, the chances of avoiding another Great Depression look like hinging on these two defunct economists and on the coming battle between their political heirs.

— UPI

Obituary

Atlantic Eye: Helen Suzman's South Africa



PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC — She was of great wit. A grande dame with stinging intelligence. She had incredible will-power. The gritty anti-apartheid activist Helen Suzman, who I inter-

viewed twice, died Jan. 1 in Johannesburg — just a day after I had returned from a humanitarian mission to Africa.

From 1953 to 1989 Suzman sat in Parliament as a lone voice against white minority rule and as a tireless advocate for individual liberty and personal responsibility. She was firmly opposed to economic sanctions and divestment, fearing that South Africa would wreck the economy for generations of South Africans. It doesn't make sense for a free South Africa to inherit a wasteland, she would say.

Suzman once sent the minister of law and order a postcard from the Soviet Union, saying, "You would like it here. Lots of law and order." Once she told a government minister to go into the black townships and see their appalling conditions for himself. He would be quite safe, she said, if he went heavily disguised as a human being. In a famous exchange

a minister shouted: "You put these questions just to embarrass South Africa overseas". To which she coolly replied: "It is not my questions that embarrass South Africa — it is your answers". When an Afrikaner in Parliament sneered at her Jewish roots and asked what her ancestors were doing when his were bringing the Bible to the savages, she snapped, "They were writing the Bible".

A free-market-oriented liberal, Suzman also opposed many of the policies of the new African National Congress government. She was especially concerned about education.

When apartheid ended, South African schools were beginning to integrate. The white schools provided a First World education, as did the universities. Black schools were dysfunctional from 1983 onwards because of the legacy of apartheid, but also because of the disruption caused by the ANC's approach of liberation before education. Under Minister of Education F.W. de Klerk the government was moving slowly toward equal funding for education. By 1989 there were more black students in tertiary education than whites.

President F.W. de Klerk interacted with Helen Suzman. He admired her fortitude. He also agreed with many of her points of view. De Klerk would abolish many of the laws his own father, a leading nationalist politician, had enacted. Soon after becoming president in 1989, he would un-ban the ANC, he would

open up South African politics to all South Africans — he would free Nelson Mandela after 27 years on Robben Island. In the process, he would abolish the remnants of apartheid altogether. Despite all this, the new South Africa that he bequeathed to the ANC faced enormous educational challenges.

After 1994 the ANC, full of idealism, made a number of disastrous decisions in its eagerness to reform education. It abolished school inspectorates and basic teacher training colleges. It drastically cut mother-tongue education for black children. The result was that after the third year of school, black children were taught in English, a language most of them could not understand, by teachers with a limited grasp of the language themselves. An outcomes-based system was introduced — which is fine for advanced First World schools — but completely unsuited to the rudimentary black schools. The result has been catastrophic for a whole generation of post-1994 black schoolchildren.

It is an embarrassment that 15 years after the fall of apartheid, education in a free South Africa has plummeted to new lows. Of the group of black students who entered schools in 1995, 1.2 million students, only 42,000 left school in 2007 able to read and do math at a 10th grade level. South Africa gives out more money per capita than all of the other African countries, yet its education system is one of the poorest on the continent. This has disastrous effects

on employment and the economy and on efforts to increase the representation of black South Africans in senior management positions and professions.

A new political party, the Congress of the People — mostly dissatisfied ANC members who were loyal to former President Thabo Mbeki — for the first time is giving the ANC a serious run for its money. In regional by-elections in the Western Cape province in December, COPE did remarkably well. It remains to be seen how the party will do in national elections expected in April. COPE has made education, healthcare and open markets the cornerstone of its campaign.

As a democracy, South Africa can only survive with a strong rule of law, competing political parties and an economy that is based on free-market principles.

It is not always possible to redress the past, the great dissident and former President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel would say. Sometimes one must be content to focus on the future.

Helen Suzman knew this.

I can only hope she will not be turning in her grave.

UPI International Columnist Marc S. Ellenbogen is chairman of the Berlin, Copenhagen and Sydney-based Global Panel Foundation and president of the Prague Society for International Cooperation. A founding trustee of the Democratic Expat Leadership Council, he is a senior associate at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in upstate New York.

— UPI

Miracle in Manhattan

All rescued from Hudson River plane crash

NEW YORK, JAN. 16 — A US Airways Airbus A-320 carrying 150 passengers and five crew members ditched into the Hudson River in New York today, US Airways said.

No deaths were reported.

Flight 1549 from New York LaGuardia to Charlotte, N.C., went down six minutes after takeoff about 3:03 p.m. after losing both engines, CBS reported. ABC reported the plane got no higher than a thousand metres.

Pilots union officials said the pilot reported two bird strikes to air traffic controllers, ABC said.

The plane, which was nearly full, landed in the river near 57th Street near the restored aircraft carrier Intrepid. The plane remained afloat, enabling ferry boats that surrounded it to get everyone off, police said.

Rescued passengers told reporters the pilots calmly prepared them for the landing and once the plane was down, herded them out on the wings.

Rescued passenger Jeff Kolodjay of Norwalk, Conn., said it was really a scary few minutes. He said an engine blew out three minutes into the flight, filling the fuselage with smoke. The pilot then circled around. He said the pilot knew we were going down.

"The pilot said, 'Brace for impact,' and I thought,

'Aw (expletive). It's going to be ugly', said Kolodjay, who was on a golfing trip.

He said women and children were allowed off first, debarking onto rafts and then transferred to the surrounding ferries as water started coming in through the rear of the plane.

Kolodjay said a number of people suffered leg injuries but he said the pilots did an incredible job.

"Kudos to him. Good job. . . Hats off to the pilot," Kolodjay said.

CNN reported four people were taken to Roosevelt Hospital, suffering from hypothermia, and hospital officials said they had been told to prepare for 50 more. Temperatures hovered around minus 6 degrees and the water temperature was reported at 5 degrees at the time of the crash.

Joyce Cordero, a producer for CBS's *60 Minutes*, said she could see the plane from her office window.

"It looked like a movie scene," Cordero said.

US Airways Chairman Doug Parker told a hastily called news conference the airline would cooperate fully with the investigation.

Andreas Sappok of Circle Cruise Line told WNBC-TV, New York, the plane was towed to shore by a large tug and remained tied up opposite Stuyvesant High School in Lower Manhattan.



The half-submerged US Air jet is docked alongside a wharf in Manhattan after it drifted downriver following an emergency water landing in the Hudson River today. (UPI Photo/Monika Graff)

Sappok said everyone appeared calm.

Rescue worker Janis Krums said the coordination among the ferry crews was incredible.

"It was pretty impressive," Krums told WNBC.

"We started taking people from the wing to the ferry

and gave them jackets to try to get them warm."

Sean Court said he watched the plane coming down from his office window. He said the descent was gradual and it looked like the pilot was fully in control.

— UPI

No ceasefire without key demand met

GAZA CITY — In the worst day of fighting since Israel launched its assault on the Gaza Strip, Israeli troops pushed deep into Gaza City overnight, shells set alight a UN compound and an Israeli airstrike killed a top Hamas leader.

There were growing signs that the offensive could nonetheless be in its final days.

It was unclear how the death of Said Siam — the interior minister of the Hamas administration in the salient, the overall head of its security apparatus and the most senior member of the Islamist movement to be killed in the Israeli offensive — would affect the movement's willingness to accept Egyptian proposals for ending the fighting.

Although Hamas promised to avenge Siam's death, the Dubai-based al-Arabiya news channel reported that Hamas accepted "a one-year-long renewable ceasefire on the condition that Israeli troops withdraw from the Gaza Strip within five to seven days."

It is unlikely however that Israel will agree to pull its troops out the Strip until a key demand is met, that a mechanism be in place to prevent Hamas from smuggling weapons into the salient.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon had earlier Thursday told a news conference in Tel Aviv that the elements were there for a ceasefire to be in place "reasonably soon," but added that how soon depended on the "political will of the Israeli government."

Both Ban and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier have spoken of an immediate halt to the fighting, which would see both sides end the fighting, to be followed by a more durable truce.

During that initial ceasefire, the parties would discuss the durable truce, including the guarantees and mechanisms Israel is demanding to end arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip.

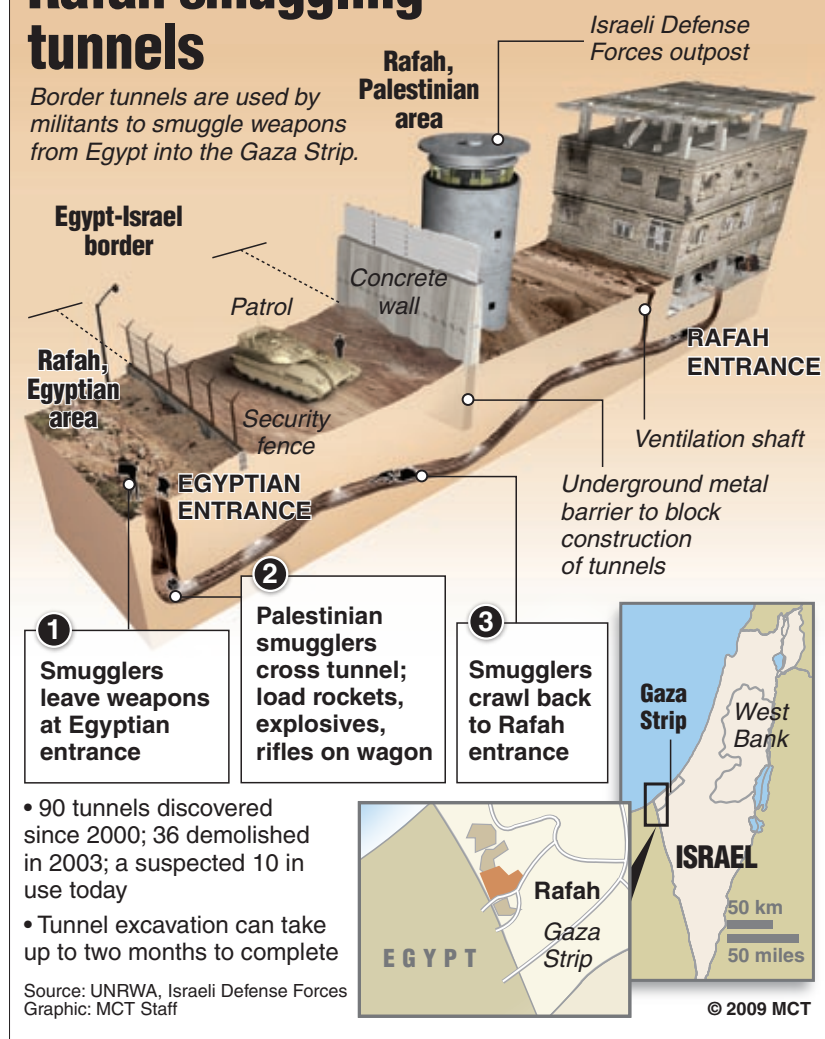
While the terms were being worked out, the Israeli army would remain in the salient.

Hamas has said it is amenable to a temporary halt to the fighting, but rejects any long-term truce with the Jewish state. Senior Israeli Defence Ministry official Amos Gilad met Egyptian officials in Cairo Thursday to hear how Hamas interpreted a ceasefire.

A senior Israeli official said Israel felt "momentum" early this morning regarding a ceasefire. Gilad was due to brief Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni on his return from Cairo. Any Israel decision would be based on what he had to tell them, the official said.

Rafah smuggling tunnels

Border tunnels are used by militants to smuggle weapons from Egypt into the Gaza Strip.



Ban and Steinmeier were in Israel for talks with officials as part of a diplomatic push to find an end to the Israeli offensive, in its 20th day today.

But while the secretary general and Germany's top diplomat were holding talks with Israeli leaders in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israeli ground troops were taking on Hamas and other militants as close as 1.5 kilometres from the city centre, Gaza City residents said.

Backed by heavy tank shelling, the troops concentrated in the southern Tel el-Hawa neighbourhood in their deepest push yet into the city of 400,000.

