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Corrupt or incompetent?

'Explosive' documents could be the end of Shane Jones' career

By Ian Wishart
 Editor, TGIF Edition

The career of high-flying Labour MP Shane Jones looks dead in the water tonight with revelations he awarded citizenship to a Chinese migrant despite an explicit official warning that the man was still under an ongoing "criminal investigation" by NZ authorities.

The revelations are contained in devastating new documents released on the former Minister's decision to grant citizenship to Labour party political donor and wanted Chinese criminal, Yang Liu.

Additionally, it's just been revealed that Labour's then Ethnic Affairs Minister Chris Carter also lobbied in favour of Yang Liu, after receiving a \$5,000 donation.

TGIF Edition and Radio Live News have been given a copy of the file that Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones considered before deciding to award the Chinese businessman citizenship back in August.

The Internal Affairs Department file, released under the Official Information Act tonight and slugged "Confidential", shows Jones was explicitly warned by his Department that Liu - real name Yongming Yan - was still under "active... criminal investigation" at that moment, and that the citizenship application should be "DECLINED".

In a covering letter to the Minister, Geoff May of Internal Affairs wrote on 14 July this year:



NZPA/ Ross Setford

"The applicant does not clearly meet... the good character requirement" of the Citizenship Act.
 "Mr Liu remains the subject of an Interpol wanted to arrest in China 'red notice' for allegedly committing serious financial fraud..."

"Mr Liu remains the subject of an active Immigration New Zealand Fraud Branch criminal investigation concerning his true identity."
 "It is alleged that Mr Liu has fraudulently obtained and used Chinese identity documents"

[Continue reading](#)

on the INSIDE



GAY RAGE
 Hurl racist insults
[Page 10](#)



'HOT' WIGGLE
 Mums like him
[Page 13](#)



SPACE COWBOYS
 NASA needs cash
[Page 19](#)

EXCLUSIVE

German president dodged NZ Police bullet

By Ian Wishart

The accidental police shooting on a VIP aircraft revealed this week, put the life of a visiting world leader, the President of Germany, at risk.

Police National Headquarters was today playing coy with the news media after the former press advisor to Prime Minister Jim Bolger, Richard Griffin, went public yesterday over the incident, suggesting it happened on a flight carrying Bolger.

However, NZPA this afternoon provided a different version from police:

Wellington, Nov 21 NZPA - The police have confirmed a Diplomatic Protection Squad officer once discharged a pistol inside an airborne VIP air-

craft but said there was no damage to the plane and former prime minister Jim Bolger was not aboard.

Mr Bolger's former press secretary, Richard Griffin, revealed the incident during a Radio New Zealand panel discussion earlier this week.

He said the officer shot a hole in the side of the plane while Mr Bolger was aboard.

Mr Griffin later told NZPA it occurred on an Air Force VIP flight in the 1990s.

"In the process of taking his Glock (pistol) out and disarming it he managed to discharge it, in the air," Mr Griffin said.

There was no loss of pressure in the cabin and the flight continued, despite "a bit of a panic", Mr Griffin said.

Mr Bolger was "sanguine" about the incident. Police National Headquarters said today the incident occurred 15 years ago.

"The DPS member followed correct procedures but due to a handling error his pistol discharged into a briefcase. The bullet lodged in the battery pack of a police radio in the briefcase," police said in a statement.

"The bullet did no damage to the aircraft and it certainly did not put a hole in the aircraft as has been reported. The safety of the aircraft and passengers was not at risk."

The statement said reports that Mr Bolger was on board the aircraft were incorrect.

That's the official police version, relayed to NZPA. However, *Investigate* magazine obtained papers on

the incident eight years ago under the Official Information Act. Here's what really happened.

The DPS officers were guarding Germany's then-president, Richard von Weizsacker, on a 1993 flight between Auckland and Wellington when the gun was accidentally discharged. It is true the bullet lodged in a briefcase, but the Police National Headquarters statement that "the safety of the aircraft and passengers was not at risk" is misleading, as it gives the impression the officer had control of his weapon. If he'd had control of his weapon, it wouldn't have gone off. The bullet could have hit a passenger, including the German president. It didn't. The police got lucky.

The incident was hushed up because of the enormous diplomatic embarrassment to New Zealand.

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off BEAT

SCHOOL DENIES UNDERWEAR CHECKS

WINCHESTER, England, Nov. 21 (UPI) — A Winchester, England, school has denied claims that teachers have been checking students' underwear to be sure they comply with the dress code.

Parents of 11- through 16-year-old students at Kings School said their students were told during assemblies that boys are only to wear white or black underpants and girls are to only wear white or light-colored unpadded bras, *The Daily Mail* reported Thursday.

Some students claimed teachers were performing spot checks to ensure students were following the underwear rules.

Stuart Gander, whose daughters Chelsea, 15 and Kirby, 13, attend the school, said his children were told that the school considers coloured bras offensive.

"They were told they had to wear white ones or very light pale bras and they would be spot checked," Gander said. "You wouldn't be able to do that in a work place so why should you be able to do that at school?"

However, a school spokeswoman said female students were merely told what was appropriate dress for the school as a way to prepare them for the workplace.

"There is no rule, we are not checking underwear. We are not checking girls' bra straps and we have certainly not had an assembly with any of the boys telling them what colour underwear to wear."



CELL PHONE STOPS HEART-BOUND BULLET

COVINGTON, Louisiana, Nov. 21 (UPI) — A Louisiana man said a stray bullet left him with only a bruise after the slug struck a cell phone in a pocket covering his chest.

Ronald Richard said he was mowing his lawn Saturday when he felt a sharp impact on his chest, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* reported today.

Richard initially thought he had been hit by a rock sent airborne by the lawn mower, but when he removed the nylon case of his Motorola Razr phone from a pocket on the bib of his overalls — over his heart — a .45 calibre bullet fell to the ground.

"I don't look at any of this as coincidence," said Richard, who suffered only bruising on his chest. "I look at this as God telling me to put my cell phone in that pocket, and I'm grateful and humbled."

St. Tammany Parish Sheriff Jack Strain said investigators were trying to determine the origin of the bullet. He said the shooting did not appear to be intentional.

RELEASED PRISONER REFUSED TO LEAVE

OAK PARK HEIGHTS, Minn., Nov. 21 (UPI) — Officials with the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights said they had to call the police after a released prisoner refused to leave prison grounds.

The officials said an officer from the Oak Park Heights Police Department was called to the facility Nov. 13 after King Phillip Veiga, 23, refused to leave the prison, saying he wasn't due to be released until May 2009, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reported today.

The police report said Veiga would not sign any paperwork stating his release date was today because he felt he would be rearrested and brought back to prison.

"Veiga was sentenced to one year and one day in prison for a fifth-degree controlled substance charge of possession of marijuana. He was placed on supervised release July 15 after spending 140 days in jail, but he was brought back to prison Aug. 8 after he violated the terms of his release," said Shari Burt, communications director for the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Burt said Veiga was eventually convinced to leave the prison.

"He was released on his release date and is no longer under supervision, she said. He was reluctant to leave prison because he didn't think all of his time was served, but it was. His sentence is completely discharged."

FROM FRONT PAGE

relating to another identity including obtaining two false passports.

"An Immigration New Zealand search warrant has been executed to seize Mr Liu's Chinese passports and other identity documents which were held by the Department of Internal Affairs whilst his application was being processed.

"As a result of the seizure of his passport Mr Liu claims he is 'stateless' although he has provided no evidence to support his belief.

"On two separate occasions Hon Dover Samuels MP has written to you in support of Mr Liu's application.

"Hon Pansy Wong MP has written to you in support of Mr Liu's application.

"Hon Chris Carter, Minister for Ethnic Affairs has written in support of Mr Liu's application."

Particularly difficult for Labour MP and *News-talk ZB* commentator Shane Jones to explain is the next paragraph in the Internal Affairs briefing paper, suggesting Yang Liu had set off multiple crime alarms:

"Despite remaining under multi-agency inter-governmental investigations Mr Liu has requested that you consider his application at this time," wrote the IAD's Geoff May. "It is considered that Mr Liu does not meet the good character requirement and is not eligible for the grant of citizenship."

Why was Liu so keen for his application to go before a Labour cabinet minister ahead of the election, even given the mounting evidence against him, and why was Liu seemingly so confident his citizenship would be granted? These are questions *TGIF Edition* would like to ask Labour's Shane Jones, but he refuses to take our calls.

When former Prime Minister Helen Clark was questioned on the campaign trail about the Yang Liu case, she was quick to reveal the man wanted in connection with a quarter-billion dollar fraud [the Internal Affairs documents wrongly identified only a fraction of the total amount] in China had donated \$5,000 to Labour's Ethnic Affairs Minister, Chris Carter. But Clark was quick to add that Liu had donated to National as well. Clark did *not* disclose to the press gallery that Carter had also written a

letter of support on Liu's behalf this year.

Despite the political show of support for Liu behind the scenes, the Internal Affairs Department issued a recommendation that cabinet minister Shane Jones could not have failed to see:

"It is recommended you **DECLINE** [their emphasis] the grant of New Zealand citizenship to Mr Yang Liu."

Right below it, however, Jones crossed out the bold capitalised word "**DECLINED**" and instead ticked the box "**APPROVED**".

Just three days later, the man's citizenship was conferred in a special ceremony at parliament giving him an official New Zealand identity under a false name, Yang Liu.

But that's just the covering document. The larger file sent to Jones, accompanying the recommendation to "**DECLINE**", was even more damning.

Internal Affairs notes that "It is alleged he misappropriated a significant sum of money in China by entering into a false contract in 2000 using one of his companies. According to the Chinese in 1999 he stole another person's identity by falsely registering their birth. He then used this deception to obtain two false Chinese passports.

"Immigration New Zealand is actively investigating Mr Liu on the basis that he may have entered New Zealand under a false identity... however, at this time Mr Liu remains a permanent resident of New Zealand despite remaining under investigation by the Immigration Fraud Branch.

"The Jilin Public Security Bureau of the Chinese government considers that Mr Liu is actually 'Yongming Yan' and that in 1999 he took another person's identity ('Yang Liu' dob 20 October 1972) by registering a fake household birth register. It is suggested that he subsequently obtained two Chinese false passports in this false identity.

"The Department cannot be satisfied that Mr Liu is living in New Zealand and has applied for New Zealand citizenship under his true identity."

What is interesting is that the Internal Affairs briefing paper to the Minister of Internal Affairs reveals that Yang Liu had some kind of direct line of communication with the Labour cabinet:

"Mr Liu has written that he will petition you

[the Minister] directly if any supporting evidence becomes available before his application is considered."

The Ministerial briefing concludes:

"What is known is that Mr Liu remains wanted and subject to arrest in China, is unwilling to resolve the Interpol red notice matter, [next clause deleted by Internal Affairs], is under active investigation by Immigration New Zealand and has allegedly obtained and used false identity documents."

With Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones on clear notice that the applicant before him was still the subject of an active criminal investigation by NZ authorities, serious questions arise as to why the Minister overrode his officials and awarded the Labour party campaign donor citizenship, without waiting for the outcome of the criminal investigation.

Meanwhile, *TGIF Edition* has questioned *News-talk ZB* boss Bill Francis over the failure of the radio network to ask Shane Jones hard questions about the case when it had repeated chances.

News-talk ZB, whose on air promo's boast "hear it first", interviews Jones every Wednesday in the breakfast show, but failed to pursue its on-air personality about the Yang Liu case — despite widespread media reports that Jones had ducked for cover and was refusing to answer questions.

Paul Holmes attempted to ask: "Did you give a nod and a wink to the Chinese guy after he made a donation so he could get citizenship?"

Jones gave a stock-standard 'fob-off' response: "No, no you won't bloody draw me on that... you've got a press statement on that from the senior minister Mr Barker."

And that was the end of the matter as far as *News-talk ZB* was concerned.

News-talk ZB boss Bill Francis denied his station went "soft" on its regular guest, but it was in sharp contrast to the constant pursuit of Don Brash by *ZB* news over the Exclusive Brethren claims in the 2005 election. On that occasion, *News-talk ZB* did not take "no" for an answer. Nor was *ZB* reluctant to keep asking National leader John Key about the Springbok tour during the latest election campaign.

[Back to the front page](#)

Election finals: No major changes

By Ian Llewellyn of NZPA

WELLINGTON, NOV 21 — The final results for the 2008 election are to be declared tomorrow afternoon, but there are unlikely to be any major changes in the shape of Parliament.

Over the last fortnight electorate officials have been recounting the 2,103,842 votes cast on election day and counting 208,000 special votes.

Of these around 32,000 are overseas votes with the rest mainly being cast by people outside their electorate on election day.

The final count will not alter National leading a government as Prime Minister John Key has stitched together 70 votes on confidence issues supported by ACT, United Future and the Maori Party.

However, if parties gain a greater percentage of the special votes than they did of votes counted on election day there could be changes at the margins in the composition of Parliament.

It is also possible that some of the marginal electorates could change hands.

The provisional results had National on 45.45 percent support (59 seats), Labour 33.77 percent support (43), Greens 6.43 percent (8), ACT 3.72 percent (5), Maori Party 2.24 percent (5), Progressive 0.93 percent (1), United Future 0.89 (1) and New Zealand First 4.21 percent.

ACT, Progressive and United Future all gained entry into Parliament through winning an electorate seat.

The Maori Party gained five electorate seats and since this was a greater proportion than they would have been entitled to under the party vote, there is a Parliament of 122 MPs.

List MP places are allocated through the "St Lague Formula" allocation, a complex equation. The most likely change mathematically is for Labour



to get a seat off National by getting around 0.20 percent more specials than it did votes on election night and National getting 0.20 percent less.

While mathematically more likely, it is less so politically as it would mean those casting special votes bucking the trend of other voters.

If it did happen this would mean Cam Calder would be out of Parliament and Damien O'Connor would be back.

The Greens have also done well in the past with special votes and a similar performance could result in Kennedy Graham coming in at the expense of Mr Calder again.

If Labour and Greens do much better than their election night result and National much worse then it is possible both Mr O'Connor and Mr Graham could get back in and Mr Calder will be joined by Aaron Gilmore from the National list as a near-miss MP.

Other permutations such as National gaining a seat would need them performing substantially better in specials than they did on election night and other parties much worse.

For New Zealand First to come back from the dead they would have to win much more than 10 percent of all special votes.

This is unlikely as they only gained support of 4.21 percent of voters on election night.

It is also possible that provisional electorate results could be overturned.

The most marginal seat on election night was New Plymouth which National's Jonathan Young held by 314 votes over the incumbent Labour's Harry Duynhoven.

The Taranaki Daily News reported today that after the counting of the 2600 specials Mr Young had won the seat by around a 100 votes.

The result will be declared tomorrow.

The next most marginal seat was Waimakariri held by Labour's sitting MP Clayton Cosgrove by 518 votes from National's Kate Wilkinson.

Labour also hold Rimutaka by 625 votes — Chris Hipkins over National's Richard Whiteside, the Maori Party hold Te Tai Tonga by 684 votes — Rahui Katene over Labour's Mahara Okeroa and Labour hold Christchurch Central by 880 votes — Brendon Burns over Nicky Wagner.

It is a possibility that these seats could change hands if specials heavily favour the challenger.

However, special votes are usually cast fairly closely in proportion to the election night result and any differences are unlikely to be enough to overturn it.

Once the results are declared any aggrieved parties have until Wednesday November 26 to apply for a judicial recount.

— NZPA



Recession hits dairy

WELLINGTON, NOV 21 – Fonterra says its 10,000 farmers should plan on receiving only about 75 percent of the money they pocketed last season, as the dairy giant battles the international economic recession.

The cooperative today warned its farmers to expect a payout of only \$6/kg milksolids this season, 24 percent down on the \$7.90 windfall earned by last summer's milk. But directors have not yet cut back the advance payments farmers are given through the season.

"No one should underestimate what is actually happening in the global markets," Chairman Henry van der Heyden said in a broadcast to farmers.

"We are starting to show signs ... that we are moving into an economic crisis."

"This is probably the worst that it has been for two generations," he said. "The message is for farmers to be cautious in their planning."

"On my farms, I'm just telling everybody to just hunker down".

Slowing world growth and deteriorating consumer confidence were hitting the prices likely to be paid for butter, cheese and milk powder before the season ends in the middle of next year.

The company controls nearly 40 percent of the international dairy trade, but has been watching prices plunge on commodity markets.

Chief executive Andrew Ferrier told shareholders that instead of prices flattening out and starting to rise again, they are likely to keep on falling, further than had been expected.

World prices of butter, milk and cheese are down about 42 percent from record levels a year ago and Mr Ferrier said the Dow Jones financial indices showed a drop in dairy commodities of 21 percent in October alone.