During the fighting, three shells hit a United Nations compound in the centre of Gaza City.

The shells set ablaze a warehouse storing food and

medicine and spread to other sections of the compound, which houses aid agencies and where some 700 people were seeking refuge from the fighting.

One wing of the al-Quds hospital was also on fire, UN officials said, and two buildings housing journalists were hit.

Residents of Tel el-Hawa were panicking in their residential buildings, some of them high-rises, while keeping doors and windows shut, and calling on international organizations to evacuate them.

Thousands were also fleeing their homes. Ambulances were unable to reach the area amid the heavy battles.

Heavy exchanges were reported in the nearby, but more southern, Zaytoun neighbourhood.

Al-Jazeera reported that tanks had also pushed

close to the house of Mahmoud al-Zahar, Hamas' leading hardliner. Five of his bodyguards were reported killed during the night.

A Hamas website reported that an Israeli airstrike also hit the home of Hamas interim minister Said Siam, killing his brother Iyad.

An Israeli military spokeswoman said local militants were confronting the ground troops with mortar shells and small arms, sparking "very intense" exchanges of fire.

She said the tanks were returning fire only toward the sources of the Palestinian fire.

Hamas and other militant factions in turn stepped up their rocket attacks, firing approximately 20 missiles into southern Israel by early

afternoon, more than the average for previous days.

One struck in a garden of a home in the town of Sderot, located just a few kilometres to the north-east of the strip. The family living there had escaped into the safe room of the house.

Two rockets which slammed into the city of Beersheba wounded five people including a 7-year-old boy.

The Palestinian toll for the entire Israeli offensive now stands at at least 1,095 dead and some 5,000 injured, according to Gaza emergency services chief Mo'aweya Hassanein.

Some 13 Israelis, including nine soldiers, have been killed in the ground fighting in the Gaza Strip and by Palestinian rocket fire, which has also wounded dozens more.

In his news conference Thursday, Ban said that the number of casualties in the Gaza fighting had reached an "unbearable point" and it was unacceptable that more people would be killed in the fighting.

It was equally unacceptable that almost 1 million people in Israel lived day and night in fear of Hamas rockets from the Gaza Strip, he said.

Israel launched its Operation Cast Lead on December 27, in response to massive rocket barrages from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip on its southern towns and villages. After a week of incessant air strikes, ground troops crossed into the Gaza Strip on January 3.

— DPA

DURING THAT INITIAL CEASEFIRE, THE PARTIES WOULD DISCUSS THE DURABLE TRUCE, INCLUDING THE GUARANTEES AND MECHANISMS ISRAEL IS DEMANDING TO END ARMS SMUGGLING INTO THE GAZA STRIP



Danger for NZ farmers in European subsidies

BERLIN – The European Union plans to resume programs to protect dairy farmers, an EU official said today, the day before one of the world's major farm-products fairs opens for business in the German capital of Berlin.

Mariann Fischer Boel, commissioner for agriculture, said, "The abruptness of the fall in the price of milk in the last few months has surprised a lot of people." The EU ceased subsidizing exports a year and a half ago.

She said Brussels proposed to buy up butter, cheese and milk powder stocks to stabilize prices, then export the products. From March to the end of August, it would buy 30,000 tons of butter and 109,000 tons of skimmed milk powder at an "intervention" price.

The world recession has pulled the rug from under prices for commodities such as milk.

EU is under pressure from militant farmers who

demand what they term fair prices for their milk. For 10 days last year German dairy farmers poured milk down drains rather than sell it.

Currently, milk often sells at the farm gate in Germany for less than 0.30 euros per litre (NZ\$0.73).

Past EU plans to fill warehouses with surplus milk powder and butter have always angered other dairy export nations, since the stockpiles push down prices for farmers right around the globe.

Oxfam, the aid agency, warned today that the subsidies could ruin farmers in developing nations.

Fischer Boel said at the opening party that EU officials were reviewing "more efficient" ways of making direct subsidy payments to European farmers from 2013 when the next EU budget period starts.

"Until 2013 there won't be any more agricultural reforms," she added.

– DPA

The cost of US bailout rises

WASHINGTON – President-elect Barack Obama faced the first tests of his incoming administration today as legislators considered two measures worth a combined US\$1.175 trillion to help revive the struggling US economy.

Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives revealed details of an historic 825-billion-dollar stimulus package that Obama hopes will pull the US out of a year-long recession.

In the Senate, lawmakers voted to release the second half of a 700-billion-dollar bail-out package passed last year to keep the finance industry afloat. The House will take up the bill next week.

Some lawmakers have tried to block the second 350 billion dollars from being approved, which would put Congress on a collision course with Obama before he even enters the White House.

Obama, who takes office on Wednesday, has reportedly threatened lawmakers that he would use his first presidential veto if Congress fails to appropriate the funds.

Both Democrats – who hold a majority in both houses of Congress – and Republicans have expressed reluctance to release the remaining 350 billion dollars of the controversial programme.

Many legislators complained that the first half of the bail-out money was poorly invested by the Bush administration, shoring up struggling Wall Street banks without unblocking credit access or helping homeowners who have suffered a record number of foreclosures.

In the final vote today, 42 senators voted to block the money while 52 supported issuing the extra money. The vote fell largely along partisan lines as most Democrats chose to back their incoming president.

Obama had argued it was crucial that he have the breathing room to

address any further erosion of the financial sector. He promised today to use the second half "in a new and responsible way" and to take on board



lawmakers' concerns.

"I know this wasn't an easy vote because of the frustration so many of us share about how the first half of this plan was implemented," he said in a statement. "My pledge is to change the way this plan is implemented and keep faith with the American taxpayer."

Detailing its plans for the money in a letter to Congress, the incoming

Obama administration said it would address both the housing and financial crises by committing as much as 100 billion dollars of the bail-out to help homeowners avoid foreclosure.

"Our actions will reflect the act's original purpose of preventing systemic consequences in the financial and housing markets," Larry Summers, Obama's incoming chief economic adviser, wrote in the letter.

The damage inflicted on the finance industry, sparked by a sharp downturn in the housing market, has been largely blamed for the year-long recession inflicting the United States.

House Democrats meanwhile took their first steps toward approving an 825-billion-dollar economic stimulus plan, part of Obama's promise to save or create 3 million jobs and revive the world's largest economy.

The bill would provide for 550 billion dollars in spending over two years in infrastructure, energy, transport, technology and other sectors. Another 275 billion dollars will go to tax relief, according to summaries of the legislation released today.

Obama in a statement called the plan "a significant downpayment on our most urgent challenges" and promised transparency and oversight as the money is spent.

He had hoped for stimulus measures on his desk to sign on the day of his inauguration on Tuesday, but growing resistance in Congress could delay passage until February 13 – a deadline Obama has set and congressional leaders have promised to meet.

– DPA

“No compromise” – Bush’s legacy

WASHINGTON – US President George W Bush in his farewell address Thursday said there can be "little debate" that the controversial decisions he's made during his presidency have kept the United States safe.

Bush took up many of the themes that defined his eight years in office as he made his final speech to the nation. He warned that terrorism remains the "gravest threat to our people," more than seven years after the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington.

Bush said the United States was the only country that could "lead the cause of freedom" and democracy around the world. The US must never turn to isolationism or protectionism to achieve its goals.

Bush gave his final address to the nation from the White House's East Room as he tries to salvage his legacy despite leaving with some of the lowest job approval ratings in modern US history.

While acknowledging some "setbacks" and things he might have done differently, Bush said he had followed his conscience in making the "tough decisions" necessary to protect the country.

"There is legitimate debate about many of these decisions. But there can be little debate about the results," Bush said. "America has gone more than seven years without another terrorist attack on our soil."

Bush has steadfastly maintained that history will be the ultimate judge of his presidency, which ends when Barack Obama is sworn in on Wednesday morning NZ time.

Bush will give way to Obama amid the worst recession in decades and ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The president-elect also inherits the unfinished job of closing the notorious prison camp



for suspected terrorists in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right," Bush said. "You may not agree with some tough decisions I have made. But I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions."

Bush offered best wishes to Obama, who will become the country's first African-American presi-

dent. Bush described his successor as a man "whose story reflects the enduring promise of our land."

Next week's inauguration is "a moment of hope and pride for our whole nation," Bush said. "And I join all Americans in offering best wishes to president-elect Obama, his wife Michelle and their two beautiful girls."

Bush said the US should "never let down our

guard" and must continue to speak with the kind of "moral clarity" that was a key trait of his own presidency.

"I have often spoken to you about good and evil," Bush told viewers. "This has made some uncomfortable. But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise."

– DPA

“THERE IS LEGITIMATE DEBATE ABOUT MANY OF THESE DECISIONS. BUT THERE CAN BE LITTLE DEBATE ABOUT THE RESULTS. AMERICA HAS GONE MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS WITHOUT ANOTHER TERRORIST ATTACK ON OUR SOIL

Crackdown on terror group

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI – The Pakistani government announced today that it had closed down a number of suspected terrorist training camps and detained 71 people in connection with the Mumbai attacks, apparently in a bid to ease tensions with India.

The announcement came as India increased pressure saying Pakistan was not showing willingness to cooperate against terrorism and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said Islamabad needed to act.

“There are camps which were doing the relief work ... though we didn’t find any evidence there, but there were some traces that these were being treated like training camps,” Pakistani interior ministry’s top official Rehman Malik told reporters in Islamabad.

“But they all have been shut,” he added.

The five camps set up originally for the victims of the October 2005 earthquake were run by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a militant outfit suspected of having masterminded the November 26 Mumbai carnage, and its political front, an Islamic charity, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD).

According to Malik, the law enforcement agencies had detained 71 people, including at least four top leaders of LeT and JuD, from various parts of the country.

“There are 71 persons who have been detained and in fact for the last six months we had kept certain persons under observation because the terrorist acts allow you to keep people under supervision. We have 124 people under surveillance.”

In addition, the government closed six websites and seven Islamic seminaries run by JuD. But Malik said the government was still to “find out how far and at what level JuD is involved in these (terror) activities.”

The crackdown on the outlawed charity was launched after it was placed on the United Nations Security Council’s list of terrorist entities on December 10.



New Delhi has been constantly pressing Islamabad for stern action against Pakistan-based elements responsible for the terrorist attack on its financial hub that left more than 170 people dead.

This has led to heightened tension between the nuclear-capable South Asian neighbours, who have fought three wars with each other since 1947, and were not ruling out the fourth on the issue of Mumbai attacks.

Indian Army chief General Deepak Kapoor

told a gathering celebrating 61st anniversary of the Indian Army’s raising day that all options to tackle the menace of terrorism were open, adding, however, that India wanted to resolve these issues through peaceful means.

“The attack on Mumbai was a test of our patience ... The only and biggest challenge before us is terrorism and we are ready to face this challenge,” Kapoor said.

– DPA

THE CRACKDOWN ON THE OUTLAWED CHARITY WAS LAUNCHED AFTER IT WAS PLACED ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL’S LIST OF TERRORIST ENTITIES



Fiji storm appeal goes global

WELLINGTON – Fiji, which has been devastated by floods following torrential rains over the last week, has made an international appeal for aid, especially drinking water, according to reports from the capital Suva on Friday.

The Pacific island state’s Foreign Affairs Secretary Ratu Isoa Gavidi told Radio New Zealand that 20 countries had been asked to help with water, holding tanks and purification tablets at the top of the list.

He said it could be two or three weeks before fresh water supplies are restored to some flood-stricken areas. Clothing, bedding and tents were also needed.

About 8,000 people are reported to remain in 123 evacuation centres having been forced from

their homes. At least 11 people are known to have died in the floods.

Food is reportedly short in the worst hit towns on the main island Viti Levu, including Nadi, site of the country’s international airport, which has been flooded twice, with every shop and restaurant closed.

The New Zealand government said it was giving urgent consideration to Fiji’s list of requested items.