The \$6 forecast today is 14 percent lower than Fonterra's original estimate of \$7, which was cut to \$6.60 in September.

Last season, Fonterra gave farmers their highest payout payment in 43 years, in inflation-adjusted terms. It paid a record \$7.90/kg, which added up to \$9.3 billion for its 10,724 farmers – the equivalent of an average \$867,213 for each of them.

Mr Ferrier said the medium-to-long-term outlook for dairy remained positive but as the world economy retreated, commodity stocks were building and these would need to be cleared before prices improved.

"A rebalancing of the market is unlikely in the short-term," he said.

Mr Ferrier said the \$6/kg forecast comprised a milk price of \$5.60/kg, down 65c, and a value return of 40c/kg a 5c increase.

Lower commodity prices would improve margins in some markets for the consumer brands businesses, but Fonterra expected lower demand for such fast-moving consumer goods.

The price set for Fonterra's cooperative shares at the end of last season slumped by 18 percent to \$5.57/share, down by \$1.22 from the 2007 season, driving down the total shareholder return – a key business indicator for farmers – by 13.4 percent.



Key turns to Clark for advice

WELLINGTON, NOV 21 – Prime Minister John Key arrived in Lima today to attend the APEC summit meeting, well briefed on what to expect by Labour's foreign affairs spokeswoman and former prime minister Helen Clark.

A spokesman for Mr Key told NZPA the prime minister and Miss Clark, who attended nine summits while her government held office, had discussed APEC for nearly an hour before the New Zealand delegation left.

On his way to the Peruvian capital Mr Key stopped in Santiago, where he met Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare.

Mr Key's spokesman said their talks were useful and constructive.

One of the first announcements from the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum meeting was that Australia and Peru had decided to enter a Pacific rim free trade deal with countries that include New Zealand.

The United States decided in September to join Singapore, New Zealand, Chile and Brunei in the Comprehensive Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement, a multilateral trade deal known as the P4.

The agreement, the first trade pact involving a

group of Pacific rim countries, was signed between Singapore, Chile and New Zealand in 2005 before Brunei joined it a year later.

Trade Minister Tim Groser, who is in Lima with Mr Key, said the move towards a wider Pacific rim trade bloc was significant at a time when economies needed whatever boost they could get.

"We're trying to work through the economic turmoil and this is part of the answer," he said.

The summit takes place on Sunday and Monday (NZT) and Mr Key's first appearance will be at a chief executives meeting which is taking place alongside it.

He will make a speech to the chief executives early tomorrow morning and take part in a panel discussion.

At the summit Mr Key will be alongside prime ministers and presidents from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

The global financial and economic crisis will dominate discussions, and Mr Key formed his government quickly after the November 8 election so he could attend.

– NZPA



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– NZPA

Kiwi 'illegal' battles US

WELLINGTON, NOV 21 – New Zealander Heathcliffe Bradley is sitting in his Milford, New Jersey home battling the United States government's efforts to deport him.

In 2004 Mr Bradley was planning to return to New Zealand after eight years as an illegal immigrant in the United States when he met Cheryl Losee, and married her.

His efforts since then to become a legal resident in the United States have become a bureaucratic and legal nightmare, the *New York Times* reported today.

Last month Mr Bradley, a construction worker who says he has no criminal record in either the US or New Zealand, was hauled from his home in handcuffs and put in an immigration detention centre in Elizabeth, New Jersey for deportation.

He is challenging his deportation in the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

"I'm fighting for my wife and for myself," he said. "This is my life, and this is where I want to live."

Mr Bradley, 36, had been swept up in tougher enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security's visa waiver programme, which allows citizens of certain countries, all close allies of the US, to stay in the country for 90 days or less without obtaining a visa.

He entered the US in August 1996 with a visa which effectively waived any right to challenge his removal, except under certain conditions.

Now Mr Bradley is challenging the integrity and constitutionality of the entire US visa waiver procedure and his lawyer has argued that the Department of Homeland Security has not produced the document waiving his right to challenge his removal.

Court papers say that Mr Bradley "vaguely recalls" signing a waiver at Kennedy International Airport, but he did not "knowingly and voluntarily" sign away his legal rights because he was "groggy from the sleeplessness, jet-lagged and sufficiently intoxicated".

As the spouse of an American citizen, Mr Bradley was eligible to apply for an adjustment of his administrative status and seek a green card – something done by hundreds of people a year, including his brother and sister, who also married Americans.

After the US Citizenship and Immigration Services denied his green card request, Mr Bradley filed an appeal on June 24, then heard nothing more until a dawn raid on October 8 when immigration officers arrested him for deportation.

The government has argued that the Third Circuit



has no jurisdiction in the case, and that Mr Bradley's "constitutional claims" don't apply, because he waived his rights to appeal a deportation order before entering the United States.

On November 10, the appeals court stayed the deportation, and Mr Bradley was released pending the outcome, which could take two years.

– NZPA

NZ dollar drops, lowest in six years

WELLINGTON, NOV 21 – As recession fears shook world markets the New Zealand dollar sank to six-year lows.

There was so much bad news around it was hard to know where to start. All three major US stock indexes ended sharply lower due to deepening economic fears and investors' flight from risk.

Investors sought shelter in safe assets such as US Treasury bonds, and the US dollar slumped versus the yen, but both rose against the euro.

The number of Americans filing for jobless benefits spiked to a 16-year high of 542,000 last week.

Equity markets in Asia plunged. In New Zealand, Fonterra slashed its forecast payout to dairy farmers.

Against an overwhelmingly bleak backdrop the NZ dollar touched US52c during its domestic session, dealers said. It climbed to US52.88c at 5pm from US54.09c at the same time yesterday.

By today's local close the kiwi was at 49.95 yen from 51.70 yesterday.

Against the euro it was at 0.4248 from 0.4325 yesterday.

The Reserve Bank of Australia intervened to support the Australian dollar. The NZ dollar was at A85.65c at 5pm from A84.78c yesterday.

The trade-weighted index was down to 54.63 at 5pm from 55.51 at 5pm.

– NZPA



Roger Moore may be signing books in Auckland, but his white Lotus Esprit S1 driven in the James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* is up for auction in London, and expected to fetch £100,000-120,000 at Bonhams auction house. / WENN

007 in Auckland to launch autobiography

AUCKLAND, NOV 21 – Hundreds of shoppers queued out of the door of an Auckland book store today to catch a glimpse of iconic British film star Sir Roger Moore.

Sir Roger is in the city today and tomorrow to launch his autobiography, *My Word is My Bond*.

Whitcoulls store supervisor Jeremy Eyles told NZPA just before 4.30pm more than 300 people were lining up to get up close to the James Bond star.

"We've had good sales of his autobiography today and it's great to see so many people have turned out to meet him.

"The last time we had this many people in the store was when Terry Pratchett and Jamie Oliver were here about two years ago," Mr Eyles said.

At 81, Sir Roger is certainly one of the more elderly celebrities to visit New Zealand in support of their autobiography, but his fans were clearly eager to snap up a copy.

And earlier today, Sir Roger was a guest at a literary lunch at Auckland's Hyatt Regency Hotel.

For those who missed him today, there's another chance to catch him tomorrow at Borders in Sylvia Park from 12pm until 1pm.

Suave and sophisticated, Sir Roger has starred in

some of the most popular films and television series of the past half century – from his roles in *The Saint* and *The Persuaders* to *Agent 007*.

He has also become heavily involved in the United Nations children's organisation Unicef.

My Word is My Bond looks back on his life and career – from his early childhood in wartime London to life as a struggling actor and his early Hollywood days, to his battle with prostate cancer.

The book goes behind the scenes of playing some of the world's most famous roles – and playing alongside the world's most legendary stars.

Born in London, Sir Roger started out as a trainee animator. After studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and a stint in the British Army, he worked in theatre and radio, then as a model and salesman before a contract with MGM in 1953 led to Hollywood and roles in TV series *Ivanhoe* and *Maverick*. But it was the hit series *The Saint* that brought international stardom.

He went on to play James Bond on the big screen in seven films, more than any other 007. And in 2003, he was awarded a knighthood for his work for Unicef.

– NZPA



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Editorial

There must be a Corruption Commission

There are times when you instinctively know an investigation will hit its target, no matter what interference is thrown in its way. The torpedo that *TGIF Edition* dropped in the water three weeks before the election is one of those stories; with the certainty of purpose of the Grim Reaper himself, that missile ploughed silently through the political waters, unwavering despite the lack of wider media coverage. In tonight's *TGIF Edition*, the torpedo reaches its biggest target yet: a high-flying Labour cabinet minister whose actions leave a reasonable person with only two reasonable conclusions: the minister was either incompetent... or corrupt.

The revelations on the front page of tonight's *TGIF Edition* leave no wriggle-room anymore, no hope of political escape. For Labour's Shane Jones, up till now a high flyer, the game's over, his career effectively finished.

Here's why: whilst he had discretion, as the delegated Minister of Internal Affairs, to make a judgement call on the citizenship application of wanted criminal Yang Liu, Jones also has to live with the consequences of that decision.

For Jones, tonight's story is Hobson's choice. Either he awarded Yang Liu (real name Yongming Yan) New Zealand citizenship for corrupt reasons, and he should be the subject of an immediate law enforcement investigation, or he was utterly and totally incompetent and is not fit to hold ministerial office ever again. I can't see a credible third option. And either way, Shane Jones' political career is toast.

"Mr Liu remains the subject of an active Immigration New Zealand Fraud Branch criminal investiga-

tion concerning his true identity"—those were the words leaping out from the page of the Ministerial briefing papers which Jones read *before* awarding Liu a Kiwi passport.

What would a *reasonable* person do in the Minister's position? I'm pretty sure most people reading such a warning would rapidly conclude that final decisions on Liu's application should only be made once the criminal investigation was complete, and not before.

Especially when the Internal Affairs briefing said this:

"Immigration New Zealand is actively investigating Mr Liu on the basis that he may have entered New Zealand under a false identity... however, at this time Mr Liu remains a permanent resident of New Zealand despite remaining under investigation by the Immigration Fraud Branch.

"The Jilin Public Security Bureau of the Chinese government considers that Mr Liu is actually 'Yongming Yan' and that in 1999 he took another person's identity ('Yang Liu' dob 20 October 1972) by registering a fake household birth register. It is suggested that he subsequently obtained two Chinese false passports in this false identity.

"The Department cannot be satisfied that Mr Liu is living in New Zealand and has applied for New Zealand citizenship under his true identity."

Again, what would a reasonable and competent minister do, after being told his officials were not even sure they knew who Yang Liu was?

I'm sorry, based on the documents released tonight, I believe cabinet minister Shane Jones

acted for corrupt reasons. I don't have any evidence of payments, or any motive at all beyond the family relationship between a senior staff member in Jones' office and an associate of Yang Liu's, or the donations made to Labour by Liu, so I can't prove Jones is corrupt. But I don't believe he's incompetent, and that leaves to my mind only the possibility of a criminal motive. Finding the evidence of that is impossible, under New Zealand's current law enforcement structure.

The New Zealand Police Headquarters, as established in a series of investigations last year, is essentially corrupt. The Police top brass cannot be trusted by either the public or the new government.

The Serious Fraud Office, recently rescued from being swallowed up by Police Headquarters, potentially could investigate corruption at this level, but it

may not have the complete legal powers necessary.

John Key's new government is left with only one choice via two pathways: to either establish a brand new Independent Commission Against Corruption, similar to the law enforcement agencies found in jurisdictions like Hong Kong or Australia, or to dramatically upscale the existing SFO to become an ICAC.

There is no way the New Zealand Police, and in particular Deputy Commissioner Rob Pope or Commissioner Howard Broad, should be allowed anywhere near such an agency, except perhaps to be invited in for questioning.

Setting up an ICAC would rescue the National Government from taking personal responsibility for every major scandal that breaks. It would be a recognition that New Zealand's law enforcement structure has matured to meet the needs of a modern 21st century democracy; that we've shaken off the naïve Pollyanna doctrine which tries to convince the public we don't have corruption. Take it as a point of logic: if we have serious and complex fraud, we also have corruption.

And as for Shane Jones, he's now a lame duck shadow minister. His leadership aspirations are ruined—if he could make that decision on Yang Liu in the face of the evidence, what else is he capable of?

Every day that Labour leader Phil Goff hangs onto Jones is one day more that the stench of this scandal will drag Goff's credibility down with it.

There are more torpedoes already in the water. Tonight's is merely the first in a series of explosions.

SUBSCRIBE TO TGIF!

THE REVELATIONS ON THE FRONT PAGE OF TONIGHT'S TGIF EDITION LEAVE NO WRIGGLE-ROOM ANYMORE, NO HOPE OF POLITICAL ESCAPE. FOR LABOUR'S SHANE JONES, UP TILL NOW A HIGH FLYER, THE GAME'S OVER, HIS CAREER EFFECTIVELY FINISHED

Comment

Alliance of civilisational hypocrites

By Joel Brinkley

If you are the undisputed monarch of a wealthy nation, you probably think you can say or do most anything without repercussion. But when King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia stood before the United Nations late last week to proclaim his opposition to "religious intolerance," anyone listening would have to think: Of all the gall!

Abdullah actually sponsored last week's event: a U.N. conference on interfaith dialogue on the 'Alliance of Civilisations' theme. The amazing thing is that any Saudi who advocates "interfaith dialogue" is likely to be arrested, tried and executed—beheaded by sword.

President Bush was among the heads of state who attended Abdullah's conference. Oh, the price we have to pay to assure an uninterrupted supply of oil. Abdullah's "interfaith dialogue" is the most compelling recent argument for launching a major new program to achieve energy independence.

Abdullah didn't simply wake up one morning and decide to promote religious plurality. Even the conference's origins were cynical. Remember, last spring, when a senior Saudi cleric who is a member of Abdullah's government issued a fatwa calling for the execution of two journalists? In their newspaper, they had suggested that religions other than Islam are worthy of respect.

They haven't been killed, but not surprisingly the fatwa caused a stir—another case when the world happened to notice one of the unconscionable acts in the name of religion that the Saudi government commits day after day. (Remember another one, the court decision a year ago to administer 200 lashes to a woman who had been gang raped? The White House, ignoring the oil for a moment, called the ruling "outrageous.")

Abdullah could not easily interfere with a religious edict. So instead he decided to rise above the fray last spring and call for this conference. No one at the United Nations chose to discuss Saudi Arabia's own record of religious bigotry. So allow me.

Saudi Arabia, it happens, is the world's most intolerant state on religious matters. Sure, many other nations are guilty of atrocities committed in the name of religion. We humans have a long and sorry history of that. Today, however, only in Saudi Arabia are these rules institutionalized on such a broad scale—and enforced. Consider a few recent decisions both amusing and grave.

Last summer, the kingdom banned the ownership of cats and dogs. Why on earth? It turns out that the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (a.k.a., the religious police) found that men out walking their dogs were apt to chat with a woman they happened to pass in the park.

Othman al-Othman, general manager of the religious police, told the Saudi paper *Al-Hayat* that he wanted to staunch "the rising phenomenon of men using cats and dogs to make passes at women." Imagine!

At least violations of this new rule are not punishable by execution. Satellite-television operators are not so fortunate. In September, the state's Supreme Judiciary Council called for death by sword for satellite TV operators who air "shows that contain obvious heresy and promote licentiousness and wantonness," as one of the clerics put it. The programs that so offended the sheiks, it seemed, were Turkish soap operas quite popular in Saudi Arabia.

So far, no satellite television programmers have fallen under the sword—not because of any reticence in Saudi Arabia to use capital punishment for religious "crimes." The kingdom, in fact, holds a lust for the death penalty (much like Texas and some other states).

Amnesty International, in a report published last month, found that Saudi Arabia has one of the world's highest rates of execution, as measured per capita—at least 158 last year. Many of the condemned are found guilty of religious crimes. Amnesty cited several cases, among them:

► Mustafa Ibrahim, an Egyptian working as a pharmacist in Arar, who was arrested and beheaded because he had been observed carrying a copy of the

Quran to read in the bathroom.

► Sabri Bogday, a Turkish owner of a barbershop in Jeddah, who was overheard "swearing at the Lord in public." The court sentenced him to death.

► An unnamed Indian woman, a mother of four, who was convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning for getting pregnant after her husband died.

In his address to the U.N. conference, Abdullah implored: "We say today with a single voice that the religions through which Almighty God sought to bring happiness to mankind should not be turned into instruments to cause misery."

If only the king would follow his own advice.

Joel Brinkley is a former Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent for The New York Times and now a professor of journalism at Stanford University.