New Zealand and Australia, which have imposed sanctions on Fiji’s military regime which seized power in a coup two years ago, have so far supplied aid only to the Red Cross and non-governmental relief organisations.

– DPA



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MAG12883/M

Dual of the Americas at tennis final

AUCKLAND, JAN 16 – Top seed Juan Martin Del Potro of Argentina will play American Sam Querrey into tomorrow’s Heineken Open tennis final.

Querrey scored a comeback 3-6 6-3 7-6 victory over second seed David Ferrer of Spain, while Del Potro overwhelmed third seed Robin Soderling of Sweden 6-4 6-3.

Querrey lost the first set and broke Ferrer when the Spaniard was serving for the match in the third set to win 7-4 in the third set tiebreak.

Ferrer showed his trademark speed around the court and retrieving skills and appeared likely to overcome Querrey, whose first serve percentage was well down on what it was in his quarterfinal victory over Nicolas Almagro yesterday.

But Querrey produced the goods when it mattered, breaking Ferrer when he was serving for the match in the third set, and did not lose a point on his serve in the tiebreaker.

Del Potro, ranked number nine in the world, was in almost total control against Soderling. He did not give up a single break point to Soderling and was particularly harsh on the Swede’s second serve, winning 23 of the 29 points on Soderling’s second serve.

The Argentine outserved Soderling with 10 aces to two, was powerful on his forehand and showed some deft touches on the occasions he went to the net.

Del Potro will be seeking his fifth title tomorrow while Querrey seeks his second.

– NZPA



Juan Martin Del Potro, Argentina, in action against Robin Soderling, Sweden, during their semi final match at the Heineken Open Tennis Tournament, Auckland. NZPA / David Rowland



Erakovic to meet Cetkovska in first round

AUCKLAND, JAN 16 – New Zealand women’s tennis No 1 Marina Erakovic has been treated kindly in today’s draw for the Australian Open.

World No 68 Erakovic, who will be playing in her first Australian Open, will play world No 84 Petra Cetkovska of the Czech Republic in the first round.

Both Erakovic and Cetkovska, who have not met before, played in the ASB Classic in Auckland last week. Erakovic, 20, beat Nuria Llagostera-Vives of Spain in the first round before losing to top seed Elena Dementieva in the second round. Cetkovska, 23, was beaten in the first round by Shahar Peer of Israel.

Since then Erakovic lost in the first round of the Hobart International to world number 24 Jie Zheng of China 6-1 4-6 6-1, while Cetkovska lost in the first round of qualifying at the Sydney International tournament to Vera Dushevina of Russia.

The players followed similar courses in 2008, both

reaching career-high rankings of 49 before slipping over the second half of the year.

It will be the fourth Grand Slam event for Erakovic, who reached the third round of Wimbledon last year, the second round of the French Open and was knocked out in the first round of the US Open.

Cetkovska reached the fourth round of the French Open but was knocked out in the first round of three other Grand Slam events.

Should Erakovic win she will play either 24th seed Sybille Bammer of Austria or world No 59 Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic.

From there, French 16th seed Marion Bartoli would be her toughest possible third round match while top seed Jelena Jankovic of Serbia could be the fourth round obstacle.

The schedule for the first round is yet to be confirmed.

– NZPA

Blenkinsop back in the saddle

WELLINGTON, JAN 16 – Wanganui’s Sam Blenkinsop returns to action for the first time this year when he competes in round two of the national downhill series tomorrow in Rotorua.

Blenkinsop, who hasn’t raced since winning the final round of the 2008 World Cup round in Austria in September, will have fond memories of the Whakarewarewa downhill course where he won a silver medal at the world championships in 2006 as a 17-year-old.

His Austrian success made him the world’s No 7 downhill and No 1 among under-23s.

His main opposition will come from round one winner Ben Cathro, of Scotland, seasoned Rotorua charger James Dodds, 2007 world championships bronze medallist Matt Scoles, of Alexandra, and promising Hawke’s Bay juniors Aari Barrett and Brook MacDonald.

In the elite women’s section, Harriett Harper of Blenheim makes her first appearance of the national MTB Cup and will square off against another Rotorua local, Gabby Molloy.

Sunday’s cross country race in Wellington fea-

tures a men’s field which has produced some very close racing at the front in the previous two rounds at Rotorua and Auckland.

Clinton Avery suffered a nasty knock to the thigh in Rotorua two weeks ago, but should be fit to challenge current national champion Stu Houltham on the Mt Victoria course.

Local advantage may play into Gavin McCarthy’s hands, while road rider Edwin Crossling, making a debut on the the rough stuff, could provide that ‘dark horse’ component.

Christchurch’s Jeanette Gerrie and Nic Leary from Palmerston North make their first cup appearances in Wellington, and will add some real depth to the elite women’s field.

Current series leader Monique Avery will look to extend her advantage but can expect a strong challenge from Samara Sheppard on her home turf.

Sheppard will be looking to reverse the result from last week’s Auckland race where Avery pedalled away from her in the closing stages to take the win.

– NZPA

Lee within two of lead after first round

By NZPA special correspondent

ABU DHABI, UAE, JAN 16 – Danny Lee upstaged his more fancied New Zealand compatriots to finish just two strokes from the lead when the first round of the Abu Dhabi championship was finally completed here today.

The 18-year-old US Amateur champion was among 60 players who had to return to the Abu Dhabi Golf Club early today to complete their round following the loss of two hour’s play due to violent hail and rain storm a day earlier.

Lee resumed at two-under par through 10 holes, having eagled the second, and added three birdies and a bogey to complete his round.

His four-under 68 left him just two strokes adrift

of three players who led the \$US2 million European Tour event – Northern Ireland teenager Rory McIlroy and the Swedish pair of Johan Edfors and Mikael Lundberg.

Michael Campbell and Mark Brown were among those who had to join Lee in finishing off their first round ahead of moving straight into their second round play.

Campbell restarted from in front of the 12th green at two-under par but gave back two strokes with a double bogey at the 14th before dropping a further shot at th 17th and end with a one-over par 73.

Brown returned to the course having also played 11 holes at even par before dropping a shot at his 13th hole but managing to birdie the next ahead of before signing off for a 72.

Federer and Murray trade words before Oz Open

By Michelle Kaufman

MIAMI – The Australian Open is three days away, and already a spicy story line is brewing between former No. 1 Roger Federer and No. 4 Andy Murray.

Murray, pumped after a five-week training camp in Miami, is all the rage heading into the season’s first Grand Slam tournament. He is 8-0 this year, including a victory over top-ranked Rafael Nadal and two over Federer. Those were tuneup events, Federer stressed. The real test is about to come.

Federer, who is 2-5 against Murray, bristled at the suggestion that Murray, 21, is the favourite next week.

“Who said that?” Federer said. “The bookies? Good for him. It doesn’t help him a whole lot. I’ve been in that position before, as well, and didn’t make it. He’s put himself in a great position, started off well in Doha, and finished strong last year. But it still does surprise me bookies say that. He’s never won a Grand Slam.”

Murray shrugged off Federer’s comments and said he is not afraid to play the world’s best anymore.

“The more you play against Federer the less fearful you are; you’re not scared to win the match,” Murray said. “If you’re young and you play against the top guys, once you get close to winning you get nervous. Now I don’t get nervous, and if I play my best tennis, I can beat him.”

The battle between Nadal, Federer, defending champion Novak Djokovic and Murray, should

make for an intriguing few weeks Down Under.

Said television commentator Patrick McEnroe: “What makes it so appetizing is you’ve got Nadal, the legitimate No. 1, who shows no signs of slowing down; Roger, playing with a little edge and with something to prove; then you’ve got Murray in the conversation, and Djokovic, who won it last year. All four of those guys could win a major, and it wouldn’t shock me if each won one this year. I see a real race for No. 1.”

JANKOVICTOPS BOND

World No. 1 Jelena Jankovic is so huge back home in Serbia that a documentary about her called *Jelena’s World* drew bigger theatre audiences than the latest James Bond movie, *Quantum of Solace*, in recent weeks.

Jankovic is eager to get the season under way and prove she is worthy of the top ranking.

She has yet to win a Grand Slam, so a title in Australia would be huge. Jankovic spent a few weeks vacationing in Hawaii with her boyfriend, “drinking mango juice,” and then went to Mexico for two weeks of training at altitude. She said she is fitter than ever, that previously she might have “looked fit” but she wasn’t.

“If I had to choose between world No. 1 all year and winning a slam, I would have to go for winning a slam,” she said. “I have already been world No. 1, but winning a slam would be something new.

“My wish is to win all four Grand Slams.”

Men’s Australian Open seeds



Championships start Jan. 19.

- | | |
|----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Rafael Nadal (Spain) |
| 2 | Roger Federer (Switz.) |
| 3 | Novak Djokovic (Serbia) |
| 4 | Andy Murray (U.K.) |
| 5 | Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (France) |
| 6 | Gilles Simon (France) |
| 7 | Andy Roddick (U.S.) |
| 8 | Juan Del Potro (Argentina) |
| 9 | James Blake (U.S.) |
| 10 | David Nalbandian (Arg.) |

Source: Australian Open

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Women’s Australian Open seeds



Championships start Jan. 19.

- | | |
|----|----------------------------|
| 1 | Jelena Jankovic (Serbia) |
| 2 | Serena Williams (U.S.) |
| 3 | Dinara Safina (Russia) |
| 4 | Elena Dementieva (Russia) |
| 5 | Ana Ivanovic (Serbia) |
| 6 | Venus Williams (U.S.) |
| 7 | Vera Zvonareva (Russia) |
| 8 | Svetlana Kuznetsova (Rus.) |
| 9 | Agnieszka Radwanska (Pol.) |
| 10 | Nadia Petrova (Russia) |

Source: Australian Open

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Paris to Dakar: Sainz out

Carlos Sainz is out of the Paris/Dakar. DPAPHOTOS

LA RIOJA, ARGENTINA – Giniel de Villiers won the overnight Dakar Rally stage and reclaimed the overall lead because Spain’s Carlos Sainz was forced to abandon the race on a day of mixed emotions for the Volkswagen team.

The two-time rally world champion Sainz and his co-pilot Michel Perin drove their VW Touareg into a ravine. Sainz escaped unhurt and could have continued but Perin sustained a shoulder injury which ended their title hopes.

The official Dakar website said they were taken by helicopter to a bivouac in Fiambala where Thursday’s stage to La Rioja with a timed section of 253

kilometres had started.

“Suddenly there was this four metres hole. We plunged into it and landed on the roof,” said Sainz.

Sainz won six of the 10 stages contested so far and led by more than 27 minutes going into Thursday’s stage. He is the second race leader to go out as BMW driver Nasser Al-Attiyah of Qatar was disqualified for missing checkpoints last week.

“I am very disappointed but I hope that our team will win in the end,” Sainz said.

VW motorsport director Kris Nissen said: “Our most promising team is no longer in the race but we still have two strings to our bow.”

De Villiers and Miller are set to battle out the first Dakar champion for VW and aim for personal and national pride because neither an American nor a South Africa has won the prestigious race. Miller led for most of Thursday’s 12th stage where drivers had to battle sand dunes and adverse weather. But he eventually had to bow to de Villiers who took his third stage win in 4 hours 6 minutes 43 seconds with a strong finish.

Miller trailed by 16:17 minutes which saw his overall 14-minute lead turn into a deficit of 2:35 minutes on de Villiers. The small gap promises a thrilling finale in the final two stages and Sunday’s

closing parade in Buenos Aires.

American Robby Gordon came third on the day and now holds the same position overall, 1:18:52 minutes behind de Villiers.

Frenchman Cyril Despres got his third stage win in the motorbike category 1:23 minutes ahead of fellow-KTM rider Marc Coma, but remains second behind the 2006 champion from Spain with a deficit of 1:29:48 hours. Frenchman David Fretigne is third overall on a Yamaha.

Coma is bidding for his second Dakar title following 2006 while Despres won in 2005 and 2007.