LAST SUMMER, THE KINGDOM BANNED THE OWNERSHIP OF CATS AND DOGS. WHY ON EARTH? IT TURNS OUT THAT THE COMMISSION FOR THE PROMOTION OF VIRTUE AND THE PREVENTION OF VICE (A.K.A., THE RELIGIOUS POLICE) FOUND THAT MEN OUT WALKING THEIR DOGS WERE APT TO CHAT WITH A WOMAN THEY HAPPENED TO PASS IN THE PARK

The future of newspapers: moving beyond dead trees

By Rupert Murdoch

ABC AUSTRALIA BOYER LECTURES, 16 NOV – Today I would like to talk with you about a subject that always gets certain journalists going: the future of newspapers, and it's a subject that has a relevance far beyond the feverish, sometimes insecure collection of egos and energy that is the journalistic profession.

Too many journalists seem to take a perverse pleasure in ruminating on their pending demise. I know industries that are today facing stiff new competition from the internet: banks, retailers, phone companies, and so on. But these sectors also see the internet as an extraordinary opportunity. But among our journalistic friends are some misguided cynics who are too busy writing their own obituary to be excited by the opportunity.

Self-pity is never pretty. And sometimes it even starts in journalism school – some of which are perpetuating the pessimism of their tribal elders. But I have a very different view.

Unlike the doom and gloomers, I believe that newspapers will reach new heights. In the 21st century, people are hungrier for information than ever before. And they have more sources of information than ever before.

Amid these many diverse and competing voices, readers want what they've always wanted: a source they can trust. That has always been the role of great newspapers in the past. And that role will make newspapers great in the future.

If you discuss the future with newspapermen, you will find that too many think that our business is only physical newspapers. I like the look and feel of newsprint as much as anyone. But our real business isn't printing on dead trees. It's giving our readers great journalism and great judgment.

It's true that in the coming decades, the printed versions of some newspapers will lose circulation. But if papers provide readers with news they can trust, we'll see gains in circulation – on our web pages, through our RSS feeds, in emails delivering customised news and advertising, to mobile phones.

In short, we are moving from news *papers* to news *brands*. For all of my working life, I have believed that there is a social and commercial value in delivering accurate news and information in a cheap and timely way. In this coming century, the form of delivery may change, but the potential audience for our content will multiply many times over.

The news business is very personal for me. For more than a half century, newspapers have been at the heart of my business. If I am sceptical about the pessimists today, it's because of a simple reason: I have heard their morose soothsaying many times before.

The challenges are real. There will probably never be a paperless office, but young people are starting paperless homes. Traditional sources of revenue – such as classifieds – are drying up, putting pressure on the business model. And journalists face new competition from alternative sources of news and information.

My summary of the way some of the established media has responded to the internet is this: it's not newspapers that might become obsolete. It's some of the editors, reporters, and proprietors who are forgetting a newspaper's most precious asset: the bond with its readers.

When I was growing up, this was the key lesson my father impressed on me. If you were an owner, the best thing you could do was to hire editors who looked out for your readers' interests – and give these readers good honest reporting on issues that mattered most to them. In return, you would be rewarded with trust and loyalty you could take to the bank.

Over many decades in newspapers, I have been privileged to witness history being made and printed almost every night. Today I'd like to talk about what these experiences have taught me – and

why they give me confidence about the future.

My intent is to use my experience to illuminate the way we need to respond to the two most serious challenges facing newspapers today. The first is the competition that is coming from new technology – especially the internet.

The more serious challenge is the complacency and condescension that festers at the heart of some newsrooms. The complacency stems from having enjoyed a monopoly – and now finding they have to compete for an audience they once took for granted.

The condescension that many show their readers is an even bigger problem. It takes no special genius to point out that if you are contemptuous of your customers, you are going to have a hard time getting them to buy your product. Newspapers are no exception.

I became an editor and owner well before I had planned. It happened when my father died, and I was called home from Oxford. That was how I found myself a newspaper proprietor at the age of 22. I was so young and so new to the business, when I pulled my car into the lot on my first day, the garage attendant admonished me, 'Hey, sonny, you can't park here.'

That paper was *The Adelaide News*. Its newsroom was a noisy place. But it was noise with purpose. The chattering and pounding of typewriter keys reached a crescendo in the minutes before a deadline that was stretched beyond breaking point by gun reporters determined to get the latest, freshest version of a story.

That background music created an urgency all of its own. When the presses began to run, everyone in the building felt the rumble. And when the presses were late, the journalists felt *me* rumble.

Today the challenge we face is different. In some ways, it is a direct attack on our judgment.

It used to be that a handful of editors could decide what was news – and what was not. They acted as sort of demigods. If they ran a story, it became news. If they ignored an event, it never happened.

Today editors are losing this power. The internet, for example, provides access to thousands of new sources that cover things an editor might ignore. And if you aren't satisfied with that, you can start up your own blog and cover and comment on the news yourself.

Journalists like to think of themselves as watchdogs, but they haven't always responded well when the public calls them to account.

When Dan Rather broadcast his story suggesting President Bush had evaded service during his days in the National Guard, bloggers quickly exposed the dubious nature of his sources and documents.

Far from celebrating this citizen journalism, the establishment media reacted defensively. During an appearance on Fox News, a CBS executive attacked the bloggers in a statement that will go down in the annals of arrogance.

'60 Minutes,' he said, was a professional organisation with 'multiple layers of checks and balances.' By contrast, he dismissed the blogger as 'a guy sitting in his living room in his pajamas writing.' But eventually it was the guys sitting in their pajamas who forced Mr Rather and his producer to resign.

Mr. Rather and his defenders are not alone. A recent American study reported that many editors and reporters simply do not trust their readers to make good decisions. Let's be clear about what this means. This is a polite way of saying that these editors and reporters think their readers are too stupid to think for themselves.

By taking their audience for granted and allowing themselves to become as institutionalised as any government or company they write about, these journalists are threatening their own papers. It is simply extraordinary that so many who are privileged to sit in the front row and write the first account of history could be so immune to its obvious meaning – not to mention the consequences for

their own industry.

I see the same thing every day.

Instead of finding stories that are relevant to their readers' lives, papers run stories reflecting their own interests. Instead of writing for their audience, they are writing for their fellow journalists. And instead of commissioning stories that will gain them readers, some editors commission stories whose sole purpose is the quest for a prize.

When I started out in the business, anyone who dared parade a prize for excellence would have been hooted out of the newsroom for taking himself too seriously. But today the desire for awards has become a fetish. Papers may be losing money, losing circulation, and laying off people left and right. But they will have a wall full of awards – prisoners of the past rather than enthusiasts for the future.

Readers want news as much as they ever did. Today *The Times* of London is read by a diverse global audience of 26 million people each month. That is an audience larger than the entire population of Australia – an audience whose sheer size is beyond the comprehension and ambitions of its founders in 1785. That single statistic tells you that there is a discerning audience for news.

The operative word is discerning. To compete today, you can't offer the old one-size-fits-all approach to news.

The defining digital trend in content is the increasing sophistication of search. You can already customise your news flow, whether by country, company or subject. A decade from now, the offerings will be even more sophisticated. You will be able to satisfy your unique interests and search for unique content.

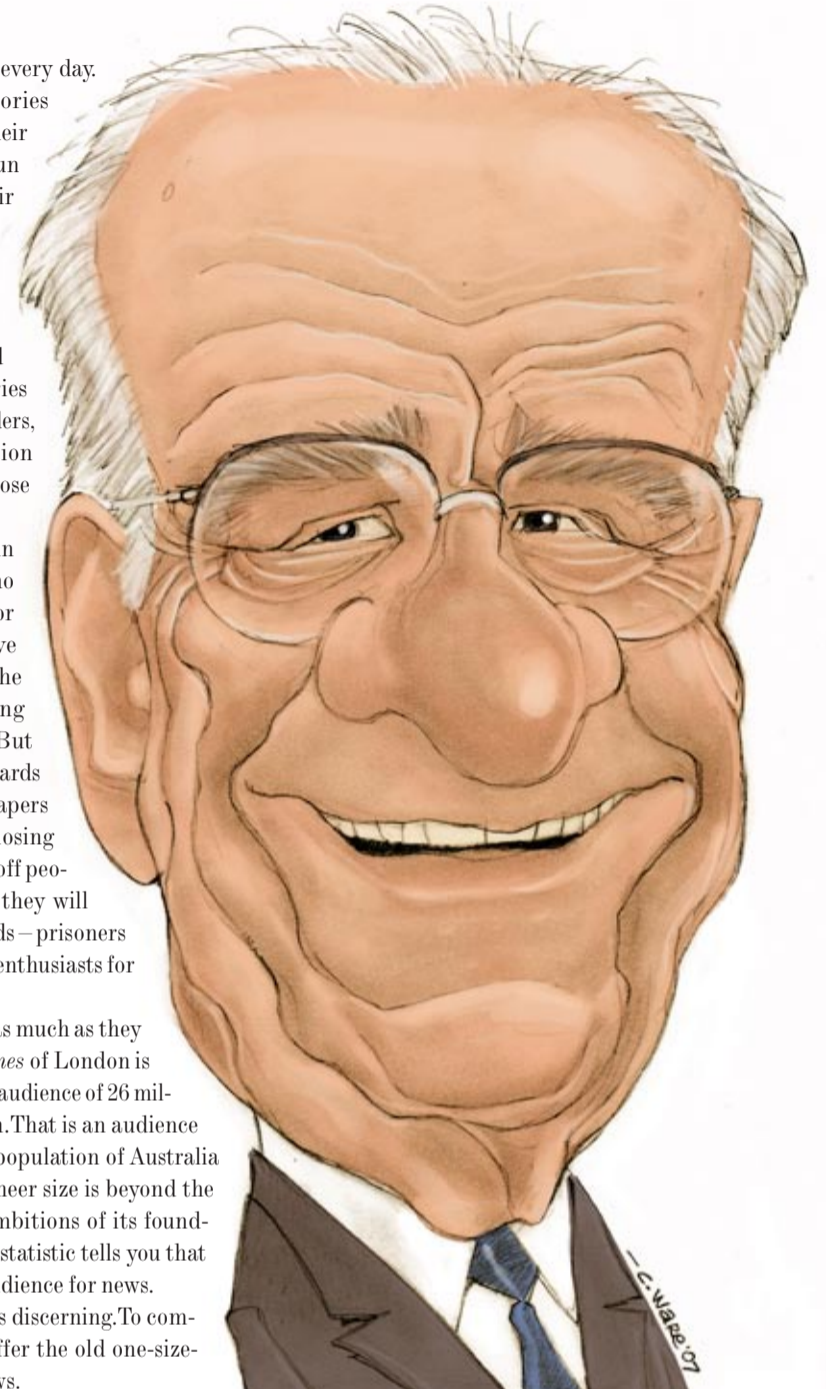
The challenge is to use a newspaper's brand while allowing readers to personalise the news for themselves – and then deliver it in the ways that they want.

This is what we are now trying to do at *The Wall Street Journal* by offering three tiers of content. The first will be the news that we put online for free. The second will be available for those who subscribe to *wsj.com*. And the third will be a premium service, designed to give its customers the ability to customise high-end financial news and analysis from around the world.

In all we do, we're going to deliver it in ways that best fit our readers' preferences: on web pages they can access from home or work on still evolving inventions like Amazon's *kindle* as well as on cell phones or blackberries.

In the end, we are left with where we began: the bond of trust between readers and their paper. Much has changed since I walked into the *Adelaide News* in 1954. Presses have never been faster or more flexible. We have computers that allow you to lay out multiple pages in multiple countries. We have faster distribution. But none of it will mean anything for newspapers unless we meet our first responsibility: earning the trust and loyalty of our readers.

I do not claim to have all the answers. Given the realities of modern technology, this very radio address can be sliced and digitally diced. It can be accessed in a day or a month or a decade. And I can rightly be held to account in perpetuity for the points on which I am proven wrong – as well as



IT'S TRUE THAT IN THE COMING DECADES, THE PRINTED VERSIONS OF SOME NEWSPAPERS WILL LOSE CIRCULATION. .BUT IF PAPERS PROVIDE READERS WITH NEWS THEY CAN TRUST, WE'LL SEE GAINS IN CIRCULATION – ON OUR WEB PAGES, THROUGH OUR RSS FEEDS, IN EMAILS DELIVERING CUSTOMISED NEWS AND ADVERTISING, TO MOBILE PHONES

mocked for my inability to see just how much more different the world had become.

But I don't think I will be proven wrong on one point. The newspaper, or a very close electronic cousin, will always be around. It may not be thrown on your front doorstep the way it is today. But the thud it makes as it lands will continue to echo around society and the world.

Thank you for listening.

Note: this transcript has been abridged. The full lecture can be heard here

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Global uncertainty breeds trouble

By Peter Curson

US Intelligence officials are currently warning that the intensifying world financial crisis could have long-term security implications and impact on US defences. As recently reported in *The Washington Post*, US analysts say that the current economic turmoil has heightened the risk of terrorist attacks and threatened the political viability of 'friendly' regimes such as Pakistan.

Underlying such comments is a deep concern for increasing regional instability and for the decline of US and Western power in a 'new' world geopolitical system. The current economic crisis has also heightened US security concerns about China, which despite the recession eating into its export trade and creating significant job losses, still continues to experience considerable domestic growth.

Therein lays the crux of the US problem. The financial crisis has ushered in a process which will ultimately see global power shift away from the US to a group of emerging states. China is seen as the major inheritor of this global geopolitical crown and will most likely outpace the US to become the world's dominant economic and political force within a decade.

But while the current economic crisis may tilt the global geopolitical scales away from the West, it is not only China that will benefit. Countries such as India and Brazil are also likely to become military and economic powerhouses over the next few decades (with authoritarian Russia watching in the wings), further eroding US and Western influence, particularly in Asia and Latin America.

It is not without note that at the recent formal

dinner for the G20 conference President Bush placed the Presidents of Brazil and China on each side of him at the table. But it is not only the current economic crisis that is producing economic and geopolitical change but also current demographic trends which have seen many Western societies age rapidly with extremely low fertility levels and the threat of declining populations.

While China and many parts of the developing world are also experiencing some of these trends, sheer population size matters and perhaps overrides all else.

Should New Zealand and Australia be concerned about such developments and in particular, a possible shift in geopolitical power away from the US and Western countries? How might such developments impact on our security?

In the case of Australia does it face a crisis with the regional world of Islam and do Moslems in the Asia Pacific see Australia as only a local extension of US regional policy? Quite possibly we are looking at a Chinese Pacific Ocean and a substantial growth of Chinese economic aid and assistance to numerous Pacific micro states.

Over the next decade will New Zealand and Australia be comfortable with their traditional Pacific role being 'usurped' by a 'Chinese invader'? More significantly, in the short term will the current economic downturn produce in our neighbours what the US currently fears in Pakistan – insolvency, violent insurgencies, suicide bombings and increasing radicalism? Might we also see increasing food and energy prices and widespread poverty and unemployment encouraging anger, desperation and



Quite possibly we are looking at a Chinese Pacific Ocean and a substantial growth of Chinese economic aid and assistance to numerous Pacific micro states

ultimately civil unrest among disenchanted youth in countries like Indonesia? Will such youth automatically turn to extremists and terrorism?

In the US Security World, weak and failing states are not to be ignored and pose as great a danger to regional peace as do strong expansionist states. Yet formal intervention holds many terrors as the war in Afghanistan clearly demonstrates.

Al-Qa'ida has recently made much of the global economic recession claiming that it is evidence of the decline of the West and that it only requires a

gentle nudge from jihadists to tumble countries like the US over the precipice.

Are there groups 'in waiting' in our region ready to take up this challenge? Will ethnic diasporas help transmit Islamic militancy to New Zealand and Australia? There are many issues facing our security over the next few decades. Hopefully, we can satisfactorily address some of them.

Peter Curson is Professor in Population & Security, at the Centre for International Security Studies, Faculty of Economics & Business, the University of Sydney. He is also a *TGIF Edition* subscriber

Walker's World: Bailing out Detroit

By Martin Walker

WASHINGTON – The squabbling in the U.S. Congress over whether to bail out a faltering General Motors appears to be arguing from ideology and emotion rather than cold, hard facts.

Republicans are shy of federal bailouts, and Democrats are appalled by the prospect of job losses that go far beyond the 240,000 people directly employed by Detroit's Big Three of GM, Ford and Chrysler. Another 644,000 work in companies that supply components to Detroit, and they in turn help employ a total of some 3 million Americans in the steel, plastics, computer, glass and tyre industries.

But here are the facts that Congress is missing. First, the Republicans do not seem to understand that a GM bankruptcy would not save money for the U.S. economy. The healthcare and pension obligations would simply shift to state welfare, Medicare and Medicaid and the pension guarantee system.