– DPA

TV & Film



The Valkyrie encounter

A grandfather’s sacrifice inspires family, and WWII drama

By David Perlmutter

McClatchy Newspapers

Kurt Waldthausen wouldn’t let the month end without seeing *Valkyrie*, the new Tom Cruise thriller based on the 1944 plot to kill Adolph Hitler.

Not that Waldthausen is a devout fan of Cruise, who plays German Army Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, the plot’s central figure.

But because his grandfather, Walter Cramer, had a personal connection to the plot and would hang for his part months after it failed.

Waldthausen never knew his mother’s father. But Cramer’s defiance against an evil government has inspired his grandson to quietly work against indifference and build bridges between Germans and Americans.

He is the an honorary German consul and a board member of Echo Foundation, the group that works against injustices like the Rwandan genocide.

Next month, the German government is honouring Waldthausen with its coveted Cross of the Order of Merit award, for his efforts to nurture stronger ties between the two countries.

He will dedicate the award to his grandfather.

“My grandfather taught me that one person can make a difference,” said Waldthausen, who runs a US executive search company. “He inspired me to fight indifference and create a better understanding between my nation, Germany, and the nation where I live.

“When I take up a cause that I am passionate about, I think of Walter Cramer.”

From the start, Cramer openly condemned Hitler’s persecution of Jews.

He ran a Leipzig wool mill, with plants in Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Jews were on his board and in his work force.

His close friend was Carl Goerdeler, Leipzig’s mayor and the father of the German resistance movement that along with members of the German Army planned Operation Valkyrie, the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler.

Goerdeler banned flying the swastika at Leipzig City Hall and protected Jews from looting.

He resigned in 1933 when the Nazis toppled a statue of the Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn in Leipzig.

With the plot’s planning underway, Goerdeler recruited Cramer to work for the resistance. Cramer’s mill was essential to the German war effort, so he was allowed to travel abroad and around Germany – keeping resistance cells informed about Operation Valkyrie on his business trips.

“His travels allowed him to seek contacts in the American and British forces to determine if there was an interest in supporting the resistance in Germany,” Waldthausen said.

Goerdeler also wanted Cramer to be a part of the new government after the coup.

Cramer resisted, but ultimately agreed to temporarily serve as governor of Saxony once Hitler was eliminated.

“He was not interested in the plot for political reasons as much for humanitarian reasons,” his grandson said. “He felt the government structure had to change to improve human conditions in Germany.”

Waldthausen’s other grandfather, his father’s father, was concerned Cramer’s involvement would risk his family. He persuaded Waldthausen’s parents to move to Portugal.

Two days before the coup, Goerdeler informed Cramer that the plot was on.

On July 20, Col. Stauffenberg, the only conspirator with regular access to Hitler, met the Nazi leader and other officers at a briefing hut in East Prussia.

He placed a briefcase holding an armed bomb under a thick oak conference table.

Minutes later, he excused himself to make an urgent call to Berlin and left the hut. The bomb exploded. Stauffenberg was convinced no one survived.

Yet Hitler, apparently shielded by a table leg, was only slightly injured.

Telegrams were sent to resistance leaders that the plot was a success. One went to Cramer. It wasn’t until Hitler went on radio that they realized he was still alive.

Two days later, Cramer was arrested. He was endlessly interrogated and tortured, then tried and convicted of treason on Nov. 14, 1944. The Nazis hanged him the same day. He was 58.

Waldthausen was born five years later in Portugal, the youngest of five children.

When his family moved back to Germany, there was little connection left to Cramer.

The Nazis refused to return Cramer’s remains, so there is no grave. Waldthausen’s mother and grandmother talked little about him until late in their lives.

“My mother was full of guilt since she was in a relative safe haven in Portugal,” he said. “She was unable to help her mother and sister. Her heart was broken.”

He learned about Cramer through two books based on his diaries. Then in 1996, he returned to Leipzig for the unveiling of a bust of his grandfather in Johannapark.

“I’ve never been prouder,” Waldthausen said. “My grandfather was a man willing to stand up for dignity and justice – and for what was right regardless of the cost.

“He was willing to sacrifice his life for the right cause.”

Watch the trailer



Seven Pounds
➔ **Director:** Gabriele Muccino
➔ **Cast:** Will Smith, Rosario Dawson
➔ **Length:** 123 minutes
➔ **Rated:** M (for adult themes)
★★★★☆

Seven Pounds is a difficult story, multi-layered, spare and full of detail, thoughtfully told. Its goal is to stir, rouse, reach deep into your guts, and leave you shaken and upset – yet hopeful. Because its story of atonement and accountability relies on slowly unfolding secrets, much of what follows will be vague.

It’s clear from the opening moments that Will Smith is playing a man whose emotional gyroscope is badly damaged. Ben Thomas’ behaviour is baffling and somewhat sinister. He lives in a seaside California villa, its austere, Asian-inspired “W Hotel” look accented with an eerie accessory: a jellyfish aquarium. Something is out of whack.

Just what is wrong and how Thomas aims to put it right is the point of the disquieting story. Flashing credentials as an IRS auditor, he interviews several people whose cases intrigue him. He grills them about their lives, smiling with his teeth while holding them in a judgmental gaze, seemingly less interested in their Schedule C than their immortal souls. He probes into areas of their lives that rarely concern tax agents: illness, domestic abuse, dashed hopes, the way they treat others who depend on their care. We learn that he intends to intervene in the destiny of several strangers, significantly altering their lives. To what end, we don’t quickly learn.

The man and his mission remain mysterious for much of the film. Thomas taunts a milquetoast customer-service operator (Woody Harrelson) and roughs up a nursing home administrator. His expression conveys anger tinged with despair; his best friend (Barry Pepper) is deeply worried about his state of mind. He was once in love, and when he meets a terminally ill tax delinquent played by Rosario Dawson, that feeling begins to dawn again.

She is a good-hearted woman with a failing heart. Thomas’ sense of estrangement begins to evaporate in the face of her warmth, his chilly restraint thaws and his sense of purpose begins to wobble. The man who set out to remake seven lives starts to reassess his own. His sense of purpose was shattered, and late in the day he begins to question his furious battle to put it back together.

Seven Pounds reteams Smith with Gabriele Muccino, who guided the actor to an Oscar nomination as a homeless job-seeker in *The Pursuit of Happyness*. Once again, he puts Smith in a melancholy drama with redemptive themes and follows him to new emotional depths. Like the earlier film, *Seven Pounds* trades on themes of instability and loss that resonate with many viewers. Life, liberty and cheerful pursuits feel like quaint mementos of a naive past age. The precariousness of all we hold dear is drummed into our heads in a 24-hour news cycle.

Seven Pounds translates this tension into a story of romance, suspense and tragedy. Muccino fractures the story in modernistic style, an appropriate way to depict Smith’s troubled psyche. The film presents disconnected snippets of his perplexing behaviour and challenges us to weave it all into context. When we finally discover the trauma that triggered Smith’s quest, it feels conventional and a contrived, but the script is tough-minded about how things would pan out for a man in his situation.

The acting ensemble is skilful. Smith is compellingly grim and vulnerable as the alienated antihero; he has deepened as an actor and his talent radiates from the screen in every frame. Dawson gives a blessedly natural performance and has the knack of looking beautiful without ever appearing glamorous.

Seven Pounds takes their relationship somewhere unexpected. It’s not a standard romance but a parable about how a good person’s effort to do the right thing can blur the lines between right and wrong. When we finally see the story in its full outlines, we have a lot left to think about.

Watch tre trailer

— By Colin Covert

Music



MIRRORPIX

I did it for you: the Bryan Adams story

By Walter Tunis

As has been the case for the bulk of his career, the veteran Canadian rocker Bryan Adams continues to maintain a huge international fan base. Take his 1996 album, "18 Til I Die." It was a No. 1 hit in Sweden, Finland, Norway, Germany, Belgium, Australia and all over the United Kingdom. Even here in the States, where Adams remains best known for early-'80s MTV pop-rock hits and a string of movie soundtrack ballads, the album went platinum.

And all that pales next to 1991's "Waking Up the Neighbours," which sold more than 10 million copies worldwide, and 1984's "Reckless," which sold 5 million in the US alone.

The globe-trotting has only increased since then. During the past decade, Adams has maintained his international following by playing at least one week every month in a different part of the world.

"I don't really strategize any of it," Adams, 49, said by phone last week, as his current tour rolled

through southern Florida. "I just go with the flow."

This week, the singer of guitar-driven, hook-happy, rock radio staples "Run to You," written for but rejected by Blue Oyster Cult, and "Summer of '69," as well as the epic movie ballad "(Everything I Do) I Do It for You," returns in rather modest fashion. Adams is performing without frills and without a band, as part of a solo acoustic tour that began last year with the release of his 11th studio album, titled "11."

"I started out doing this pretty much to challenge myself," Adams said. "I tour with a band all the time, but I wanted to do something to push myself. A solo show is more about getting back to basics."

"This isn't like an unplugged thing. It's rawer than that. Besides, even when I did my unplugged album (1997's all-acoustic "MTV Unplugged"), I still had a band. This time it's just me."

"Back to basics," in Adams' book, can have multiple meanings. First, there is the chance to revisit the songs in settings similar to those in which they were written. But mostly, a solo acoustic tour is more than just a chance to unplug from bands and massive amplification. It's an opportunity to demystify much of the celebrity status that has been tied to Adams' music during the past three decades.

"I really like the simplicity of it. I can tell some stories and explain certain things about the songs that maybe I wouldn't be able to do if I had my band with me."

"All the songs started in a room somewhere when I was by myself, so there is no reason why they can't work by themselves in front of an audience. Some obviously work better than others, but I've got it all down now. I just wish I had started doing this 10 years ago. It's been really fun."

The idea for an unaccompanied tour began with "11." There are strong acoustic elements to the record, particularly on the album-closing "Walk on By." The tune, one of three songs on "11" to reteam Adams with fellow Canadian songsmith and longtime writing partner Jim Vallance, uses only acoustic guitar and strings to accent the scratchy, weathered contours of Adams' singing.

"'11' started out as an acoustic record," he said. "But at some point in making it, I felt that would have been too much of a departure. So I went back to making a regular record. But the foundations of the songs were still acoustic-based. When you listen to the album, you can tell. The acoustic sound is a predominant part of the record."

Don't let the simplicity and intimacy of the solo acoustic tour suggest that the scope of Adams' music and career is shrinking.

Over the years, he has forged a resilient bond with the film industry. Sure, "(Everything I Do) I Do It for You" remained a No. 1 hit in the United States for two months in 1991 (and more than twice that long in England) because of its placement in the Kevin Costner movie "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves." But Adams' music has found a home in a number of stylistically varied films, from collaborations with composer Hans Zimmer on the animated "Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron" to a Golden Globe-nominated song, "Never Gonna Break My Faith," featured in "Bobby," Emilio Estevez's fictionalized biopic of Robert Kennedy.

"I don't think I could have imagined any of this," Adams said of his Hollywood connection. "All I wanted to do at first with my music was pay the rent. Suddenly, to be working with great composers like Hans, Michael Kamen (co-writer of "Everything I Do") and Marvin Hamlisch (on "I Finally Found Someone," performed as a duet with Barbra Streisand on 1996's "The Mirror Has Two Faces") was just incredible."

Adams has forged a fruitful relationship with moving pictures, but he also has discovered a passion for still photography. His photos have been published in *Vanity Fair*, *British Vogue* and *Interview*. Adams' Web site, <http://www.bryanadams.com>, features a wide sampling of his work, including a wonderfully regal portrait of singer Harry Belafonte. Adams even takes his own picture at times.

"I keep that side of my career pretty quiet," Adams said almost dismissively. "I don't have an agent or anything like that. I just do it because I love it. I get to work with different magazines. It's fun."

"It's a very different world from music. I suppose that's one of the things that attracted me to it. Still, there's this idea of creating something out of nothing. Those kinds of things just spur me on."

The Summer of 69

Heaven (acoustic version)

—Lexington Herald-Leader (Lexington, Ky.).