There are 479,000 retirees getting GM pensions. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. pays out a maximum of US\$40,000 a year to each one, or US\$20 billion a year for them all. That is what Uncle Sam would have to start paying if GM folds, so in that context a US\$25 billion loan to GM looks rather more sensible.

Second, a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing would likely hit sales hard, as consumers fear that multi-year warranties and their local dealerships and future supplies of spare parts might not be reliable.

Third, there is a strategic aspect to the U.S. auto industry. It is a critical part of the national industrial base and the economy as a whole, as well as the defence sector.

Although GM no longer plays the heroic role it did in World War II, since even modern military trucks are too specialized for Detroit, the Pentagon has some concerns here. Detroit is the key partner in the Army's Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Centre and the Fuel Efficient Ground Vehicle Demonstrator Project. Detroit Diesel and ArvinMeritor are irreplaceable links in the military's long supply chain.

Fourth, GM outside the United States is not a bas-



ket case. It is profitable in Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. GM upped its profits in Europe by 65 percent last year – the best it's done across the Atlantic since 1996. GM also posted records in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In China, GM leads all automakers in sales. In 2007 volume sales rose 20 percent for GM in China compared with 2006, and GM became the first manufacturer to sell 1 million vehicles in China.

This may not last. Opel, the German wing of GM, is applying to the Berlin government and to Brussels for restructuring aid under the European Union's proposed scheme to help its auto industries retool for a green future. But Opel, like the British wing of GM known as Vauxhall, is looking hard at buyout options.

Even in these days of a car glut, they should have little trouble finding investors. Cash-rich oil-exporting nations might find GM's European operations a useful fit. Consider, for example, the marketing possibilities of free gasoline for a year from the Kuwaiti-owned Q8 chain of gas stations.

Fifth, the world is not going to stop buying cars. Quite the reverse; the growing wealth of the devel-

oping world means a boom is on the way. There are now 800 million vehicles on the world's roads; by 2020 there are expected to be 1.5 billion, with strong growth in China, India and other emergent markets. Congress might ask itself whether this future market is too attractive to be left to non-U.S. manufacturers.

Of course, the prospect of 1.5 billion gas-powered automobiles is a daunting one for the environment. But in the Volt, GM has an electric-powered (but still hybrid) car coming to market within 18 months that could become a market leader. Ford and Chrysler have hybrid vehicles already, and fully electric and fuel-cell cars are in development. Is this to go to waste, or to be bought up cheaply in a bankruptcy sale by a Chinese or Indian manufacturer?

Sixth, it is important to remember that GM and Ford are well advanced on the restructuring path, after new agreements with the labour unions, improved quality and models, and ongoing reform of its sprawling dealer network. GM's deal with the United Auto Workers union to fund a voluntary employee beneficiary association has ended its \$50 billion liability in unfunded benefits. This has

already saved GM \$5 billion. Moreover, healthcare reform, a likely priority of the incoming Obama administration, could shift the remaining burden of health costs from companies to a national insurance system that should further relieve the auto industry's current high cost structure.

Congress should also remember that what had been a belated but credible rebuilding effort by the industry was ambushed by the Crash of '08, which sent U.S. new car and truck sales down from 16 million in 2007 to 13 million this year. GM's current North American operating costs of \$31 billion a year at its 24 plants need to be slashed by at least a third. This is happening. Three plants are already slated for closure.

More needs to be done. Another five probably should go, along with doomed brands like Pontiac, GMC and maybe Saturn. GM's sprawling and swollen dealership network needs heavy pruning, which means heavy costs for ending contracts. (A bankruptcy would save those costs but bring local misery to some 4,000 small-town dealerships across the country.)

Finally, if Congress decides against a bailout for GM, this need not be the end of the world. Remember the U.K. experience, after Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher refused further subsidies to British Leyland, the last U.K.-owned major manufacturer. The United Kingdom now manufactures and exports more cars than it did then and employs more people in the car industry. Given the manufacturing presence of Honda, Toyota, BMW, Mercedes and Hyundai, the U.K. experience may well be repeated in the United States, even if Ford and GM collapse.

And at today's rock-bottom prices, with the current share price meaning that Ford and GM both could be bought for less than \$10 billion, quite a few foreign companies will be interested in the modernized plants, the Volt car and the dealership network. The only question is whether Congress wants the United States to stay in the mass-market auto industry. Lots of other countries will be only too keen to take over.

– UPI

Intelligence study sees risks in global power shift

By Jonathan S. Landay
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — The risks of a Middle East nuclear arms race and wars over shrinking resources will increase in the next 20 years as the world is reshaped by a loss of U.S. power, a shift of wealth from West to East, the rise of India and China, climate change and a soaring population, a U.S. intelligence study said this afternoon.

The current economic upheaval could accelerate those trends, but it's unlikely to trigger "a complete breakdown" in the post-World War II international financial and political order, said the report, "Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World."

The new report expands on a theme already widely noted: the transformation of the international political and economic order that was established and dominated by the U.S. since the end of World War II in 1945.

"The international system — as constructed following the Second World War — will be almost unrecognizable by 2025 owing to the rise of emerging powers, a globalizing economy, an historic transfer of relative wealth and economic power from West to East, and the growing influence of non-state actors," the report said.

"However, the next 20 years of transition toward a new international system are fraught with risks," the study said. "The rapidly changing international order at a time of growing geopolitical challenges increases the likelihood of discontinuities, shocks and surprises."



The report, the fourth in a series that examines the factors that could shape international developments, was produced by the National Intelligence Council, which is composed of the U.S. intelligence community's top analysts.

The studies have been timed to coincide with the advent of new administrations and aim "to stimulate strategic thinking" about possible directions the world will take and actions that could "alleviate if

not solve" problems, Thomas Fingar, the NIC chairman, said at a news media briefing today.

"We could have a better world in 2025," he said.

The new study offers a grimmer assessment of the threat of major global shocks, such as terrorists obtaining and using a nuclear weapon than did the last such report, published in December 2004, which considered how the world might look in 2020.

The study, however, also projects that a world now

dominated by fossil fuels petroleum will transition to cleaner energy sources.

Both reports, however, consider globalization such a "pervasive" influence on global developments that "it will reorder current divisions based on geography, ethnicity and religious and socio-economic status."

ON THE WEB

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The international system — as constructed following the Second World War — will be almost unrecognizable by 2025 owing to the rise of emerging powers, a globalizing economy, an historic transfer of relative wealth and economic power from West to East

Obama calls disciples for new world order

By Frank Greve

WASHINGTON — President-elect Barack Obama's 3 million campaign volunteers got re-enlistment notices this week.

Campaign manager David Plouffe, in a mass e-mail sent yesterday to former workers, asked how much time they can spare for four missions integral to Obama's effort to transform his victory into a broader political movement.

The volunteers' options are, Plouffe wrote:

- Campaign for progressive state and local candidates

- Undertake grassroots local efforts to advance Obama's agenda

- Train others in Obama's organizing techniques
- Focus on local political issues.

"Obama's building a political machine," said Stephen Hess, a presidential scholar at the Brookings Institution, a center-left Washington research group.

"These people have just opened up a new world for politics," added Hess, the author of "What Do We Do Now?: A Workbook for the President-Elect."

Pre-Internet presidents, he said, lacked the ability to communicate in real time with masses of their volunteers. In addition, the social networks such as

MySpace and Facebook that link Obama's army together didn't exist.

The net effect was that pre-Obama political machines grew out of local politics and remained rooted there. Statewide or presidential candidates relied largely on local leaders' support.

Not so Obama, who, at least for now, has the allegiance of thousands of volunteers in most if not all congressional districts.

"Your hard work built this movement," Plouffe wrote them. "Now it's up to you to decide how we move forward."

His four-page questionnaire also asks respondents

to name their top-priority issues out of 27 listed. The options included environment and global warming, civil rights and voting rights, war in Iraq, jobs and trade, or divisive politics and partisanship.

Plouffe also invited volunteers to identify their proudest campaign accomplishment and, separately, to name a fellow volunteer or field organizer who inspired them.

In the hallmark of a campaign that ran on small donations, volunteers are once again invited to make a financial contribution. This time it's to the Obama-Biden transition effort.

— MCT

Car rescue plan sunk by jets

By David Lightman

McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — If there's a single moment that explains why Congress refused this morning to give the ailing American auto industry immediate help, it came the day before when Rep. Brad Sherman asked company executives to raise their hands if they'd flown to the nation's capital on commercial airlines.

No hands went up.

Then the California Democrat asked the heads of General Motors, Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler LLC, who were testifying before the House Financial Services Committee on Wednesday, whether they were planning to sell their corporate jets and fly home commercial.

Again, no hands went up.

Industry spokesmen explained later that they have travel policies to follow and safety considerations, but the public relations damage had been done.

"I know it wasn't planned, but these guys flying in their big corporate jets doesn't send a good message to people in Searchlight, Nevada, or Las Vegas or Reno or any place in this country," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said today.

He and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., agreed to delay until next month consideration of aid to Detroit's automakers after finding that they lacked the votes for even a last-minute compromise on a \$25 billion loan.

"Until we can see a plan where the auto industry is held accountable and a plan for viability on how they go into the future ... until they show us the plan, we cannot show them the money," Pelosi said.

Their decision, reached at a hastily called private early afternoon meeting, came after nearly a week of tension among congressional lawmakers, the White House and the industry.

They all agreed that the carmakers need help, and the executives warned Congress that their industry could collapse within weeks without it. Economists disagree about whether that necessarily would devastate the Midwest and U.S. economies or whether conventional bankruptcy might be a better solution, but the chance of devastation is real.

However, several developments converged to make it impossible for lawmakers to cut a \$25 billion check, factors that are still likely to be present next month.

Lawmakers found that their constituents are increasingly leery of October's \$700 billion financial rescue passage. In the past few weeks, its uses have been questioned, and last week, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson changed the plan's direction, saying that he wouldn't use the money to buy troubled mortgages and bad assets, but instead would try to help unregulated financial institutions that aren't banks but are important to consumer lending.

"There's a lot of scepticism in Pennsylvania and across the nation about the \$700 billion, because

of the lack of results," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa. Constituents were saying that carving out \$25 billion to help automakers, as many Democrats wanted to do, seemed to add another unfathomable layer to an already murky endeavour.

Also helping to derail momentum for the auto aid was President-elect Barack Obama's comment Sunday on CBS' "60 Minutes" that help for the auto industry "can't be a blank check." He urged the White House, Congress and the industry to develop a plan for the aid.

When lawmakers returned to Washington on Monday for their lame-duck session, some Democrats echoed that view.

"Unless there is a new business plan," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., "we'll be right back where we are. What's happened in the industry hasn't been abrupt."

Supporters of aiding the carmakers thought that those questions would be answered Wednesday and Thursday when the auto executives and United Auto Workers President Ronald Gettelfinger testified before con-

gressional committees.

Instead, many lawmakers grew angrier.

"They just weren't saying anything," Senate Banking Committee Chairman Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., said after the hearings.

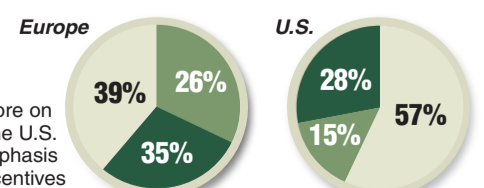
Top-earning executives

How much CEOs of top U.S. and European companies were paid in 2007:

CEO	Company	Salary, \$ millions	Bonus, \$ millions	Long-term incentives, \$ millions
Europe				
A. Sarin	Vodafone	2.3	3.5	8.3
J.P. Garnier	GlaxoSmithKline	1.6	3.2	6.4
Lord Brown	BP	2.8	1.6	6.2
J. van der Veer	Royal Dutch Shell	2	2.5	3.7
P. Scaroni	ENI	1.8	2.8	5.3
U.S.				
E.E. Whitacre Jr.	AT&T	1.9	6.2	15.2
A.G. Lafley	Procter & Gamble	1.6	5.6	15.5
C. Prince	Citigroup	0.9	12.1	8.6
J.R. Immelt	General Electric	3	4.6	13.3
K.D. Lewis	Bank of America	1.4	6	13.3

Typical packages

While Europe concentrates more on fixed salaries, the U.S. places huge emphasis on long-term incentives



Source: Hay Group Graphic: Scott Bell

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Syria developing nukes, says U.N. watchdog group

By Jonathan S. Landay

WASHINGTON — A Syrian facility that Israel bombed last year had similarities to a nuclear reactor and chemically processed uranium particles were found at the site, but a final determination can't be made until Syria provides "the necessary transparency," a new U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency report says.

"The onus of this investigation is on Syria," said a senior U.N. official, who requested anonymity because the report is confidential.

A separate IAEA report says that Iran has persisted in stymieing the agency's probe of its nuclear program and continues to defy U.N. Security Council demands to suspend uranium enrichment, a process that can produce fuel for nuclear weapons.

"There is no communication whatsoever, no progress regarding possible military dimensions of their (Iran's) program," the senior U.N. official said.

The reports served as stark reminders of one of the thorniest security issues that will confront President-elect Barack Obama — global nuclear proliferation — particularly Iran's refusal to suspend the uranium enrichment program that it kept secret for 18 years.

Iran says that it's legally producing low-enriched uranium fuel for power reactors; U.S. and other Western officials contend that Tehran is pursuing the capability to make highly enriched uranium used in the explosive cores of nuclear bombs.

Iran has refused to halt its enrichment program despite being hit with three rounds of U.N. economic sanctions and punitive measures by the United States and the European Union.

The nuclear watchdog's director general, Mohamed ElBaradei, submitted the confidential reports to the agency's 35-nation board of governors. Copies were posted on a blog, www.armscontrolwonk.com.

The IAEA opened an inquiry into the Dair Alzour site in eastern Syria after the United States charged in April that the facility, which was destroyed in a September 2007 Israeli airstrike, was an undeclared nuclear reactor that was being built with North Korean help to produce plutonium for bombs.



DAMASCUS CONTENDS THAT THE DESTROYED BUILDING WAS AN UNUSED NON-NUCLEAR MILITARY FACILITY. IT SAYS THAT IT LACKS THE TRAINED MANPOWER AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS TO HAVE RUN SUCH A REACTOR

U.S. officials said that satellite pictures, photos taken inside the semi-completed facility — also known as Al Kibar — before it was bombed and other information showed that the building was a copy of the British-designed natural uranium-powered reactor that North Korea built at its main nuclear complex at Yongbyon.

The Bush administration provided the IAEA with the materials on which the U.S. assessment was based.

"It cannot be excluded" that the Syrian facility "was intended for non-nuclear use," the IAEA report says.

However, it continues, "The features of the build-

ing . . . along with the connectivity of the site to adequate pumping capacity of cooling water, are similar to what may be found in connection with a reactor site."

Pre-attack photographs show a "containment structure (that) appears to have been similar in dimension and layout to that required for a biological shield for nuclear reactors, and the overall size of the building was sufficient to house the equipment needed for a nuclear reactor of the type alleged" by the United States, the report says.

It also says that dirt samples taken from the site by IAEA inspectors who visited in June contained "a significant number of natural uranium particles."

An analysis of the particles found that they were "produced as a result of chemical processing," the report says.

Syria is required by an accord with the IAEA to inform the agency six months before it begins building a nuclear reactor.

Damascus contends that the destroyed building was an unused non-nuclear military facility. It says that it lacks the trained manpower and other requirements to have run such a reactor.

Satellite pictures taken after the Israeli strike showed that the remains of the facility were demolished and then buried or carted away, and a shed-like building was erected over the site.

The report criticizes Israel for its "unilateral use of force," the Bush administration for waiting seven months after the attack to turn over information on the site to the agency and Syria for the "removal of the remains," all of which made the IAEA inquiry "more difficult and complex."

Syria told the IAEA inspectors that the uranium particles had come from missiles fired in the Israeli airstrike, and it refused them access to three other sites that satellite photographs provided by an IAEA member nation showed might have been related to Dair Alzour, the report says.

The senior U.N. official said the particles weren't depleted uranium, a substance used in hardened military munitions, and a second U.N. official said that one of the closed locations is thought to contain debris removed from Dair Alzour that inspectors want to test.

"The director general has called on Syria to provide the necessary transparency, including allowing visits to the requested locations and access to all available information for the agency to complete its assessment," the report says, noting that Damascus also has failed to provide the inspectors with documents related to the suspected reactor.

The IAEA also urged Israel to cooperate in the investigation.

ON THE WEB

[The IAEA report on Syria](#)

[The IAEA report on Iran](#)

— MCT



Judge orders release of five Guantanamo detainees

By Marisa Taylor

WASHINGTON — In the first ruling of its kind, a federal judge ordered the speedy release today of five Algerian men after concluding the government didn't have the evidence to hold them for nearly seven years in Guantanamo Bay prison.