NEW CD RELEASES

Glasvegas

➔Glasvegas
➔Columbia

★★★★☆



A new year, a new band of Brits who arrive from their hype-happy homeland burdened with impossible expectations. Already declared “a poet, a genius,” by the New Musical Express, Glasvegas singer James Allan sings in a thick Scottish burr, fighting through a sonic maelstrom that conjures Phil Spector by way of the Jesus and Mary Chain to put forth tales of working-class struggle.

When it works, it really works. “Daddy’s Gone” is a cataclysmically earnest cry of pain directed at an absent father. And despite its gimmicky ending — the loving voice telling the singer “when you’re standing on the window ledge, I’ll talk you back from the edge” — turns out to belong to a social worker — “Geraldine” makes the most of its heart-tugging pathos. But Allan is wont to wallow in his woes, and on songs like “S.A.D. Light” and “Ice Cream Van” catchy choruses don’t arrive with enough of a kick to nudge the music out of its slough of despond.

— Dan DeLuca

Rokia Traore

➔Tchamantche
➔Nonesuch

★★★★☆



Ali Farka Toure’s shadow looms large in Malian music, and Rokia Traore has obviously absorbed the master’s patient and droning blues, even though as a daughter of a diplomat she spent time in Europe and the Middle East in her youth. She’s no purist or traditionalist: The stripped-down arrangements behind her intimate, pure voice balance African and Western instrumentation (the n’goni, a West African lute; a Gretsch guitar).

“Tchamantche,” her fourth solo album, is entrancing and beautiful. “Kounandi” is a delicate web of acoustic guitar and classical harp through which Traore weaves her softly insistent vocals. She adds a bit of grit and growl to the electric “Tounka,” but “Tchamantche” is primarily gorgeous and hypnotic, including “The Man I Love” (the only non-original and only English-language song), her nod to another master, Billie Holiday. Traore honors her elders, but she is not confined by them.

— Steve Klinge

Lou Reed’s Metal Machine Trio

➔The Creation of the Universe
➔Sister Ray Recordings

★★★★☆



Clueless consumer beware: this new Lou comprises two successive October ‘08 nights of improv performance in Los Angeles, with Reed on “guitars and electrics,” Ulrich Krieger on tenor sax and “live-electronics,” and Sarth Calhoun contributing “live processing and continuum fingerboard.”

Live albums have long been a habit with Lou Reed. Many got their first taste of the former Velvet Undergrounder’s tuneful tales of bohemian debauchery with the widespread FM airplay of his 1974 arena-rock disc “Rock N Roll Animal.” Two months ago, Reed released “Berlin: Live at St. Ann’s Warehouse,” along with a Julian Schnabel-directed DVD. On “Creation,” Reed indulges his ax-love, sometimes subtly, sometimes riffing with saxist Krieger. “Creation of the Universe” is immaculately recorded, almost entirely instrumental, mostly rock-toned atmospherics and free-jazz rage — and pretty freakin’ awesome.

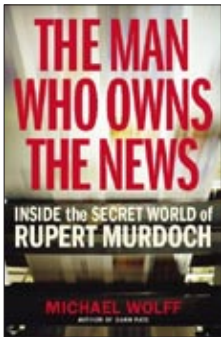
— David R. Stampone

Books

The man, the myth, the real Rupert Murdoch

The Man Who Owns the News: Inside the Secret World of Rupert Murdoch

➔By Michael Wolff
➔Random House, 464 pages (NZ\$55)



Scan the online comments accompanying most current stories about the travails of the newspaper business and you’ll invariably encounter declarations that most problems are caused by a dearth of “conservative” views. Forgetting for a moment that the definition of this ideology has become amorphous — believe it or not, “conservative” once included small government, individual freedom and lack of government interference in personal issues — the idea that media in general and newspapers in particular are “liberal” is laughable. Most are owned by large corporations whose interests are hardly radical, socialist or anything other than determinedly capitalist. They are in business to earn revenue, not for ideology.

A few big-city daily newspapers that lose tons of money are, indeed, kept afloat for mostly ideological reasons. Both are “conservative” and one, the *New York Post*, is owned by Rupert Murdoch, the subject of this new biography by journalist and sometime-entrepreneur Michael Wolff. According to the author, the money-losing Gotham tabloid is less a propaganda vehicle than a means of providing its freewheeling CEO with a political presence in that media capital. But with the company’s acquisition of the *Wall Street Journal* and its parent company, Dow Jones, owning the *Post*, which bleeds an estimated \$50 million a year, may be an unnecessary extravagance.

The acquisition of one of journalism’s crown jewels serves as the central point to cover Australian native Murdoch’s childhood, education, marriages, family and the rest, reinforced by substantial research and interviews with the subject, his wives, children and others, including former British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Beginning as the son of the owner of a local paper, Murdoch’s empire has grown to include television networks, a film studio and several newspapers, an industry to which the subject seems unnaturally drawn. Wolff tries to make sense of this predilection and gets into somewhat dodgy territory when he does, but it’s no great matter, as one can take or leave any psychobabble. He’s a terrific and engaging writer, with a few tics and asides that distract but mostly add what rappers call “flava” to the proceedings. Though some quotes and thoughts seem, at first, to be pop-psych and Woodwardian telepathy, copious endnotes mostly proved otherwise.

Murdoch is commonly presumed to be a political mover, mostly evidenced by the right-wing ministry of propaganda that is cable channel Fox News, though his UK Sky News is, according to Wolff, its “mirror image” — meaning that unlike FNC, it’s fact-based and/or liberal. Murdoch’s latest wife, Wendi, is, according to Wolff, a moderating force, so her husband’s pals now include progressive stalwarts David Geffen and Barry Diller, though the author maintains that Murdoch’s main allegiance is to his own fortunes rather than any ideology.

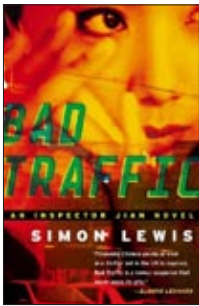
The inside stuff on the WSJ acquisition could have easily been a separate volume — and it’s worth noting that the transaction was made at the peak of the company’s value, for which he paid \$60 a share. It’s now worth far less. But Wolff’s laudable attempt to create a fair and balanced portrait of the singular, self-made and motivated Murdoch results in a book that’s well worth readers’ time.

— By Richard Pachter

From China to England in *Bad Traffic*

Bad Traffic

➔By Simon Lewis
➔Scribner (NZ\$51, or US\$16.50 via Amazon)



The lives of two Chinese men converge in the exotic country of England in travel writer Simon Lewis’ excellent mystery debut.

Bad Traffic works as the mystery equivalent of *The Odyssey* as both men strive to get home; out of their comfort zones they are strangers in a strange land. *Bad Traffic* explores cultural differences, racism, classism and immigration. Throw in a plot line about human trafficking and you have a rip-roaring action tale.

Chinese Police Inspector Ma Jian is cynical, tough cop who’s not above taking. Admittedly, he’s a poor father who is glad his daughter Wei Wei, with whom he is not close, is studying at Leeds University in England as it makes it easier for him to keep a young mistress. But when Wei Wei makes a late-night distress call before being disconnected, he doesn’t think twice. He books the next flight to England, even though he doesn’t speak English, knows no one there and isn’t even sure where his daughter lives.

Ding Ming, 19, and his new bride, Little Ye, travelled from China to England “inside a sealed box in a container truck” for three months. They paid dearly to come to the United Kingdom where he could improve his English, perhaps get a job as a teacher and make a better life for themselves. It doesn’t dawn on him until he is on English soil and separated from his wife by the men who organized the travel ordeal that he has just bought himself a life of slavery and that his wife may be forced into prostitution.

When the jade Ma Jian and the innocent Ding Ming meet, it’s not an easy union. Both are suspicious of the other yet each needs the other. Ma Jian knows how to get things done and isn’t above using violence; Ding Ming speaks English.

Lewis doesn’t miss a beat as he allows these two characters to mature as men and to discover skills they didn’t know they had. Lewis, who has written several Rough Guides and the backpacking novel “Go,” shows England through the eyes of scared outsiders.

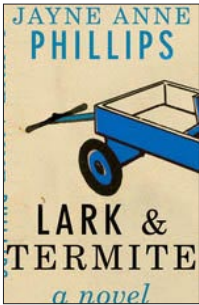
To these two Chinese nationals, England is a complex, frightening and odd country with unimaginable danger around every corner.

— By Oline H. Cogdill

Lark and Termite: A ferocious new novel about family and war

Lark and Termite

➔By Jayne Anne Phillips
➔Knopf (US\$16 via Amazon)



Of a character in her powerful new novel, *Lark and Termite* (Knopf), Jayne Anne Phillips writes, “She’s forgotten nothing and is fiercely herself.” It’s a sentence that comes complete with its own GPS tracking system: It leads you straight back to the novelist herself.

Phillips, too, seems composed of equal parts memory and fierceness. Her work is never still, rarely satisfied. Her words may seem quiet and docile on the page, but if you look a little closer, you’ll realize that the story is actually jumping around in a frantic, fretful state, as

restless as guilt. She has done in *Lark and Termite* what she did in previous novels such as *Machine Dreams* (1984) and *Shelter* (1994), which is to take a relatively simple, straightforward tale and twist it into something luminous and haunting and singular.

This is Phillips’ first novel in almost a decade, but it doesn’t feel tardy or excessively fussed over. It feels fresh. It feels as if it has been taken straight from the griddle and is still too hot to touch. And because it deals with issues over which people have been arguing for centuries — family and war — the novel’s raw immediacy is really quite spectacular.

Lark and Termite is the story of an exceedingly complicated family living in a small West Virginia town, but it’s also the story of a young man who finds himself in the middle of a war — the one in Korea, the one that predated Iraq and Vietnam, the one that Americans have sometimes forgotten about. *Lark and Termite* is about what happened to Robert Leavitt in his final hours before he was killed in that war, and it is also about what happened to those he left behind. And it’s told with a kind of barely controlled fury: the fury of righteous anger at lies and half-truths, and the fury of just being really ticked off at fate’s lousy timing.

Phillips serves it all up with a prose that sparkles and startles with outside-the-box word choices. She has always been a brave, headstrong, reckless writer, but this time she has abandoned even the idea of safety and just plunges right in. She’s going to tell us what it feels like to be under fire: “Fear and anger turn in his gut like a yin-yang eel, slippery and fishlike but dimly human in its blunt, circular probing, turning and turning, no rest.” And then she pulls back from the individual experience and gives us the long, studied view, the historical one: “He commands a platoon now and he sees that war never ends; it’s all one war despite players or location, war that sleeps dormant for years or months, then erupts and lifts its flaming head to find regimes changed, topography altered, weapons recast.” Korea? Maybe. But other places too.

Lark and Termite, however, is not ultimately a war book. Its real home is the home front. Phillips intersperses Leavitt’s vivid battlefield recollections with the story of the son he never met: Termite, a special-needs child who is being raised by Lark, Termite’s older sister. They live in a burnt-out Appalachian burg in the late 1950s, a place of frequent floods and economic instability. Their aunt, Nonie, works at the diner and tries to jury-rig a family from the human odds and ends that she has picked up along the way.

Similarly, *Lark and Termite* makes a whole and complete entity out of scattered, disparate parts, out of multiple narrators and changing perspectives. Phillips seems to realize, better than many other writers — and better than a slew of legislators and census-takers — that the word “family” is not stable, not settled, never at rest. It resists any final definition. Family can be Mom and Dad and kids, or it can be something else too. It can be anything that people want it to be, that they fight for it to be.

That’s an easy concept to state, but it’s a very hard one to portray, because lives are always in flux, always in motion. Defining such a thing is like trying to capture a firefly without harming it. *Lark and Termite* succeeds because it refuses to come to any conclusions. No homilies are allowed within the ragged patch of land upon which Phillips pitches her little tent of plot and personalities. There are secrets and surprises — but no aphorisms, no tidy lessons.

Phillips, a native West Virginian, is an English professor at Rutgers University. She divides her time among New Jersey, New York and Boston. But she has never forgotten her childhood, or who she is, or why she writes. She writes for the same reason that Lark draws: “I look at Termite,” the character tells us, “and I draw, shading closer and closer to what I really see. I draw the way he moves, sitting so straight, focused so sharp and true there’s nothing else. He reminds me there’s a clear space inside the chores and the weather, inside cooking and cleaning up and taking him downtown or to the river, inside the books in my room.... It’s quiet in that space.”

In the quiet, Phillips brews thunder and magic.

— By Julia Keller

Treatment lowers temp, saves patients



By Jennifer L. Boen

FORT WAYNE, IND. — Nearly 200,000 out-of-hospital incidents of sudden cardiac arrest occur among U.S. residents each year. For every minute care is delayed, survival is decreased.

“We used to always think that when the brain didn’t get enough oxygen, cells died, but we think now that it’s more that the brain is stunned,” said Dr. Matt Sutter with Emergency Medicine of Indiana. Sutter works at the Emergency Room at Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne, Ind., and is among a growing number of emergency doctors using a treatment called moderate therapeutic hypothermia to cool

the body of a patient when sudden cardiac arrest is witnessed.

By cooling the body quickly to between 90 and 94 degrees Fahrenheit — normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees — the body’s metabolic processes are slowed. Cellular breakdown and the release of toxic chemicals are stymied.

“The cooling slows the process, allowing injured, but not dead, cells to get healthy,” Sutter said.

The treatment was first used at Lutheran Hospital in October 2006, when Eric Jones, then 45, was brought to the hospital by EMS after he collapsed at a Fort Wayne, Ind., fitness centre.

“I had been running on the treadmill. When I

exercise I tend to push myself pretty hard,” Jones said. A fitness instructor began CPR and used an automated external defibrillator, which the club had just purchased. Although his heart restarted, “I wasn’t breathing on my own for about 10 to 13 minutes,” he said. Emergency responders used a bag to force air into Jones, and he was taken to Lutheran, where doctors said his prognosis looked grim.

“I was posturing,” which is a reflexive arching of the body due to lack of oxygen to the brain. “That was pretty scary to my family,” said Jones, who is married and has three daughters. “The doctors actually told my wife that she should probably call all my siblings and my family and have them all come in.” At the time, hypothermia for cardiac patients was a fairly new concept, and Lutheran had on order a device called the Arctic Sun, which pumps coolant into tubes within pads that are placed around the patient’s body. Some methods of cooling the body involve putting the cooled saline into the femoral artery.

A target temperature is set on the control module, and the lowered temperature is maintained for 24 to 36 hours, on average, to allow the healing of the damaged or stunned cells in the brain. The same concept explains why people, particularly children, who drown in cold water have a greater chance of revival than if they drowned in warmer water.

Because Lutheran had therapeutic hypothermia protocols in place but not the Arctic Sun, Sutter used special cooling blankets to bring Jones’ temperature down. He was kept sedated and his body slowly returned to normal temperature.

“My family was on pins and needles,” Jones said, recalling how they waited hopefully but cautiously

while the new treatment was used.

In just five days, he was home from the hospital. His main problem was short-term memory loss but that resolved in a few weeks. Doctors discovered the cardiac arrest was due to an electrical problem within his heart, not the normal cause, which is blockage in an artery of the heart.

“I’m so grateful that they had the opportunity to use the cooling blanket on me,” Jones said. Since April 2007, Lutheran has used the Arctic Sun on 28 patients, with good outcomes for many. Sutter cautions the treatment is not for patients whose cardiac arrest is not witnessed or who have other medical conditions that lead to the heart’s stoppage. But several studies reported in medical journals show good outcomes ranged from 41 percent to 68 percent better for patients treated with hypothermia compared to those given normal supportive care.

The treatment is also being used on traumatic brain injury and spinal cord patients in some hospitals. Parkview Research Center is considering using it on stroke patients as part of a study, he said.

Buffalo Bills tight end Kevin Everett brought national attention to the treatment after it was successfully used on him following a spinal cord injury incurred during a September 2007 game.

“It’s a really hot topic,” Sutter said of the potential uses for hypothermia. The most gratifying news he hears from nurses, he says, is that “a lot of people are waking up who they never expected to wake up.” lives LIVES To learn more For more information on therapeutic hypothermia, check out the American Heart Association’s guidelines for its usage at <http://tr.im/nscardio>

Phthalate ban in children’s products

By Suzanne Bohan

WALNUT CREEK, CALIF. — Despite recent sabre-rattling between state and federal officials, a new California law has taken effect this week that effectively bans the sale of toys and other children’s products containing phthalates.

These goods now may not contain more than 0.1 percent of phthalates, a colourless, oily chemical used in thousands of consumer products to impart flexibility and durability. The law, which narrowly passed the Legislature and received a tepid endorsement from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger before he authorized it in 2007, sets the strictest standard nationwide for phthalates in consumer products.

But in November, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a legal opinion stating that the federal ban on children’s products, which sets the same limits on phthalate levels as the state, applied only to goods manufactured on or after Feb. 10, the date the federal law takes effect.

In response, California Attorney General Jerry Brown in December told the commission that the federal government had no authority to preempt California’s stricter version.

“As long as you got it off the assembly line in time, you could sell it for the next five years,” said Ed Weil, a supervising deputy attorney general with the Office of the Attorney General in Oakland, describing the chief objection to the federal version of the phthalate ban.

A spokesman for the product safety commission suggested it won’t stand in the way of California’s more-comprehensive ban.

“The Consumer Product Safety Commission respects the law as passed in California, and its implementation starting this week,” said Scott Wolfson, the commission spokesman.

During the past decade, phthalates have come under fire for their threat to the developing human reproductive system, particularly in young boys. Phthalates can slowly leach from products, and children typically ingest them by hand-to-mouth contact, or by chewing on a toy.

With the ban in place, California consumers should now be able to buy safer toys and products that help children sleep, eat, get clean and teethe.

The same law applies to online retailers shipping products into the state. Weil noted that most large retailers pledged last year to cease selling products with phthalates by Jan. 1; some phased them out in

advance. Major retailers such as Wal-Mart, Toys“R”Us and Target last year began removing children’s products with phthalates from their shelves nationwide.

“The regulatory loop has been closing on these products for about three years,” Weil noted. “And companies have known this. So they’ve been acting.”

Specifically, the law bans the use of six types of phthalates found in some children’s toys containing plastic and in “child-care articles” intended “to facilitate sleep, relaxation, or the feeding of children, or to help children with sucking or teething.”

The law also requires that phthalate substitutes be less toxic.

The San Francisco Department of the Environment throughout 2008 tested toys made with polyvinyl chloride — which often contains high phthalate levels — bought in city stores.

About half had the chemical, said Debbie Raphael, who manages the department’s toxics reduction program. In one case, she noted, a brand name toy pony had none, but a copy version of it contained 40 percent.

Weil said he’s more concerned about deep discount stores, which typically buy older inventory from other retailers, and are thus more likely to sell

products with high levels of phthalates.

Major retailers said they would stick to California’s standards for children’s products they sell nationwide.

But the fight isn’t over in other states over the Consumer Product Safety Commission giving retailers the option to continue selling children’s products exceeding the new phthalate standards, as long as they were made before the federal ban that takes effect Feb. 10.

But to the American Chemistry Council, the contentious debate is brouhaha over a class of chemicals that it said no one has proven actually harms humans.

“This law flies in the face of good science and good government,” said Jack Gerard, president of the chemistry council.

A December report from the National Research Council, which does research for the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering, found that “few human studies on the health effects of phthalates are available.” But it detailed a number of health consequences in lab animals after phthalate exposure, such as infertility and other defects of the male reproductive system. Gerard, however, criticized the “chemical-by-chemical attack strategy” of policymakers and health advocates.

Nutritionist’s advice: Stop dieting

By Jane Glenn Haas

So you started the new year on a diet, right? Giving up carbs and starches, watching the sugars, heavy on the fish and chicken and light on the beef and pork.

Forget it, says Francie M. Berg, founder of Healthy Weight Network. She’s a licensed nutritionist and adjunct professor at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine. Skip diets and move ahead with healthy habits is her advice.

“Resolve to follow a healthy diet-free lifestyle through 2009,” Berg says. “You can get your life back on track, improve your health and move on with what’s really important to you.”

No diet? I had to talk to her about that.

Q: Shouldn’t I cut calories and watch what foods

I eat forever?

A: It’s helpful if you change your style of eating if you’re not eating well. But, in general, eat enough food and calories so your body is satisfied. The problem with cutting calories on a diet is that the body isn’t satisfied and there is this continual drive to eat more.

Q: But there are always diets, maybe always have been diets.

A: We’ve had diets for about 50 years. If any one of them worked we wouldn’t have so many obese people. The truth is some people are thin and some are larger. A lot of thin people are restricting their food so their bodies are not as healthy as they should be.

The real problem with people 50-plus is a deficiency in nutrients. There’s a lot of emphasis on

not eating meat and these people need the protein they get from meat. They are scared of what they eat. They think food is wrong and not good for them.

Q: So the answer is ...

A: Eat all the food groups. Eat moderately. Eat at regular times, three meals and one or two snacks a day. If people will do that and stop dieting, they probably will get their bodies in good balance.

Q: You actually have a file on the Web site you edit, healthyweightnetwork.com, on “normal eating.”

A: Normal eating. An interesting concept. It’s pretty easy. Right now, it’s politically correct to be a vegetarian. I don’t want to talk against that. And for some people, it works. But most of us need



animal products to get the full nutrition from the food we eat.

Q: There’s more to a daily “diet” than food?

A: It’s important to stretch

and work on balance to keep our bodies strong — especially as we age. Of course, physical activity is critical.

Q: So you encourage people to make good food choices, eat enough to keep themselves satisfied?

A: And also to feel good about yourself and others, accept your own body. I hope we will accept and respect other people — people who are naturally larger. These people are harassed in our country. Eat good foods and stop when you are full.

Books on phones: heaven

By Lou Dolinar
Newsday

Boy, do I have high-tech idea for those of you who got a shiny new smart phone for Christmas: Try reading a book on it.

In most cases you can buy a contemporary book via the usual extortionate vending plan of your service provider, but why bother? Assuming you can browse the Net, you can download — for free — thousands of out-of-copyright titles. The main source of these is Project Gutenberg, a collaborative volunteer effort that's been scanning, proofreading and digitizing since 1971. Gutenberg's one of those Internet things that gets a lot less attention than it deserves from the media, mostly because it's free and it's been around forever.

I have a hunch the site is in for a spurt of interest, however. There's something weird about trying to read a book on a desktop monitor and it's not much better on a laptop. But for trendy smallish net-books, PDAs, and smart phones, novels and works of nonfiction are a match made in heaven. Text takes up a fraction of the space as audio or video, and contemporary portable anything's have more than enough memory to hold a couple of books.

Late last month, the Gutenberg folks announced an initiative to reformat their collection, currently numbering 27,000 books on the main site, and 100,000 plus when affiliates are included, specifically for cell phones. "Each Java/MIDP 2.0 enabled cell phone is sufficient — the most common computing platform in the world: There are by far more cell phones shipped worldwide than personal computers," they noted in their release.



For other devices, Gutenberg offers books in HTML and text format, but for a more book-like experience (e.g., bookmarks and page turning), you need to install a reader tailored to your device and one of the specialized book formats Gutenberg supports. I have a reader on my little Nokia 800 palmtop, and have been working my way through the collected writings of Jack London. The nice thing about the Gutenberg is that mostly these are books you should read, classics like Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* or Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. BlackBerrys and iPhones also get along with Gutenberg.

For additional sources of books, see [booksinmyphone.com](#), [manybooks.net](#), and [textonphone.com](#).

Another improvement for your holiday haul: Cables and a wall-mount bracket for your big-screen TV. I always find it disturbing to see a gorgeous, 15 cm deep plasma placed on a 60 cm deep equipment stand with a clutter of cable draped behind it.