The decision by U.S. District Judge Richard Leon, who was appointed by President George W. Bush, was the latest setback for the administration's detention policies and could foretell more court-ordered releases.

Leon, however, backed the continued imprisonment of a sixth Algerian from the same group, concluding that the Justice Department had sufficient evidence he was a supporter of al-Qaida.

One of those ordered released is Lakhdar Boumediene, whose appeal to the Supreme Court became the underpinning of a 5-4 decision that gave Guantanamo prisoners the right to challenge their detention in court. Boumediene, 42, had maintained all along that he was a relief worker with the Islamic Red Crescent.

Leon's decision marked the first time that a lower

court has concluded after a habeas corpus hearing that the government lacked evidence to hold Guantanamo detainees as enemy combatants. Now, more than 200 other detainees await similar reviews in Washington's federal court.

Leon said he didn't want his ruling to serve as precedent for upcoming cases. Nonetheless, the decision — issued by a judge who originally supported the government's position — is certain to hearten administration critics who think that many detainees are being held in the prison in Cuba without cause.

In an unusual entreaty, Leon urged the administration not to appeal his order releasing the five men.

"Seven years of waiting for our legal system to give them an answer to a question so important is, in my judgment, more than enough," Leon said.

Anthony D. Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, called the decision "another nail in the coffin of the Bush administration's lawless and failed Guantanamo policies."

The men, natives of Algeria who immigrated to Bosnia more than a decade ago, have been imprisoned without charges because the Bush administration claimed they were enemy combatants in an unconventional war waged by terrorists after Sept. 11, 2001.

While the government said the men had plotted to travel to Afghanistan to fight the U.S. and its allies, Leon found that the government had only offered unsubstantiated information from a single unnamed source as justification to detain the five men.

"To allow enemy (combatant status) to rest on so thin a reed would be inconsistent with the court's obligation," Leon said.

Robert Kirsch, one of the lawyers for the group, described the judge's decision to release the men as a "relief," adding that Bosnia has indicated that it's willing to allow them to return home.

— MCT

Fergie undercover, in trouble

ANKARA — Turkey's social services board filed an official complaint today against a British television documentary in which the Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson bluffed her way into state-run orphanages for disabled children and secretly filmed scenes that she described as horrific, the Anadolu news agency reported.

The official complaint was handed to the Ankara prosecutor's office who will now launch an investigation into whether any crimes were committed by the duchess and British documentary maker Chris Rogers who accompanied her.

The documentary — in which the Duchess visited orphanages in Istanbul and Ankara showed scenes of distressed children tied to chairs with many rocking in a way which is common amongst institutionalized children — was roundly condemned by officials in Turkey with Social Affairs Minister Nimet Cubukcu saying that the Duchess had "bad intentions."

Cubukcu said that to secretly film the disabled children was against Turkish and international law and claimed that the Duchess herself may have tied up the children seen in the documentary.

"It is very clear that Mrs Sarah Ferguson has bad intentions. In the run-up to Turkey's EU Progress Report being announced, due to her being against our EU membership and her calls of 'don't go to Istanbul as a tourist,' she is obviously in a campaign to blacken Turkey's name," Cubukcu told reporters when news of the documentary broke two weeks ago.

Cubukcu said the duchess had tried to create "resentment" by secretly filming inside the orphanages and expressed regret that Turkish media had repeated the claims made in the documentary.

— DPA



According to exit polls, 70 percent of black voters supported the gay marriage ban measure, which has caused friction between gays and blacks.

Gay activists go 'KKK'

By Aurelio Rojas

McClatchy Newspapers

SACRAMENTO, CALIF. — California State Assembly Speaker Karen Bass says she is "appalled" at the hostility that has been directed at African-Americans since the passage of Proposition 8.

According to exit polls, 70 percent of black voters supported the gay marriage ban measure, which has caused friction between gays and blacks.

But during a meeting with The Sacramento Bee's Capitol Bureau, Bass said that lost in the post-mortems over Proposition 8 is that black support for the measure was "a generational issue" that divided younger and older African-Americans.

The Los Angeles Democrat, who is California's highest-ranking African-American elected official, said she was "really appalled at how quickly (the issue) was racialized, and it wasn't even analyzed."

"I have friends in Los Angeles, who are African-Americans in the (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community, and they went out to protest the vote and had racial epithets hurled at them, [by their gay colleagues]," Bass said. "A couple of them

were fearful and they left because they were threatened."

Bass, who opposed Proposition 8, said she was "appalled at how quickly some members of the LGBT leadership went there, as opposed to saying, 'what did we or didn't we do in the campaign?'"

The No on 8 campaign, she said, failed to do enough campaigning in the black community "and the LGBT leadership is looking back at that."

"I do think that people have pulled back a way from some of the hostility — I mean it got out of hand," she said.

Bass said she was contacted by some LGBT "leaders who asked me if I would be helpful in terms of negotiating and mediating."

"I declined because I felt that they were bypassing black LGBT leadership," she said.

The speaker said "there's a lot of healing that needs to take place."

"But I think the first place that the healing needs to happen is in the LGBT community — white and black," she said.

Bass said leaders in the gay community need to do a better job reaching out to blacks.

Zimbabwe limps toward solution

BERLIN — Zimbabwean prime minister-designate Morgan Tsvangirai said Thursday he was confident of an end to the political impasse holding up the formation of a government of national unity.

"We will find a solution. It may take some time, but we will find a solution. The position of President Robert Mugabe is untenable," he said in an interview with Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

Speaking after talks with German officials, he said this would come after issues relating to the definition of the prime minister's powers and the allocation of government ministries had been resolved.

Tsvangirai, who wrested the title of prime minister from Mugabe's ruling party after the opposition won the first parliamentary majority in nearly 30 years, was in Germany to campaign for more support for his country.

Tsvangirai's opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has been in tough negotiations for months, with the assistance of regional leaders, over the makeup of a new government.

But the talks have stalled over who should have control of the home affairs ministry, which is responsible for the police, and whether the president or the prime minister would have the power to dismiss ministers.

On September 15, former South African president Thabo Mbeki got Mugabe, Tsvangirai and MDC breakaway faction leader Arthur Mutambara to sign up to a deal to govern together.

But the deal is on the verge of collapse, as Tsvangirai accuses Mugabe of grabbing all the key ministries for his party, including home affairs, foreign affairs and defence.

Tsvangirai said the MDC wanted an equitable share of the 31 government portfolios that would be distributed if a new coalition is formed.

"We identified 10 ministries we wanted and out



of those finance was the only one that came to us. We can't talk about home affairs because it is still contested.

"We have a deal that offers the people of Zimbabwe the chance of transparency and transition. It is up to Mugabe to stick to it," he said. "We have compromised enough."

German Foreign Ministry official Reinhard Silberberg said after the talks with Tsvangirai that Zimbabwe urgently needed to make a new start, both politically and economically.

He urged Mugabe's Zanu-PF party to play a constructive role in the negotiations.

Mugabe, who has led Zimbabwe since independence from Britain in 1980, has stayed in power using a combination of farm and business seizures to keep supporters happy and brute police and mob terror to silence critics.

The policies have reduced the one-time breadbasket of southern Africa to a mere shadow of its former thriving self.

Tsvangirai blamed Mugabe for a lack of foreign investment in the country.

"On the one hand he wants international support. On the other he wants to cling to power. He cannot have it both ways. You cannot expect us to clean up the mess if we are not given authority," he said.

Germany announced it was donating another 500,000 euros (NZ\$1.1 million) in humanitarian aid to help people overcome the effects of food shortages and lack of medicine.

The prime minister-designate visited France and EU headquarters in Brussels before travelling to Berlin.

From Germany, he flies to South Africa on Friday for a meeting of the Elders — group of leading activists and ex-world leaders that includes former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan and ex-US president Jimmy Carter.

— DPA

Pirates want US\$25 million for tanker

NAIROBI — Somali pirates have demanded 25 million dollars for the release of a Saudi-owned super-tanker seized at the weekend, reports said today.

Mohamed Said, one of the pirates, gave a deadline of ten days for the ransom to be paid, threatening "disastrous" consequences otherwise, Arabic television channel Al-Jazeera reported.

The Sirius Star, which was hijacked some 830 kilometres south-east of the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa, is anchored near the Somali port of Harardhere, one of several pirate strongholds, while ransom negotiations take place.

The ship, which is owned by Vela International Marine Limited, a subsidiary of Saudi Aramco, was carrying a full load of 2 million barrels of oil when it was seized.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal said that the owners were in talks with the pirates and it was their decision to pay the ransom or not.

The 25 crew members, from Britain, Croatia, the Philippines, Poland and Saudi Arabia, are according to the owners all safe, and there are no plans by either the international forces or the Puntland authorities to storm the ship.

Piracy off the Horn of Africa nation has surged in recent months, and the chairman of the African Union said political infighting is feeding the explosion.

Jean Ping linked the piracy surge to a rift within the leadership of Somalia's transitional federal government and called for UN peacekeepers to be deployed in the nation as soon as possible.

"This is a clear indication of the further deterioration of the situation with far reaching consequences for this country, the region and the larger international community," the AU said in a statement late



Thursday evening.

The surge in piracy has coincided with a bloody insurgency in Somalia, where ousted Islamists have been fighting to regain control since early 2007.

The government has not only been too busy fighting the insurgents to worry about piracy, but in recent months has descended into political infighting.

Insurgents have taken advantage of this to seize towns across Somalia and push to the edge of the capital, Mogadishu.

At the same time pirates, based mainly in the semi-autonomous northern region of Puntland, have attacked ships in droves despite the presence of international warships in the Gulf of Aden.

Many shipping lines are now avoiding or considering

avoiding the Gulf of Aden — a busy shipping channel which forms part of the route linking the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal.

Since the Sirius Star was taken, an Iranian cargo ship and a Thai fishing boat have also been seized. The East African Seafarers' Assistance Programme reported that a Greek ship was also hijacked, but the Greek Ministry of Merchant Marine has denied this.

Prior to the latest seizures, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said there had been 92 attempts at piracy in the region this year, 36 of them successful. If the report of a Greek ship being hijacked proves correct, 17 vessels are in the hands of pirates along with over 300 crew.

The Sirius Star is the largest vessel taken by

pirates and represents their most daring raid yet, despite the presence of international warships.

The surge in piracy has prompted increased patrols by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Russia, the US-led coalition forces and France along the Somali coast. The European Union has also authorized a force of between five and seven frigates, which is expected to arrive in the Gulf of Aden early December.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said today during a visit to India that the German Navy would soon decide whether to join the EU mission.

The German parliament, the Bundestag, is to decide in December whether to participate.

Russia also said today it would deploy more warships to Somalia.

"After the Neustrashimy, Russia will be sending warships from other fleets to this region to the region," Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky said, alluding to a warship, the Fearless, now patrolling the coast, news agency Ria-Novosti reported.

An increased naval presence has not deterred the pirates as they pursue huge ransoms, but they have recently started to suffer losses.

The Indian navy said Wednesday that its INS Tabar stealth frigate, which has been deployed in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy surveillance and patrol operations, destroyed a pirate mothership — the first time a pirate mothership has been destroyed.

The seizure of the Sirius Star took place outside the normal danger areas in the Gulf of Aden, prompting anti-piracy officials to warn that the pirates could be changing their tactics in response to the increased warship presence.

— DPA

All Blacks seek key to unlocking defence

By Chris Barclay of NZPA

CARDIFF, NOV 20 – The All Blacks have sought experts on Warren Gatland's coaching philosophy as they seek to prevent the New Zealander ending more than a half century of rugby anguish for Wales here on Saturday.

While New Zealand are overwhelming favourites to edge closer to a third Grand Slam at the Millennium Stadium on Saturday (6.15am Sunday NZT), the All Blacks coaching staff are taking no shortcuts in terms of preparing for a fixture Wales have not won since 1953.

For Graham Henry, Wayne Smith and Steve Hansen there is also the added pressure of not coming unstuck against one of their own – Welsh coach Gatland.

Denying Robbie Deans and Australia the Bledisloe Cup and Tri-Nations was the primary goal this season but losing to Gatland, who also headed off-shore when his All Blacks aspirations were stymied, would take the gloss off a season of redemption for the incumbents.

Like Deans, Gatland has an intimate knowledge of the All Blacks' personnel though that perceived benefit is also a weakness given the former Waikato mentor's strategies are well-known.

New Zealand are yet to concede a try on the test segment of their tour of the UK and Ireland but it is Wales' defensive system that has demanded attention this week – and before the team left Auckland last month.

Assistant coach Smith said he had sought advice on how to circumvent the rush style of defence Gat-



Warren Gatland, Wales coach during the RBS 6 Nations game between Wales and Italy at Millennium Stadium in Cardiff / ZUMA

land brought to New Zealand from English club Wasps before taking it to Wales. The All Blacks have already experienced a suffocating defensive alignment at international level, where line speed is designed to cut down the ball carriers' option.

South Africa employed the style under Jake White, the number of intercept tries snared by Bryan Habana and especially second five-eighth Jean de Villiers was a testament to its effectiveness.

While conceding tries is a risk, constructing them

is also problematic.

"We always managed to get a lot of line breaks against the Boks but we could never finish them off enough," Smith admitted.

"They had a good scrambling D, we've never really been that successful against it.

"We've put a lot of work into it this week – it's good having Stephen Donald and Richard Kahui who have played under Gats and that defensive system.

"You get a feel for what might work but you have

to execute that against what's quite a pressing D."

While the team's Waikato backs have been a source of knowledge – Smith also sought advice from Chiefs coach Ian Foster and former Auckland, and now Blues assistant coach, Shane Howarth.

"I talked to Fozzie (Foster) in terms of what stresses him when he's coaching that defence – and to Howie (Howarth) about how you stress it.

"I noticed Auckland had some good moves against Waikato when Gats was there," Smith said.

Kahui, who takes over from an injured Conrad Smith at centre, felt he had a useful insight into how Wales will play during his first visit to Cardiff.

"It looks as if they're using the blitz defence, I know what that's about," he said.

"We called it risk verses reward. You can put the attacking team under so much pressure with your line speed and getting up – you can hit them behind the gain line, as a defence it can get you in the game – but if it's not done properly it can be a weakness."

The grubber kick, which Kahui employed to great effect in his last test against Scotland, is one option he suggested.

"We know what things work better than others, we've worked through a few things at training," he said.

Meanwhile, the Wales players have followed the example of the Scots and Irish preceding them, speaking optimistically about breaking their particular losing streak – 19 tests since the 13-8 win at Cardiff Arms Park in 1953.

"There's definitely a genuine belief we can beat them. Since the new coaches took over they have made us feel like we can compete with these teams," said fullback Lee Byrne.

Campbell withdraws from Hong Kong

By NZPA special correspondent

HONG KONG, NOV 21 – New Zealander golfer Michael Campbell's immediate playing future is in doubt after he withdrew with a shoulder injury prior to the second round of the Hong Kong Open today.

Campbell at times clutched at his right shoulder during a one-over 71 opening round on the suburban Fanling course yesterday, later revealing that he had been carrying the injury since July's British Open.

"It's always disappointing to have to withdraw from event and this is no exception," Campbell said today.

"But my shoulder has been causing me concern for some time now and it was hurting so much last night I had to call a doctor to my hotel.

"He had a look at it and the good news was that

he said it's all muscular and there's no tearing of the tissue.

"But I have to now look at the bigger picture and while I am due to play next week's Australian Masters, I also see 2009 as a big year for with the new Race to Dubai schedule."

It had been while on a six-week break in Sydney when the injury flared and was starting to creep into his arm.

Campbell was to return to Sydney today and has arranged an MRI scan on his right shoulder for Monday.

"Depending on what the specialist says in Sydney on Monday will determine whether I play in the Australian Masters," Campbell said.

"I'm also entered in the Australian Open (starting in Sydney on December 11) but we'll just have to wait and see.

"In some ways it's come at a bad time but it's also come at a good time because if this had happened around July or August I would have missed a lot of tournaments.

"But if I have to withdraw from the two Australian events at least I will have the Christmas/New Year break to rest and recover before starting afresh in 2009."

Campbell is the second New Zealander to withdraw from the \$US2.5 million (\$NZ4.8 million) event after reigning US Amateur champion Danny Lee pulled out without hitting a shot.

Lee, who also is due to play in Melbourne next week, is suffering from chicken pox.

The withdrawal of Campbell and Lee has reduced the New Zealand contingent to three players in Hong Kong – Mark Brown (first round 70), Stephen Seahill (73) and Richard Lee (76).



Hareb poised to swoop

WELLINGTON, NOV 21 – Paige Hareb has finished the year with the best ranking of any female New Zealand surfer and sits on the verge of promotion to the world elite ranks.

Hareb of Taranaki ranked seventh on the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) World Qualifying Series (WQS) after the final event of the year finished in Hawaii today.

Hareb was 17th at Haleiwa Beach, Ohau in the event won by Hawaiian Carissa Moore.

If the New Zealander could have compiled just 15 points more than her year's tally of 7285 she would have been one of the six surfers who automatically secure qualification on to the lucrative ASP World Tour comprising the world's premier 18 surfers.

However, there is still a decent chance of promotion given ASP's duel tour format.

Four of the six surfers ranked higher than Hareb on the WQS could qualify for the 2009 elite group through their World Tour ranking, leaving Hareb next in line to step up.

There are two events remaining on the women's

World Tour next month, both in Hawaii, and the New Zealander will anxiously to see if results go their way.

In April, Hareb, 17, became the first New Zealand woman to win a WQS event, in Perth. She was second at an event in Brazil last month.

New Zealand's Airini Mason also finished the year with a career-best 16th ranking on the WQS.

Mason was in with a chance of World Tour qualification until her 37th placing this week.

She needed to finish the final event in seventh place or better.

Final WQS rankings:

Sally Fitzgibbons (Australia) 9695pts 1, Rebecca Woods (Australia) 8023 2, Rosanne Hodge (South Africa) 7815 3, Silvana Lima (Brazil) 7665 4, Jessi Miley-Dyer (Australia) 7520 5, Bruna Schmitz (Brazil) 7300 6, PAIGE HAREB (New Zealand) 7285 7, Jacqueline Silva (Brazil) 6845 8, Alana Blanchard (Hawaii) 6820 9, Stephanie Gilmore (Australia) 6740 10

– NZPA



Roo Rage: Targetting Benji

By Robert Lowe of NZPA

BRISBANE, NOV 21 – Kiwis playmaker Benji Marshall can expect plenty of attention from the Australian defenders during the rugby league World Cup final in Brisbane tomorrow night, with a report today of a "Bash Benji" campaign.

Quizzed about the alleged "secret" plan within the Kangaroo camp, assistant coach John Cartwright was guarded in his response, saying all teams analysed the opposition before a match.

"He is their main game breaker," he told journalists.

"He can set up tries from anywhere. He can score tries from anywhere. It's no different to how we approach every game in the tournament. The guy who sets up the opposition plays, we've got to stop."

The Brisbane Courier-Mail reported that Marshall was repeatedly mentioned as the focus of the Australian defence during a video session on Wednesday.

A player at the session, who did not want to be named, told the paper that "bashing Benji" would be a priority for the Kangaroos.

The player also accused Marshall of being afraid

of running at the Australians, saying he took on the defensive line just three times in the pool match between the teams.

Meanwhile, Cartwright said backrower Paul Gallen, who is carrying a thigh injury, was a likely starter.

A final decision on Gallen's availability had yet to be made, "but he looks pretty good at this stage".

Cartwright said Anthony Watmough was on standby to take over if Gallen pulled out.

The Kangaroos have already had one withdrawal, with winger Brent Tate ruled out yesterday because of the hip injury he suffered in the semifinal win over Fiji.

Tate's place has gone to David "Wolfman" Williams, who scored a hat-trick on his test debut against Papua New Guinea a fortnight ago.

Cartwright said he had no concerns about Williams, part of the Manly's premiership-winning side, making the step up to a World Cup final.

"He attacked his debut and scored three tries and there'll be no reason for him to change," he said.

"He's prepared all week like he's going to play, so there'll be no problems there."



Tit for tat at top of table

LONDON – Chelsea and Liverpool will each be looking to maintain momentum this weekend as they continue their tit-for-tat battle at the top of the English Premier League.

Eight points clear of Manchester United in third and ahead of Liverpool on goal difference, Chelsea host struggling Newcastle United while Liverpool entertain Fulham at Anfield.

Chelsea have won seven out of seven away from home, but they have struggled slightly at Stamford Bridge, finding it harder to break teams down who come simply to defend.

They will be without the suspended Didier Drogba against Newcastle on Saturday, but that should not hamper them too much as Nicolas Anelka, who has scored eight goals in his past five games, will again lead the line.

Joe Cole and Ashley Cole remain on the sidelines, while Frank Lampard is also doubtful after missing England's win in Germany in midweek. Michael

Ballaek, though, could return to the midfield as he continues to recover full fitness following a foot operation.

Though Newcastle sit just above the relegation zone, their fortunes have been lifted by caretaker manager Joe Kinnear, who could recall Michael Owen to his starting line-up this weekend.

"Michael definitely has a chance of starting the game," Kinnear said.

"He is pushing hard for that with his work in training. We will have to see how he is at the end of the week. I'd like to have him in the starting line up, but I won't take any risks with his fitness."

Liverpool, who have dropped just two points at home this season, host a resurgent Fulham at Anfield.

With games coming up against West Ham United, Blackburn Rovers and Hull City, Liverpool fans may be forgiven for thinking that it will be another 12 points in the bag.

But Dirk Kuyt, one of the star performers of the

season for Liverpool to date, warned against any complacency.

"They will all be difficult games and it is up to us to be ready for that," he said. "Fulham have had a couple of good results of late and they will be coming to Anfield to try and make life hard for us, just as so many teams do."

"We are still in touch with the top of the table, but we cannot start looking too far ahead."

Champions United, leading the chasing pack, face a real test as they travel to fifth-placed Aston Villa.

United could be without Dimitar Berbatov, who picked up a hamstring injury playing for Bulgaria in midweek, while Rio Ferdinand is also battling to be fit.

Villa, meanwhile, are just one point behind United and have dreams of breaking into the big four themselves.

"The top four is a tough nut to crack," Villa winger James Milner said.

"They have been the top four for a long time. We want to close the gap and break into that top bracket. That's the ultimate aim."

Arsenal, who sit fourth, ahead of Villa on goal difference, will travel to Manchester City without Theo Walcott, who is likely to be out for three months with a shoulder injury.

Bacary Sagna is also out for Saturday's game with ankle trouble and Arsene Wenger's side have to pick themselves up after last weekend's defeat at home by Aston Villa.

Elsewhere, Tottenham Hotspur look to move out of the relegation zone by beating Blackburn Rovers, while bottom side West Bromwich Albion travel to Stoke City, themselves just three points off the bottom.

Middlesbrough face Bolton Wanderers, Portsmouth host Hull City, Sunderland play West Ham United and Wigan Athletic take on Everton.

– DPA

The Davis Cup final

MAR DEL PLATA, ARGENTINA – Both teams are hoping that the weekend Davis Cup final between host Argentina and a Spain missing Rafael Nadal will not erupt in violence or bad behaviour from the partisan South American crowd.

Sparks have already flown at the indoor hard court venue when a short circuit caused a minor electrical fire as Juan Del Potro and Argentine teammate Jose Acasuso were training.

While the hitting session was stopped for a few minutes which the flames were brought under control it might take more than a few extinguishers to calm passions when the weekend tie begins with singles tomorrow.

World number one Nadal is missing the weekend with right knee tendinitis and has agreed to stay at home so as to not create a distraction for his teammates due to his world number one notoriety and popularity.

One Argentine fan launched a doomed internet appeal to delay the final until Nadal was fit in order to give his nation more satisfaction in their intended victory.

David Ferrer, Feliciano Lopez, Fernando Verdasco and Marcel Granollers make up the Spanish travelling side while the Argentine defence will be led by David Nalbandian and fast-rising Del Potro along with Acasuso and Agustin Calleri.

The emotionally charged weekend will be the third meeting between the two nations, with Spain winning both previous. The Europeans defeated Argentina 3-1 in 1926 and in 2003 Carlos Moya clinched the decisive fifth rubber for a 3-2 victory in the quarter-finals.

Nalbandian has devoted his end of season to the

title quest, skipping a chance to play as alternate at last week's Masters Cup. Del Potro played in Shanghai at the year-end event, but hustled home last weekend to acclimate from the jet-lag.

The hosts are desperate to win a first Davis crown and believe that in the absence of Nadal, they have their best chance.

"I would say we can win all five points," said Argentine captain Alberto Mancini. "The boys are playing very well in practise."

Nadal told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa in Spain that he hoped the weekend would be marked by fair play and without any bad behaviour among a 9,750-person sellout crowd.

"I hope this weekend can serve as an example for the rest of the world of sport," said Nadal. "Argentine players are some of my best friends in tennis - they speak my language."

Del Potro is recovering his fitness after travelling for 27 hours to finally reach Mar del Plata, with Mancini expecting him to be ready when play starts on Friday.

"I'm slowly starting to feel better," said the 20-year-old ranked ninth. "There's still three days to go and I'm quickly getting used to the court."

Argentina picked indoor hard court to thwart the huge clay skills of Nadal, a strategic decision which became moot once the Spaniard had to withdraw.

"Even without Nadal, Spain is a dangerous team. We can't completely relax," said Mancini.

Spanish captain Emilio Sanchez said his men are fine on a fast court.

"Although Argentina and Spain are traditionally



THE EMOTIONALLY CHARGED WEEKEND WILL BE THE THIRD MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS, WITH SPAIN WINNING BOTH PREVIOUS

clay-courtiers, del Potro and Nalbandian have had excellent results on hard court.

"It was better for them to stay on hard court instead of having to switch to clay, the level of tennis all round wouldn't have been the same," said Sanchez.

Nalbandian said his teammate are over the shock

of the "missing" Nadal.

"It changes your mental state, but it doesn't change our focus. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter who is in front of us," he said.

The opening singles rubbers are tomorrow, the doubles Sunday and reverse singles Monday.

– DPA

TV & Film

**When Did You Last See Your Father?**

➔ **Cast:** Colin Firth, Jim Broadbent, Juliet Stevenson, Matthew Beard, Elaine Cassidy.

➔ **Director:** Anand Tucker.

➔ **Running time:** 1 hour, 32 minutes

➔ **Rated:** M (Sex scenes & offensive language)

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

The old man, a doctor, is dying. His wife weeps and waits. But when his son finally arrives, the first few cuts of criticism from his dad send him on a long remembrance of this withered chap in the bed before him, memories full of contradictions, anger and regret.

You'd never think to pair Oscar winner Jim Broadbent and dashing leading man Colin Firth as father and son. But it works in *When Did You Last See Your Father?*, a modestly affecting coming-of-age, coming-to-grips-with-death drama about a son who tries to understand his insufferable dad as he sits by his father's deathbed.

The film, based on a memoir by poet Blake Morrison, is about a son who has spent his life annoyed that his father could never put together "two little words, 'well' and 'done.'" The bookish intellectual Blake (Firth, doing a good "wounded and confused") grew up feeling overshadowed and ill-used by his gregarious, blustery dad (Broadbent, terrific as always), a doctor who lived for "little seams," ways of getting more than his share out of life.

Dad lied, cheated and bullied, ever the centre

of a dad-centred universe. He never seemed, to his son (Bradley Johnson and Matthew Beard play the younger Blake), to have a moment's consideration for the ways his words and actions robbed others. Ego-centric in the extreme, "Dad" is greedy emotionally, sexually and financially, a real piece of work.

"He was lost if he couldn't cheat in some way," the son recalls.

“IN COMING-OF-AGE TERMS, THERE'S LITTLE HERE WE HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE, RIGHT DOWN TO THE AWKWARD KID'S EFFORTS TO LOSE HIS VIRGINITY OR LEARN TO DRIVE. THE WEIGHT OF THE FILM IS IN THE UNPLEASANT SIDE OF THE KNOW-IT-ALL DAD. BUT EVEN DAD HAS HIS MOMENTS, LITTLE UNDECLARED DECLARATIONS OF LOVE FROM A PARENT TO A CHILD THAT THE CHILD WILL CLING TO ALL HIS LIFE

In flashbacks by his father's deathbed, the son remembers dad's clumsy and self-serving efforts at bonding, his possible philandering, the seminal moments from a childhood and adolescence spent in loathing his father.

In coming-of-age terms, there's little here we haven't seen before, right down to the awkward kid's efforts to lose his virginity or learn to drive. The weight of the film is in the unpleasant side of the know-it-all dad. But even Dad has his moments, little undeclared declarations of love from a parent to a child that the child will cling to all his life.

Eventually the heavy-handed flashbacks, with their over-saturated colours, coalesce into something universal about fathers and sons. But even as director Anand Tucker - he did the equally emotionally constipated *Shopgirl* - struggles to make the film something more than a 1960s period piece set in the lovely English countryside, his movie frustrates, maddeningly veering off into a creepy sexual "coming of age" reverie (and then revisiting it).

Broadbent's larger-than-life performance and that 1960s British setting (a more repressed era for the English male?) are the reasons to see *When Did You Last See Your Father?* and to plumb its meaning. But there have been more moving and more succinct explorations of the movie's weary moral, expressed by the son as if he'd never thought of this before.

"You spend your lifetime avoiding talking to someone, and then it's too late."

Watch trailer

— By Roger Moore

entertainment NEWS

**THE 'HOT' WIGGLE**

It's fun to make a Wiggle giggle.

Confronted with the information that, according to the group's publicist, he was the "hot" Wiggle, Anthony Field began to laugh. A low rolling giggle.

"Well it's not like I wear a T-shirt or anything" proclaiming it, said the blue Wiggle in his Aussie accent. "I don't want to make the other guys feel bad."

He claims he has never noticed that he makes moms go weak in the knees. "It must be very subtle," he said. "I try to concentrate on the children."

And children love all of The Wiggles. For those out of the know, The Wiggles is a collection of four Australian men who, for 18 years, have delighted pre-school audiences with catchy tunes and colourful outfits. The group tours the United States three times a year, selling out every time. According to Australia's Business Review Weekly, the group is the top earner in the entertainment field Down Under.

It might have been hard to envision all those years ago when they met in college. For his part, Field was part of a rock band called The Cockroaches. "It was a good way to spend my 20s," he said. "We were six guys in one van, starting to work at 11 o'clock at night and sometimes drinking alcohol on stage."

That is light-years away from the Wiggle that Fields has become. Each group member has an alter ego, and Field, as the blue Wiggle, is all about health.

Because he and the other Wiggles are on the road a lot, they spend a lot of time together. "We've learned to live in each other's pockets," he said. "You've got to learn to accommodate everyone's differences."

So, what's the secret to making music that appeals to kids yet is palatable to adults?

"You should just make good music and make the subject matter appropriate for children. It's like a good book for children. We want to be able to listen to it over and over again. We do try to keep it real and keep the music nice and easy to listen," he said.

Whatever it is, it seems to be working. There is a Wiggle World theme park in Australia and a Wiggle Bay water park. Wiggle Play Centres are opening in U.S. cities, and the band has created surrogate groups in Taiwan and in South America.

That doesn't mean The Wiggles rule everywhere. Field said his own two young children "prefer Dorothy Dinosaur or Dora the Explorer."

— By Mary Meehan

SINGER TOM JONES BUSKS FOR CHARITY

LONDON, NOV. 21 (UPI) — Famed Welsh crooner Tom Jones recently spent some time busking in London as part of a charity competition.

The Times of London said the 68-year-old performer set up his microphone on the South Bank of the Thames River near the Royal Festival Hall and sang songs like Green, Green Grass of Home, Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On, Great Balls of Fire and, of course, It's Not Unusual before a crowd of about 400 people.

The mini-concert was organized by BBC Two's The Culture Show and was part of a competition between musicians to determine who could raise the most cash for charity by busking — performing on the street, The Times said.

Which charity the money would benefit from the competition was not specified.

Jones set out to raise more money than a Welsh male choir and collected his donations in champagne buckets. He accomplished his goal taking in about \$700.

The newspaper said one middle-aged woman declared she would have tossed her underwear at the singer as a sign of her affection, "if only it were a bit warmer".

Music



If you inundate them with 30 minutes of new stuff which they're not interested in, as good as it may be, it doesn't fit why they're there and what they've purchased that ticket for. ... You've got to figure out what they want out there and give it to them

Fifty-three years in the business: music icon Paul Anka

By Valerie Kellogg

Newsday

If you want to make a request at Paul Anka's show, whistle a tune in the lobby, especially if it's from one of his latest swing CDs. Anka says he never takes his fans for granted.

That's why he still performs "Diana," "Lonely Boy" and the other classics that turned him into a teen idol in the 1950s. And, of course, he always sings "My Way," which he wrote, recorded and had made famous by Frank Sinatra. But today Anka's musical set also includes tracks from 1995's "Rock Swings" and last year's "Classic Songs, My Way."

As he tells Valerie Kellogg, new projects are on the horizon for Anka, 67, who has remained an icon not only in music but film, TV and the Internet.

Q. You've written some of the most memorable songs of all time, from "Diana" to "The Tonight Show" theme to "My Way." What do you most enjoy performing?