Flat-screens really belong on the wall, and the cable box and assorted electronics off to the side

somewhere. Once you hang the set, the most expedient thing is to buy some split loom tubing to enclose and neaten the cables, and stick the gear in a corner. Split loom is black, corrugated, and is slit down the middle so you can easily add or remove cables. It is available from various online vendors and home centres.

Cable length can be another issue when you're separating a flat-screen from the rest of the electronics. Big-box retailers rarely carry longer runs of HDMI, which usually can go up to 15 metres in length, and up to 30 m if you're using high-quality cable (available in NZ if you know where to look for around \$200). Super-length computer cabling, meanwhile, is also available online, so you can hook up your set in the living room to the PC in your office.

A couple of tips for the moderately handy who, like me, want to snake their cabling inside a wall and off to a closet, with the equipment totally out of sight. The Electrical Code frowns on running extension cords through walls, so you or your electrician should add a permanent outlet behind the set to power it while hiding the cord. Use a recessed clock outlet, which intrudes a couple of inches into the wall, allowing plenty of room to recess the plug. As for operating your remote control when your gear is behind a door, the magic phrase to look up is "remote control relay." There's a gazillion different relays that will let you put an unobtrusive infrared receiver in your living room and run a cable or wireless signal to your equipment closet, where it "repeats" whatever infrared signal you throw at it. In some cases you may not even need one of these; my Dish Network box has a radio-operated control that works through walls.

Flatulence on Mars?

WASHINGTON — A team of NASA scientists has found proof of the existence of methane gas on Mars, again raising questions about the possibility of life on the red planet, the US space agency said today.

In an article published in the journal *Science*, researchers said they found seasonal variations in methane in the planet's atmosphere that could be evidence of geological or biological processes. On Earth, 90 per cent of the gas is produced by living things such as the fermentation of organic material or gas released by livestock, but geochemical processes also produce levels of the gas similar to those found on Mars, the scientists said.

"Mars could be more active than we have long believed," astrophysicist Geronimo Villaneuva told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa in an interview before the findings were released.

It is unclear whether the methane was produced by bacteria or from so called methane ice deposits, he said. "The question of the possibility of life on Mars is now asked anew."

Scientists monitored the Martian atmosphere using Earth-bound infra-red telescopes to look at 90 per cent of the planet over three years, finding plumes of methane in 2003. More studies are needed to locate the source of the gas.

"Methane molecules have a short life span in the Martian atmosphere. The discovery of larger quantities in recent years points to a current release process," Villaneuva added.

Last year, a NASA rover confirmed the existence of water on Mars, in a key finding that leaves open the possibility of past or present life there.

— DPA

Study: Performing early C-sections is dangerous



By Sarah Avery
McClatchy Newspapers

RALEIGH, N.C. — Delivering babies by Caesarean section just a few days too early increases the risk of respiratory problems and other complications in newborns, doctors at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and other centres report.

The findings, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, add to concerns about the rising rate of C-section births in the United States. Since the mid-1990s, women have increasingly elected to schedule surgery instead of undergoing a vaginal birth, so that C-sections now account for more than 30 percent of deliveries in the United States.

Much of the increase stems from women having repeat C-sections for their second and third

babies — a choice doctors advocate to avoid a rare but potentially fatal complication when the uterus ruptures at the original incision site. But first-time Caesarean deliveries are also climbing, sometimes just for the convenience of doctor and patient, and other times for medical reasons, such as a stalled labour or a baby positioned feet-first in the womb.

In any case, the timing of the operation is important, the study finds. Scheduling a delivery at 37 weeks of gestation results in a nearly fourfold increased risk of respiratory distress syndrome, in which the baby's lungs aren't capable of filling with oxygen, compared with babies born at 39 weeks. Newborns delivered earlier than 39 weeks also were significantly more likely to have other breathing problems and an infection called sepsis.

"I think there is something inherent in labour

— probably a signal from baby to mother that the baby is ready to make the transition — that we choose to circumvent when we schedule an elective, repeat C-section," said Dr. John Thorp, a UNC-CH obstetrician and one of the authors of the study. "I think it points to a role for the baby in the initiation of labour and the baby's readiness to make the transition."

To avoid complications of labour, doctors plan repeat C-sections between 36 and 40 weeks, when most babies have developed enough to survive outside the womb. Tests are performed to determine the extent of the baby's development, but Thorp said those tests are often not sophisticated enough to determine subtle milestones for breathing and processing food independently.

A high proportion of elective Caesarean deliveries in the United States are performed before 39 weeks, the study's authors wrote in the journal report. "This may be driven by several factors, including a woman's desire to give birth once term is attained and an obstetrician's desire to schedule the procedure at a convenient time."

Such early deliveries, the authors said, should be discouraged, based on the findings of the study.

That advice weighed heavily on Shannon Eubanks' decision to schedule the C-section delivery of her baby, Kathleen Conley Eubanks, on Tuesday morning at UNC Hospitals instead of last week, before the new year.

"As an accountant, I would have loved to have the tax break, but with the information we had, based on the study, it was very beneficial to wait," Eubanks said.

The 9-pound girl was the second child delivered by Caesarean section for Eubanks and her husband, Gaston. Their first, a son, was 10 pounds and feet-first in the womb, so he was born by C-section two years ago. Kathleen was also in breech (feet-first) position, discouraging Eubanks from trying for a vaginal delivery.

The option of vaginal delivery has dwindled for many women who have had one C-section — a factor contributing to the overall spike in surgical deliveries. In the early 1990s, health leaders, concerned about rising C-section rates, began counselling

women to consider vaginal births for subsequent pregnancies. Most were able to deliver vaginally without serious problems, but complication rates were troubling. One study in 2005 reported that 6 percent of women who tried a vaginal birth after C-section had serious complications.

Despite an 8 percent drop in C-section rates between 1991 and 1996, doctors and hospitals grew fearful of being sued, and backed off the recommendations for vaginal deliveries after C-section. Since then, C-section rates have climbed steadily.

Dr. Leon Woodruff, an obstetrician in Raleigh for 32 years, said that pushing vaginal deliveries after C-sections in the 1990s was a failure.

"That was all driven by policy and insurance coverage, and saying this is something we are requiring you to do as a patient or a doctor," he said. "I think everybody had some experiences where things suddenly went wrong, and mothers or babies were lost. It was just something that most patients and physicians and hospitals didn't embrace."

Others, however, contend that doctors have become too quick to discourage natural childbirth.

Kelley O'Briant, a mother of six in Raleigh, had her first child by C-section 10 years ago, then couldn't persuade her doctor to try a vaginal birth for her second child. Instead, he sent her to a nurse midwife and dropped her as a patient. She had four more children naturally, she said, and a fifth was adopted. Now she works assisting pregnant women, and is studying to be a certified midwife.

"Patients' rights are no longer respected," O'Briant said. "I saw one C-section performed for a doctor's convenience — he said he's got to be home for dinner. Another did it because he was going to a Super Bowl party. Women get all excited about it because they can arrange a time. It's the convenience, but that's not what birth is about, nor what having a baby is about."

Thorp, the UNC-CH doctor, agrees. He says medical interventions have been lifesavers, but may be overused.

"It's a really tangled web one weaves when one tries to be smarter than nature," he said.

Religion scholar asks, ‘Need God? What if I don’t?’

By Sue Nowicki

McClatchy Newspapers

Christianity is not a crutch, but a logical belief system and the only way to God.

That’s the view of Ravi Zacharias, an internationally known Christian apologist based in the US, who travels speaking on the theme, “Need God? What if I don’t?”

Zacharias is a native of India whose ancestors were Hindu priests of the highest caste. His maternal and paternal relatives converted to Christianity several generations ago, and he was raised in the Anglican church as a boy. But he viewed church and school as just things he had to put up with, until as a teenager he attempted to kill himself, mostly because of the incredible pressures put on Indian students to be the very best.

In the hospital, Zacharias began a personal relationship with Jesus, and after the Zacharias family moved to Canada when he was 20, he attended seminary. He holds three doctorates and is an expert on world religions and cults.

Zacharias has spoken in more than 50 countries and at Harvard, Princeton and Oxford universities. He addressed writers of the peace accord in South Africa, officers at a Russian military academy and delegates to the first annual prayer breakfast for African leaders held in Mozambique, Nigeria. He also has spoken at the White House and Pentagon and was the 2008 honorary chairman of the U.S. National Day of Prayer.

In addition, he has written or edited 20 books, including two published last year: *The End of Reason: A Response to the New Atheists* and *New Birth or Rebirth: Jesus Talks to Krishna*.

In a telephone interview this month, he talked about Christianity, other religions and why he believes England and Western Europe are in danger of losing their Judeo-Christian heritage.

Here are his comments:

Q: Your parents and your brother had arranged marriages, while you decided to find your own wife. How is your marriage doing?

A: Margie and I have been married 37 years. I met her when she was 16 and I was 20; we married a year later. She’s from Canada. We have three lovely grown children. The Lord’s been very good to us.

Q: In your book *Jesus Among Other Gods*, you say, “Sometimes religion can be the greatest roadblock to true spirituality.” Can you elaborate on that?

A: I think that’s really what we are witnessing in our world today. The barricades of religion, the chains of religion, the rites and rituals and superstition and tradition come into play and become what you hold onto. It becomes bereft of the true nature of personhood and relationship, and that’s what true spirituality is all about.

When Jesus was asked what is the greatest law, he reduced the 600-plus laws given by Moses to two — you shall love your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself. Jesus meant you cannot disconnect these two.

Religion can become such a single-dimension thing that you miss the horizontal. True spirituality is the focus on God and your fellow human being. Religion sometimes reduces spirituality to a moralizing, self-determining and works-oriented expression. In Buddhism, you work your way into Nirvana. In Islam, no matter how hard you work, it’s up to the will of Allah. That’s why I believe so strongly that the Christian faith is the only faith that bridges what ought to be and what can be by the grace of God.

Q: In your new book, *New Birth or Rebirth? Jesus Talks with Krishna*, you talk about Christianity and Hinduism. For years, I’ve heard about the peacefulness of the Hindu faith. Were you surprised by the recent outbreak of violence in India between Hindus and Christians?

A: Not really. Historically, these belligerent attitudes have been there. The fascinating thing about all that is the separation of India and Pakistan has been on religious grounds — Hindu and Islam. The remarkable thing is the beauty of the Christian Gospel has been getting much attention. I think Islam’s



“WHEN YOU BELIEVE SOMETHING TO BE TRUE, IT EXCLUDES THE OPPOSITE. HINDUISM IS EXCLUSIVE. BUDDHISM IS EXCLUSIVE. ISLAM IS EXCLUSIVE. BAHAI, WHICH CLAIMS TO INCLUDE EVERYONE, EXCLUDES THE EXCLUSIVISTS. THEY SAY, ALL RELIGIONS ARE EXPRESSING ONE. IF YOU SAY THAT IS NOT TRUE, THEY EXCLUDE YOUR VIEW

whole radicalism is based on fear. They are fearful of what will happen to Islam, and they impart fear to anyone who wants to leave their fold. Islam today is propagating itself by fear. It’s not the world’s fastest-growing religion; it’s the world’s fastest-growing imposed religion.

Q: You don’t agree with the popular view today that all religions lead to God. Why not?

A: Truth by definition is exclusive. It is so interesting that atheism that is basing itself on such a tolerant worldview has become so exclusive and would like to see religion annihilated. (One atheist) recently said, if it came to a choice of getting rid of rape or getting rid of religion, he would get rid of religion. [Sam Harris, in his book *Letter to a Christian Nation*: “If I could wave a magic wand and get rid of either rape or religion, I would not hesitate to get rid of religion.”]

When you believe something to be true, it excludes the opposite. Hinduism is exclusive. Buddhism is exclusive. Islam is exclusive. Bahai, which claims to include everyone, excludes the exclusivists. They say, all religions are expressing one. If you say that is not true, they exclude your view.

Q: What makes Christianity the only true way to God?

A: I think there are four fundamental questions to life: origin, meaning, morality and destiny. I believe the Christian faith is the only faith that does justice to those four questions where answers to each question correspond to reality, and when they’re put together in a total system, they are coherent.