A. Songs people wouldn't realize. "Do I Love You" ... "I'm Not Anyone" ... "Hold Me 'Til the Morning Comes."

Q. I read that you planned to record "Billie Jean" on "Swing Rocks." Is there a story behind why you never did?

A. I couldn't sing it. I just didn't feel it when I was doing it. So I dropped it. And I changed it to the other song, "The Way You Make Me Feel."

Q. The 2007 film "Ocean's Thirteen" quotes you from a secretly recorded infamous little talk you once had with your band members that was widely distributed on the Internet. What did you think of that?

A. Oh, the "shirts" with Al Pacino? Well, I guess it was flattering. ... We had a guy who worked for us a month or two. He was basically a snake who brought a tape recorder into a meeting. I take what I do very seriously. And it's not unlike Tommy Lasorda on the mound, or the Orson Welles tapes and thousands of others we've all heard. My band was

fluffing off. When I'm in front of my audience ... respect the fact that they paid a hard buck for the show ... I run a business. That tape was 25 years old. I stand by it.

Q. How did it feel having a dog named after you in the TV show "Gilmore Girls"?

A. I thought it was cool. ... The producers and the writers—they were fans, apparently. I was flattered by it, actually, because I think it's a well-written show and very intelligent.

Q. Do you plan to do another CD of covers?

A. The record company wants me to do a third CD ... originals.

Q. What else is coming up?

A. I'm a little overwhelmed at the moment because I'm trying to finish my book, which I'm writing for St. Martin's Press. ... I also have some overtures

from Broadway to do my story. I'm taking meetings over the next month regarding that.

Q. If you could get any young pop singer today to cover one of your songs, who would it be and what would they sing?

A. John Mayer, Beyonce and John Legend—between those three—I think there might be a great interpretation of "Put Your Head on My Shoulder," "Hold Me 'Til the Morning Comes" ... Andre 3000 (from OutKast) could probably do a pretty interesting version of one of my classic songs.

Q. What will you be performing onstage?

A. I won't be doing six or seven songs from "Rock Swings," unless I get there and find that, that audience is there. I send my people out (into the theatre). We kind of look in the lobby at age (of theatregoers). We kind of listen around, too. ... I like to figure out what they're expecting to hear. If you inundate them with 30 minutes of new stuff which they're not interested in, as good as it may be, it doesn't fit why they're there and what they've purchased that ticket for. ... You've got to figure out what they want out there and give it to them.

Watch Paul Anka's original performance of "Diana" from 1957



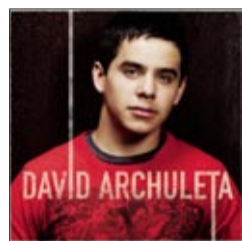
NEW CD RELEASES

David Cook
 ➔ David Cook

★★★★☆

David Archuleta
 ➔ David Archuleta

★★★★☆



Cook and Archuleta faced off last May in the most intriguing "American Idol" finale since season two, when Ruben Studdard edged out Clay Aiken. Six months later, with the release of their debut albums, they're still running throat and throat.

Cook's record is a collection of clean, propulsive rockers. His vocal range remains impressive, although to the CD's detriment,

he rarely strays from his Nickelback-based formula. Maybe that's what makes the ballad "Permanent," the least guitar-heroic song in the batch, stand out.

Archuleta, he of the sweetly yearning voice and the puppy-dog eyes, delivers a record that is more mature than expected. The opening song, "Crush," for instance, is a lovely ballad suggestive of a Utah version of Ne-Yo. Most of the songs on Archuleta's album have the markings of songwriting pros: mid-dling verses with soaring choruses. A number of tunes such as "You Can" could work on the country charts with only minor retooling.

Archuleta, who was 11 when "American Idol" debuted, grows sappier as the tracks tick by. But there are some perfectly tailored radio songs here

Both singers, in fact, display good commercial instincts. No surprise. It was apparent from the beginning of the "Idol" season that the two Davids had their eyes firmly on the prize.

— David Hillbrand

Susan Graham

➔ Un frisson français: A century of French song" Susan Graham, mezzo-soprano; Malcolm Martineau, piano

➔ Onyx

★★★★☆



An all-French recital extending from Bizet through Messiaen is bound to have passages where every third word seems to be papillons or charment. But clichés are spectacularly transcended here in a disc

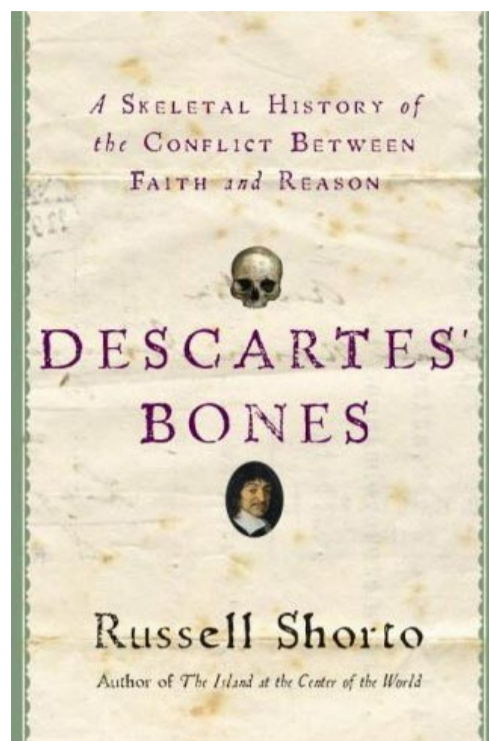
arranged in roughly chronological order, each composer represented by only one song. Few are familiar, such as Henri Duparc's anti-war "To the Land Where War is Raging" or Reynaldo Hahn's "To Chloris." The rest explore repertoire even Francophiles may not know about, including composers not normally associated with song, such as Cesar Franck, Edouard Lalo, Andre Caplet and Albert Roussel.

Virtually every one is a distinctive, significant find, whether Saint-Saens' "Dance of Death" that inspired his later orchestra work "Danse Macabre," with words examining the egalitarian elements of death, or Honegger's "Three Songs of the Little Mermaid," whose title character is heard calling out through watery piano figures in distant keys.

Susan Graham has sung French music most of her professional life, and it shows in the way she locates the core musicality of a piece while also characterizing the voices within each song with engaging theatricality. In terms of vocal lustre, she's never sounded better — or better framed, thanks to Malcolm Martineau's superb accompaniment.

— David Patrick Stearns

Books



Descartes' Bones: Quirky approach to philosopher's sphere of influence

Descartes' Bones: A Skeletal History of the Conflict Between Faith and Reason

➔ By Russell Shorto

➔ Doubleday, US\$17, via Amazon

Most Americans probably have only a vague notion of Rene Descartes, the 17th-century French philosopher and mathematician, as the guy who declared, "Cogito ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am"). It's a statement that, in our ironic age, is probably more notable for spawning such comic takeoffs as "I stink, therefore I am" or George Carlin's "I think I am; therefore, I am. I think."

With *Descartes' Bones*, Russell Shorto hits on a clever gambit to pull Descartes out of the shadow of late Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers such as da Vinci, Newton, Galileo and Spinoza, to name only a few with higher Q ratings. Shorto uses the weird and convoluted story of what happened to the great philosopher's remains as a route to exploring Descartes' philosophy and influence.

Vain, combative, sure of his intellectual superiority, Descartes had the goal of nothing less than the replacement of a "bad" way of understanding the world with a "good" one. The bad was the Aristotelian approach, adopted by the Scholastic philosophers and much in favour with royal and church authorities. By locating the ground of truth in the human mind — "I think, therefore I am" is more than a slogan — Descartes paved the way for the development of the modern scientific method and unleashed controversies that still rage today.

Although Descartes was a devout Catholic who believed his philosophy could prove the existence of God, clerical and secular authorities immediately saw the threat it posed to belief in the supernatural. Damned as an atheist, he was hounded first out of France, then Holland, and had just taken refuge in Stockholm when he fell sick and died in 1650.

Shorto traces the path by which admirers and French patriots returned Descartes' remains to Paris. Somewhere along the way, the skull was removed, only to turn up in the early 19th century, when it became an object of intense interest for the emerging scientific establishment.

In full command of the complexities of his story, Shorto brings into sharp relief such important if forgotten historical players as Henricus Regius,



Descartes' first disciple; Sweden's Queen Christina; Alexander Lenoir, deputized by the French revolutionary authorities to salvage religious art works; the great French scientist Georges Cuvier; Franz Joseph Gall, the father of phrenology but also a precursor of psychology; and Pierre Paul Broca, who made a lasting discovery about the brain and invented anthropology.

If Shorto doesn't quite prove his thesis that Descartes is the founder of the modern world, he does illuminate much about how it came to be. Perhaps the book's most important section is the last. Surveying a selection of modern "Cartesians," he makes a cogent argument for detente between faith and science, finding atheists such as Christopher Hitchens as intolerant as Islamic or Christian fundamentalists.

— By Chauncey Mabe

Short-story collection is Stephen King's lucky 13

Just After Sunset

➔ By Stephen King

➔ Scribner, US\$16.80, via Amazon

Thirteen.

That's the number of yarns featured in *Just After Sunset*, Stephen King's first book of short stories since 2002's *Everything's Eventual*.

Thirteen.

Perfect.

Thirteen the unlucky number, the numeral for losers, the digit for all the poor saps out there who never seem to be getting an even break or a fair shake. *Just After Sunset* is populated by such people, and by the requisite share of villains and monsters, too. Hey, if destiny won't inflict bad things on you, there's always some creep out there who will, right?

I've always enjoyed King's short stories and novellas; I think some of his best work lies between the covers of *Skeleton Crew*, *Four Past Midnight*, *Different Seasons* and the aforementioned *Everything's Eventual*. *Just After Sunset* is a marvellous addition to the library of King's more concise fictions.

Never, in fact, has King seemed more mature (well, he is 61) or more sure of himself as a writer. His work here still has the power to freak you out, but for the most part the horrors he has invented for these pages are far more sophisticated than the machinations of his youth.

"Harvey's Dream" finds a couple dealing with the early onset of dementia, or at least in the man's case it is so. King's portrait of Janet and Harvey is succinct; the piece runs fewer than 10 pages.

NEVER, IN FACT, HAS KING SEEMED MORE MATURE (WELL, HE IS 61) OR MORE SURE OF HIMSELF AS A WRITER. HIS WORK HERE STILL HAS THE POWER TO FREAK YOU OUT, BUT FOR THE MOST PART THE HORRORS HE HAS INVENTED FOR THESE PAGES ARE FAR MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN THE MACHINATIONS OF HIS YOUTH

But in that space he manages to pack all the fears and cares of a marriage that has changed forever — and then some. Harvey has indeed had a dream, you see, and that dream — well! We all know that in Stephen King's universe, so many dreams turn out to be nightmares. And rarely has King's phrasing been more elegant, as when he writes, "Dreams are poems from the subconscious."

"Graduation Afternoon," another of the shorter stories here, is more than memorable; this one will sear its way into your circuits and stay there. King gets great mileage in this one out of the situation: A young woman named Janice is dating a boy named Buddy, and the latter is from a well-to-do family while the former certainly is not. Janice feels the sting of attitudes from Buddy's social set and family, especially from a comment made by Buddy's oh-so-snobby grandmother.

After setting us up with the social warfare, though, King absolutely turns this story on its ear, to great and very startling effect. I won't spoil it for you, except to say I think the piece really is a bomb, and that is not a criticism. Basically, what King manages to do here is to dynamite the pretensions of the rich, except that dynamite isn't a strong-enough word. Here's a hint for you, but you'll get it only if you're a fan of the English rock group Pink Floyd and a song of theirs from about a quarter-century ago called "Two Suns in the Sunset": "We were all equal in the end."

Other stories in the book are longer, including "Willa," the opener, and two pieces that flirt with novella territory: "The Gingerbread Girl" and "A Very Tight Place." Even when he's stretching out here, though, King has it all under control. In his novels he has a tendency to let the word processor overheat, but "Girl" and "Place" are two of the strongest pieces in this book.

The latter closes out *Just After Sunset* in grand style — if your idea of grand involves a Florida real-estate deal gone sour, two men who used to be friendly but now despise each other, and a portable toilet that may or may not serve as a tomb. Note to the squeamish: "A Very Tight Place" is not for you.

I was laughing out loud at parts of this tale. Not because King made mistakes, but because he did something he likes to do and did it well: He took a situation so outlandish that it would be impossible for most writers to handle, and made that situation a preposterous but believable strength. Admirable, too, is the way he draws the characters here. Think *Grumpy Old Men* taken to a viciously absurd (or absurdly vicious) degree.

Thirteen.

In truth, some people and cultures regard 13 as a lucky number, or, in the case of Sikhism, even holy.

With these 13 stories, Stephen King's luck certainly is in.

— By John Mark Eberhart

New study discounts ginkgo as effective against Alzheimer's

By Delthia Ricks

Newsday

NEW YORK — Ginkgo biloba, the popular supplement derived from a Chinese tree, does not protect older people from Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia, scientists have found in an analysis published this week.

Ginkgo has such a long and storied past and is so commonly used as a memory enhancer that even teens studying for the SAT have been known to take the over-the-counter preparation. Some doctors routinely recommend it to people in the early phases of Alzheimer's disease.

The incurable disorder, characterized by brain-clogging "plaques and tangles," affects tens of thousands of people in Australia and New Zealand people, most of them 65 or older. And it is the explosive prevalence of Alzheimer's that caused some doctors to hold out a flicker of hope that a simple, nontoxic supplement might help thwart the disease.

But in one of the largest — and longest — studies ever designed to test whether ginkgo can stave off Alzheimer's, scientists found a particular brand of supplement was completely ineffective. More than 3,000 people between the ages of 75 and 96 par-



ticipated in the six-year project, taking a red-colored capsule twice a day. Half got 120 milligrams of ginkgo; the rest got placebos. Supplements were made by Nature's Way of Mission Hills, Calif.

Steven Myers, proprietor of Nature's Vitamin Spot in New York, said ginkgo is a big seller.

"People know of it because it increases circulation and mental clarity. That's the main reason why they

buy it, and some buy it because of tinnitus, ringing in the ears," Myers said. "People studying for the police exam or the SAT will take ginkgo."

Dr. Steven DeKosky, of the University of Pittsburgh, lead investigator of the ginkgo study, said he and his colleagues deemed the supplement powerless against Alzheimer's when participants developed the disease. The study is published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

In all, 523 people developed dementia, 246 in the placebo group and 277 in the ginkgo arm. Ninety-two percent were classified as possible or probable Alzheimer's.

Dr. Anton Porsteinsson of the University of Rochester, who conducted the nation's first ginkgo study a decade ago involving "pharmaceutical grade" supplements, said DeKosky's research is compelling — and convincing.

Porsteinsson, director of the university's Alzheimer's care and research, has recommended ginkgo for memory loss, but said he probably will stop. "Ginkgo does have a modest effect in young, healthy people," Porsteinsson said. "This study was carefully designed and conducted. You won't find me suggesting it to my patients as a likely agent of therapeutic benefit."

Stress warps brains and behaviour, researchers say

By Robert S. Boyd

McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — Scientists have discovered how stress — in the form of emotional, mental or physical tension — physically reshapes the brain and causes long-lasting harm to humans and animals.

"Stress causes neurons (brain cells) to shrink or grow," said Bruce McEwen, a neuroscientist at Rockefeller University in New York. "The wear and tear on the body from lots of stress changes the nervous system."

He said that stress is "particularly worrying in the developing brain, which appears to be programmed by early stressful experience."

Stress in early life, even in the womb, can later lead to undesirable changes in behaviour and the ability to learn and remember. Other consequences may be substance abuse and psychiatric disorders, researchers said at a conference of neuroscientists in Washington this week.

"Prenatal stress can change the brain forever," said Tallie Baram, a neurologist at the University of California, Irvine. "Stress changes how genes are expressed throughout life."

Even short-term stress can be harmful, Baram

said. She described her work with laboratory mice, which were immobilized for five hours and subjected to loud rock music. The ordeal reduced the number of delicate fibres that carry signals between neurons, an MRI brain scan of the stressed-out mice showed.

The experiment offered "insights into why some people are forgetful or have difficulty retaining information during stressful situations," Baram said. She said that neuroscientists hope they'll be able to "design drugs to prevent the damage due to stress."

Long-lasting, chronic stress also physically affects the brain, according to Fred Helmstetter, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. After laboratory rats were tightly restrained for six hours daily for 21 days, without food or water, the animals' hippocampus — a brain region involved in learning and memory — shrank by 3 percent.

Another researcher, Lauren Jones of the University of Washington in Seattle, found that rats subjected to 60 minutes of restraint and electric tail shocks lost their ability to decide which path in a maze to take to receive a reward.