Q: I’ve recently talked with atheists. Almost all of them believe that religion is a crutch of some kind. Interestingly, many of them grew up going to church as children. What would you say to them?

A: If there were other corresponding evidences to sustain that, one could say OK, religion can be a crutch to people. But why are there very fine athletes or scientists (who are religious); what kind of crutch would they be looking for to be considered the best in their field? Second question: If meaninglessness came from being weary of pain, their belief could have some value, but meaninglessness comes from an excess of pleasure, so there’s something more. Take Oscar Wilde — why after a life of indulgence did he ask for a minister to come to his bedside? He felt his life was meaningless.

The ego is precisely the problem in this world. The unsundered ego is what has led to this huge

financial catastrophe right now — greed, power. It is the people who believe they don’t need God that play God and make this kind of mess.

Q: You are a visiting lecturer at Oxford. Are you surprised by how few people actually attend church in England, considering the great Christian leaders and authors who once lived there? And what has your experience at Oxford been?

A: It’s very sad. England and Europe are on their way out. There’s no way their cultures will survive. It looks to me that the domination of Islam will take over. England and France are hanging on by a thread. The (Islamic) sharia laws already have been introduced in England. If (Prince) Charles gets on the throne, he has said he won’t be the defender of the faith; he will be the defender of the faiths.

My experience at Oxford has been mixed. It’s a historic place, a beautiful place, a wonderful place to lecture. But the powerful effect of (atheist) Richard Dawkins and all the bulldogs of naturalism are gradually eroding the reason for Oxford, which is “the Lord is my light.” That light is being extinguished.

If you do away with God, the next question is “Need to be human? What if I don’t?” To understand who we are, we need to understand who God is.

In the tomb of a chief

Acclaimed science fiction writer Jules Verne didn’t just write *Around the World in 80 Days*, he also wrote an epic about New Zealand and Australia called *In Search of the Castaways*, published in 1867. If you missed the previous instalment of this serial, you can download it [here](#).

This phenomenon of course excited no surprise in those that had just travelled among the hot springs of the Waikato. They knew that the central region of the Ika-a-Maui is essentially volcanic. It is a sieve, whose interstices furnish a passage for the earth’s vapours in the shape of boiling geysers and solfataras.

Paganel, who had already noticed this, called the attention of his friends to the volcanic nature of the mountain. The peak of Maunganamu was only one of the many cones which bristle on this part of the island. It was a volcano of the future. A slight mechanical change would produce a crater of eruption in these slopes, which consisted merely of whitish silicious tufa.

“That may be,” said Glenarvan, “but we are in no more danger here than standing by the boiler of the DUNCAN; this solid crust is like sheet iron.”

“I agree with you,” added the Major, “but however good a boiler may be, it bursts at last after too long service.”

“McNabbs,” said Paganel, “I have no fancy for staying on the cone. When Providence points out a way, I will go at once.”

“I wish,” remarked John, “that Maunganamu could carry us himself, with all the motive power that he has inside. It is too bad that millions of horse-power should lie under our feet unavailable for our needs. Our DUNCAN would carry us to the end of the world with the thousandth part of it.”

The recollections of the DUNCAN evoked by John Mangles turned Glenarvan’s thoughts into their saddest channel; for desperate as his own case was he often forgot it, in vain regret at the fate of his crew.

His mind still dwelt on it when he reached the summit of Maunganamu and met his companions in misfortune.

Lady Helena, when she saw Glenarvan, came forward to meet him.

“Dear Edward,” said she, “you have made up your mind? Are we to hope or fear?”

“Hope, my dear Helena,” replied Glenarvan. “The natives will never set foot on the mountain, and we shall have time to devise a plan of escape.”

“More than that, madam, God himself has encouraged us to hope.”

And so saying, John Mangles handed to Lady Helena the fragment of paper on which was legible the sacred words; and these young women, whose trusting hearts were always open to observe Providential interpositions, read in these words an indisputable sign of salvation.

“And now let us go to the `urupa!” cried Paganel, in his gayest mood. “It is our castle, our dining-room, our study! None can meddle with us there! Ladies! allow me to do the honours of this charming abode.”

They followed Paganel, and when the savages saw them profaning anew the tabooed burial place, they renewed their fire and their fearful yells, the one as loud as the other. But fortunately the balls fell short of our friends, though the cries reached them.

Lady Helena, Mary Grant, and their companions were quite relieved to find that the Maoris were more dominated by superstition than by anger, and they entered the monument.

It was a palisade made of red-painted posts. Symbolic figures, tattooed on the wood, set forth the rank and achievements of the deceased. Strings of amulets, made of shells or cut stones, hung from one part to another. In the interior, the ground was carpeted with green leaves, and in the middle, a slight mound betokened the place of the newly made grave. There lay the chief’s weapons, his guns loaded and capped, his spear, his splendid axe of green jade, with a supply of powder and ball for the happy hunting grounds.

“Quite an arsenal!” said Paganel, “of which we shall make a better use. What ideas they have! Fancy carrying arms in the other world!”

“Well!” said the Major, “but these are English firearms.”

“No doubt,” replied Glenarvan, “and it is a very unwise practice to give firearms to savages! They turn them against the invaders, naturally enough. But at any rate, they will be very valuable to us.”

“Yes,” said Paganel, “but what is more useful still is the food and water provided for Kara-Tete.”

Things had been handsomely done for the deceased chief; the amount of provisions denoted their esteem for the departed. There was food enough to sustain ten persons for fifteen days, or the dead man forever.

The vegetable aliments consisted of edible ferns, sweet potatoes, the “convolvulus batatas,” which was indigenous, and the potato which had been imported long before by the Europeans. Large jars contained pure water, and a dozen baskets artistically plaited contained tablets of an unknown green gum.

The fugitives were therefore provided for some days against hunger and thirst, and they needed no persuasion to begin their attack on the deceased chief’s stores. Glenarvan brought out the necessary quantity

and put them into Olbinett’s hands. The steward, who never could forget his routine ideas, even in the most exceptional circumstances, thought the meal a slender one. He did not know how to prepare the roots, and, besides, had no fire.

But Paganel soon solved the difficulty by recommending him to bury his fern roots and sweet potatoes in the soil. The temperature of the surface stratum was very high, and a thermometer plunged into the soil would have marked from 160 to 170 degrees; in fact, Olbinett narrowly missed being scalded, for just as he had scooped a hole for the roots, a jet of vapour sprang up and with a whistling sound rose six feet above the ground.

The steward fell back in terror. “Shut off steam!” cried the Major, running to close the hole with the loose drift, while Paganel pondering on the singular phenomenon muttered to himself:

“Let me see! ha! ha! Why not?” “Are you hurt?” inquired McNabbs of Olbinett.

“THINGS HAD BEEN HANDSOMELY DONE FOR THE DECEASED CHIEF... THERE WAS FOOD ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN TEN PERSONS FOR FIFTEEN DAYS, OR THE DEAD MAN FOREVER

“No, Major,” said the steward, “but I did not expect--” “That Providence would send you fire,” interrupted Paganel in a jovial tone. “First the larder of Kara-Tete and then fire out of the ground! Upon my word, this mountain is a paradise! I propose that we found a colony, and cultivate the soil and settle here for life! We shall be the Robinsons of Maunganamu. We should want for nothing.”

“If it is solid ground,” said John Mangles. “Well! it is not a thing of yesterday,” said Paganel. “It has stood against the internal fire for many a day, and will do so till we leave it, at any rate.”

“Breakfast is ready,” announced Olbinett with as much dignity as if he was in Malcolm Castle.

Without delay, the fugitives sat down near the palisade, and began one of the many meals with which Providence had supplied them in critical circumstances. Nobody was inclined to be fastidious, but opinions were divided as regarded the edible fern. Some thought the flavour sweet and agreeable, others pronounced it leathery, insipid, and resembling the taste of gum. The sweet potatoes, cooked in the burning soil, were excellent. The geographer remarked that Kara-Tete was not badly off after all.

And now that their hunger was appeased, it was time to decide on their plan of escape.

“So soon!” exclaimed Paganel in a piteous tone. “Would you quit the home of delight so soon?”

“But, Monsieur Paganel,” interposed Lady Helena, “if this be Capua, you dare not intend to imitate Hannibal!”

“Madam, I dare not contradict you, and if discussion is the order of the day, let it proceed.”

“First,” said Glenarvan, “I think we ought to start before we are driven to it by hunger. We are revived now, and ought to take advantage of it. To-night we will try to reach the eastern valleys by crossing the cordon of natives under cover of the darkness.”

“Excellent,” answered Paganel,

“if the Maoris allow us to pass.” “And if not?” asked John Mangles. “Then we will use our great resources,” said Paganel. “But have we great resources?” inquired the Major. “More than we can use!” replied Paganel, without any further explanation.

And then they waited for the night. The natives had not stirred. Their numbers seemed even greater, perhaps owing to the influx of the stragglers of the tribe. Fires lighted at intervals formed a girdle of flame round the base of the mountain, so that when darkness fell, Maunganamu appeared to rise out of a great brasier, and to hide its head in the thick darkness. Five hundred feet below they could hear the hum and the cries of the enemy’s camp.

At nine o’clock the darkness being very intense, Glenarvan and John Mangles went out to reconnoitre before embarking the whole party on this critical journey. They made the descent noiselessly, and after about ten minutes, arrived on the narrow ridge that crossed the native lines, fifty feet above the camp.

All went well so far. The Maoris, stretched beside the fires, did not appear to observe the two fugitives. But in an instant a double fusillade burst forth from both sides of the ridge.

“Back,” exclaimed Glenarvan, “those wretches have the eyes of cats and the guns of riflemen!”

And they turned, and once more climbed the steep slope of the mountain, and then hastened to their friends who had been alarmed at the firing. Glenarvan’s hat was pierced by two balls, and they concluded that it was out of the question to venture again on the ridge between two lines of marksmen.

“Wait till to-morrow,” said Paganel, “and as we cannot elude their vigilance, let me try my hand on them.”

The night was cold; but happily Kara-Tete had been furnished with his best night gear, and the party wrapped themselves each in a warm flax mantle, and protected by native superstition, slept quietly inside the enclosure, on the warm ground, still violating with the violence of the internal ebullition.



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FROM FRONT PAGE

In one example recorded by the BBC a couple of years ago, hundreds of Palestinian mothers and children allied to Hamas flocked to act as human shields to protect the house of a Hamas commander.


Israel, in a little-reported policy, phones up householders and warns them of impending airstrikes, to give them time to get their families and precious keepsakes out. The phone calls usually carry a 5 minute advance warning.


But instead of fleeing the targeted house, Hamas commanders sent wives and children to gather on the roof of the property and around its entrances. (Watch Hamas TV story )


It's not an isolated case.


HamasTV has spent the past eight years heavily indoctrinating Palestinian children into becoming suicide bombers, as this TV commercial glorifying a mother's sacrifice shows .

In this next broadcast, a children's TV programme is used to encourage youngsters to massacre those who annoy them .



Even Palestine's version of Mickey Mouse has been recruited to the suicide-bombing indoctrination classes. 

Those kids who refuse to "get with the programme" can nonetheless find themselves dragged off the streets to be used as human shields for Hamas mortar-bomb crews. 

Western psychologists have already expressed serious reservations about the mental health of Palestinian kids, because of the massive indoctrination and its impact on the cycle of hate when these children become teenagers. 

Watch excerpt from Hamas kids TV show "The Gifted" 

Even school plays in front of hundreds of parents feature five year old jihad warriors in dances glorifying death. 

Israel, which has been heavily criticised by the United Nations and world media for attacks on schools and UN depots, has been releasing videos of its own showing how Hamas has booby-trapped schools and fired mortars and rockets from inside those compounds.  & 

The rest of the pictures on this page tell their own story, but the tragedy of Palestine is that children are used as cannon fodder by their own parents and families, and end up getting killed while Hamas fighters hide behind them. [Back to the front page](#)