"If uncontrollable stress disrupts rats' abilities to adjust their behaviour," she said, "how influenced by stress are people's frequent and complex daily decisions?"

Nim Tottenham, a neuroscientist at the Weill Cornell

Medical School in New York, studied children adopted from orphanages abroad who suffered from anxiety and had difficulty controlling their emotions.

Brain scans showed that these children's stressful upbringing increased activity in the amygdala, a region involved in emotion. "Adverse rearing environments can produce long-lasting changes in the ability to regulate emotion," Tottenham said.

Simona Spinelli, a researcher at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., worked with monkeys who were taken from their mothers the day after they were born, an emotionally stressful experience. Brain scans taken two years later

showed that changes in the monkeys' brain regions that handle emotions were enlarged, evidence that stress can change the structure of the brain.

"Exposure to a stressful early-life environment has long-term consequences on brain development," Spinelli said. It's "a structural indicator for an increased risk of developing stress-related neuropsychiatric disorders in humans."

"Stress begins in the brain — it's in our heads," McEwen said.

ON THE WEB: Information on stress from the National Institutes of Health: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/stress.html>

Is your baby's crib safe?

Recent crib recalls have cast light on the manufacturing and use of baby cribs. These are entrapment hazards you should check for on your crib:

Corner posts No taller than 0.06 in. (0.2 cm) above frame so children cannot catch clothing and strangle

Decorative cutouts Large cutouts can trap a baby's head

Hardware, screws, fasteners No missing or loose screws or bolts; check periodically

Soda can" test Make sure a soda can cannot fit through any of the slats or spaces

Dropside rails Make sure side is fully on track every time you raise or lower it

Side slats fitted tightly into railing; smooth wood free of splinters

Mattress, platform If you can fit two fingers between the mattress and the side, crib should not be used; check support hardware

Other tips

- Avoid previously owned; follow directions completely when assembling
- If you are missing parts or instructions, contact manufacturer
- Drop-sides more dangerous than fixed sides
- In a drop-side crib, do not leave baby while side is down; drop side is not stable when down, baby could roll into it and become trapped
- Use tight-fitting sheets; no pillows, blankets or stuffed toys
- No cracked or peeling paint; paint should be lead-free
- If you experience problems, immediately contact manufacturer

Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission, Kids In Dangers Graphic: Chad Yoder and Phil Gelb, Chicago Tribune

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THIS CHRISTMAS, THERE'S ONE BOOK YOU SHOULDN'T MISS...

WHAT THE REVIEWERS SAY

"Wishart takes up the gauntlet laid down by Richard Dawkins in *The God Delusion*, and in fact, uses Dawkins own logic and methodology to launch a counter-attack... a compelling case against unbelief"

— *Keepingstock.blogspot.com*

"The genius of this Kiwi author is the ability to discover those ugly facts that slay the hypotheses of scientists, philosophers, historians and novelists that God does not exist and that Jesus Christ was not a person in history but a myth. Its coverage is almost encyclopaedic. Wishart's skill as an investigative journalist is obvious"

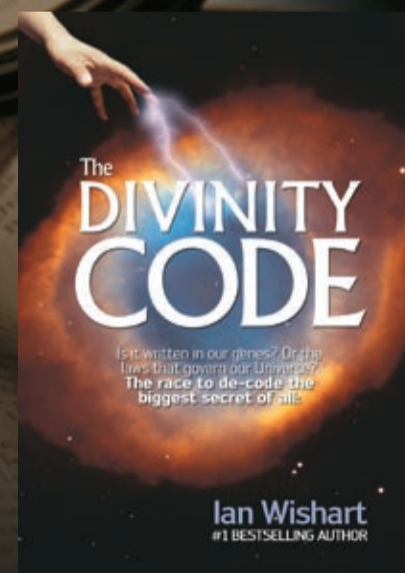
— *NZ Catholic newspaper*

"*The Divinity Code* is one of the best Christian apologetic books I have read... excellent... Don't miss reading it"

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"A very compelling response to books such as *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins... he takes the "inaccuracies" of Dawkins, Hitchens, Harris, Spong and others and pulls them apart, looking deep into the facts and issues around them and explaining with clarity the real story that is behind them"

— *The Bible Geek*



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Atheists try to expel evolution debate

By Terrence Stutz
The Dallas Morning News

AUSTIN, TEXAS — Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution grabbed centre stage yesterday as State Board of Education members heard from dozens of Texans trying to influence the panel on how evolution should be covered in science classes of the future.

College professors, science teachers and pro-evolution groups urged the board to drop a rule that

requires the strengths and weaknesses of Darwin's theory to be taught in science courses, while conservative groups aligned with a sizable bloc of board members said the rule has worked well and hasn't forced religion into those classes as critics charge.

University of Texas at Austin biochemistry Professor Andrew Ellington was one of those warning that the state could become a "laughingstock" in the science community if it insists on watering down the treatment of evolution in science classes.

"At a time when Gov. (Rick) Perry has shepherded a landmark plan for cancer research and treatment, we cannot afford for the retrograde elements of the state board to foster teaching the equivalent of astrology to our students," Dr. Ellington, an atheist, said.

Nearly 90 persons registered to testify on the proposed curriculum standards, which will dictate what is taught in science classes in elementary and secondary schools as well as providing the material for state tests and textbooks. The standards will

remain in place for a decade after their approval by the state board.

Rabbi Nancy Kasten of Dallas, a board member for the National Council of Jewish Women, said a state rule mandating that weaknesses of evolution be covered makes science education in Texas "vulnerable to a wide range of speculative and subversive interpretation" — including non-scientific explanations such as creationism.

"As a member of a religious minority, I rely on the Constitution to ensure that our government and its institutions, including our public schools, serve Americans of all faiths and no faith," she said.

On the other side, Carrollton engineer Paul Kramer called on the board to retain the strengths-and-weaknesses rule for all scientific theories, insisting that its elimination would unfairly restrict debate among students on "untested and unproven" theories.

"One can only wonder if we crush free speech and debate in our public classrooms now, where will it end?" he asked, citing a parallel with Nazi Germany. He also presented the board with a document called, "A Scientific Dissent From Darwinism," signed by 700 scientists and institutions around the world sceptical of some of Darwin's principles.

Mark Ramsey of Texans for Better Science Education accused "Darwinist activists" of trying to censor what Texas students learn about evolution.

"The State Board of Education needs to stand up for academic freedom and make sure that scientific inquiry is not expelled from our classrooms," he said.

Board members are scheduled to take their first vote on the curriculum standards in January.

Revisions recommended by a panel of experts this week call for changing the "strengths-and-weaknesses" standard to "strengths and limitations." Another recommendation calls for middle school students to "discuss possible alternative explanations" for scientific concepts.

The latter change brought sharp criticism from the atheistic Texas Freedom Network.

"The new draft contains loaded buzzwords that evolution deniers have used repeatedly to launch phony attacks on evolution," said TFN President Kathy Miller.

Landline phones: Endangered species

By Lori Borgman

Our three children are grown and not a single one of them has a landline phone. They consider "home phones" pieces of antiquity — like disco and eight-track tapes.

Which probably explains why the first question so many parents ask when calling one of their children, is: "Where are you?"

It used to be when you called someone you knew where they were — at home. That's why they answered their phone, because they were home. If they weren't home, they didn't answer. It was a good system. You knew who was home and who wasn't.

Now when you call someone, chances are the person will not be home, but will answer the phone. Since I like a mental picture of where the kid I am talking to is located, I've fallen into a standard greeting of, "Hello, where are you?"

"At the grocery store. (Beep, beep goes the scanner.) Can I call you back?"

"I'm at Building Depot loading wood. (2x4s clunk in the background.) Can I call you back?"

"We're hiking a trail and just about to the summit. (A wild pig squeals.) Can I call you back?"

"I'm in a restaurant. (Loud music, chattering voices.) Can I call you back?"

I have never understood why people answer a phone just to say hello and ask if they can call you back.

Of course, they can call me back. But they better not count on me being home.

Mobile phones cut the leash that once tethered us to home. The evolution of the phone has given us great freedom, but it has also disrupted a valuable pipeline of parental information.

When the family phone was a big black box anchored to the kitchen wall, a parent could answer the phone and discover who was calling, what they wanted, who they wanted to talk to, whether the caller was a male or female, their approximate age and whether they sounded friendly, curt, hostile or polite.

That 10 seconds of voice contact provided fodder for the Twenty Questions game that often followed the phone call. For parents, it was the Golden Age of Surveillance.

With the arrival of multiple extension phones scattered throughout a house, it was now possible for youth to "beat" mum and dad to the phone, thereby shielding callers from probing questions. Pity the parent with slow reflexes.

When phones went cordless, parents lost even more means of intelligence gathering. A parent could no longer "do dishes" in the kitchen and get the lowdown. The portable phone could move to a bedroom, a closet, the basement, the roof or the crawl space. A determined parent could get some information, but it was awkward.

"Mum! Get out of the closet. There's not room for both of us!"

And then came the cell phone. Children armed with their own phones are younger and younger and a lot of parents have no idea who is calling, how often they call, what they sound like, what they want, the nature of the message in the text or the picture in the e-mail.

Parents setting young children up with cell phones lose a lot of information in exchange for being able to call and say, "Hello, where are you?"

You can ask that when they're in their 20s. When they are adolescents and teens, you need to know a whole lot more.

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Land of extremes

Temperate Iceland is an elemental netherworld of fire, flowers and yes, ice

By Jane Wooldridge

INGVELLIR NATIONAL PARK, ICELAND – On a damp and sullen day, in the drama of the rocky rift separating east and west tectonic plates, you can almost hear the horde of Vikings gathered at one of the world's oldest parliaments.

Given the political contentiousness of its off-spring American Congress, it seems little surprise that this original Icelandic legislature temporarily lost its law-making power after only 340 years. (For the next 500 years, its role was judicial, and for nearly 50 years, it was disbanded.)

The surprise is that it happened here at all. Shouldn't the oldest continuous democratic assembly, as some have called it, hail from Rome or Britain or France? Yet many bestow that honour on the fierce Vikings who gathered in 930 near a confluence of crossroads, rocky fissures and a fish-filled lake (and meet still in more civilized quarters in Reykjavik.)

In Iceland, the unexpected is commonplace.

Start with the name – a misnomer if ever there was one. You often hear the quip that Iceland got the wrong end of the Viking marketing scheme: While this island-by-the-Gulfstream is temperate and grassy (even in winter, temperatures in the capital generally rise above freezing), more northerly Greenland is buried in ice (fast-melting though it is in these warming times).

In summer, Iceland becomes a field of flowers, and for three July days I will bask in the sun spilling over Reykjavik's cafes, motor beneath grassy mountain ridges gushing with waterfalls, slip into natural thermal pools and canter across seaside farm fields on pint-size ponies with a gait smooth as a hobby horse.

The name isn't ALL wrong, I soon discover, for Iceland is a land of fire and ice.

The country's 200 volcanoes are the boils of irritation opening along the tectonic rub called the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, and more than a third of the earth's lava flow in the past 500 years has happened here, according to experts at San Francisco's Exploratorium.

For casual travellers, the easiest access to Iceland's geological extremes is at Reykjavik's "Volcano Show," where two back-to-back films are shown in a tiny theatre by host, filmmaker and ticket-seller Villi Knudsen. Glacial ice is split by volcanic explosions before your eyes as searing magma and metres-thick ice collide in violent clashes that reshape the island, forming lakes and floods often hidden beneath the ice. The most startling footage is of the 1960s eruptions off the coast that resulted in the creation of a new island, Surtsey – mirroring the ancient creation of Iceland itself.

Step outside the theatre, and for the moment at least the geology lesson seems academic. Reykjavik is a chic urban village anchored by the concrete pyramid of Hallgrmskirkja church and surrounded by commercial sprawl. The cosy streets are lined with boutiques, coffee houses and stylish bars burning with the sharp intensity of summer love. Skateboarders zip into the town's central plaza. Cyclists and joggers pound the harbourside path in the unending light of summer. The thin grass glows emerald in the fleeting warmth.

But once you've hit the local museums and night-clubs and experienced the whopping prices (US\$150 per day car rental, \$100 for tandoori chicken and a couple of beers), you'll be drawn back to the elements.

Nearly everyone who visits Iceland goes to the Blue Lagoon, the thermal pool complex near the airport. It's part tourist trap, part transcendent voyage into an ethereal universe. Steam rises from the pool, carved from a lava landscape that looks like it should be on the moon.

Though there's a serious clinic, cafe and massage facilities, what most people do here is soak and slather their skin in the mineral mud stationed in boxes around the pool.

Along with impurities, it seems, the mud draws out the chat. A Norwegian mum and her 15-year-old, Ingeborg, advise me about the mud. "Don't get it too close to your eyes," the mum warns. From there we move to fishing, whale hunting and, inevitably, America.

"Americans are egocentric, I think," says the daughter. "The spotlight is always on them. And Americans, they are always afraid," Ingeborg says.

Shrugs her mum, "She's always had opinions."

Iceland is slightly over one-third the size of New Zealand. Though most of its interior is impenetrable without a rugged 4x4 and hearty guide, touring the island takes more time than I expect. For more than two hours I drive along the green flats edged by sea and ridge to Snaefellsjokull, a relatively accessible glacier rumoured to have been a landing strip for aliens, a place of magic and Jules Verne's legendary entrance to the centre of the earth.

Like many glaciers, this one is melting. For the past several summers, glacier tours have been impossible past mid-July, and I barely make the cutoff, bypassing the rigors of a 5-hour hike to the top in favour of the immediate gratification of a snowmobile tour.

In under 15 minutes, the group is whisked to the crater. It's a stellar, crystalline day, and the views are spectacular, with snowcapped basalt peaks showing patches of black rock trickling to azure sea. Swaths of green are sheltered by rippled peaks and cliffs and strange, prehistoric-looking lava fields strewn with rocks – the spew and vomit of a raging earth.

Looking around, you realize the elves, trolls and gods said to live here must be unsettled; you don't need to see the "Volcano Show" to realize something roils beneath.

Another day's visit to the geyser fields confirms it. White steam rises against the green hills like a train chugging through the land, and it's only when

you realize that the location never changes that you understand that these kettles sit at a constant boil.

The most visited of the fields is at Geysir, the place from which the geological term was borrowed. Whilst the world's largest known geyser eruption occurred in New Zealand, when the Waimangu geyser hit a height of 500 metres, the largest geyser now playing is Steamboat, at Yellowstone, which hits around 120 metres. So if you've been to Yellowstone, you'll be underwhelmed by the Icelandic originator of the name: it is neither so vast nor so colourful as those geysers of the American west. Still, it's a sight few want to miss.

Some of the sprays here blow regularly; others are less predictable. The namesake Great Geysir – a once-regular vent spouting 60 metres high – now spurts less regularly and less tall. Its entrance is said to have been clogged by common sense-challenged visitors who threw rocks into it in the 1950s, but more recent earthquakes seem to have loosened the passageway. This change underscores the message of "Volcano Show": that Iceland is a geological laboratory in flux, constantly reshaping the land.

A few miles away lies Gullfoss, a massive double waterfall of the river Hvita that plunges from a wide plain some 105 feet into a canyon. The flow seems almost to disappear, swallowed by Iceland's mystical and ever-changing earth – the elements at play with eyes and mind.

A drive over ridges and boulder fields brings me to Pingvellir. There's nothing whimsical or playful here; the planet's plates have thrust and sparred without mercy, shearing to dramatic heights in a set ready for a sci-fi flick. It's no wonder that the Vikings chose this as the site for their most momentous civic actions – and no surprise that, like important occasions throughout history, these took on a festive air. The pathway along the rift is lined with rock-hewn booths where vendors once sold nibbles and beer and whatever might have passed for souvenirs at an earlier time. If you close your eyes you can almost sense the hurly burly of power and influence, pride and prejudice.

Some things change. In this election year, it seems, some may not.

ICELAND SNAPSHOT

- ▶ **Capital:** Reykjavik, pop. about 113,730
- ▶ **Land area:** 103,000 square km
- ▶ **Slightly smaller than:** the North Island of NZ
- ▶ **Population:** 304,376
- ▶ **Government:** Constitutional republic
- ▶ **Religion:** 82 percent Lutheran Church of Iceland
- ▶ **Economic drivers:** Outsize banking industry has been devastated by the global economic crisis. Fishing, aluminium and ferrosilicon exports, tourism also prominent (CIA World Factbook, Invest in Iceland)



By Robert Block and Mark K. Matthews

The Orlando Sentinel

CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA. — Right now, as you are reading this, 10 Russian and American men and women orbiting 320 km above your head are busy installing toilets, refrigerators and new bedrooms aboard the most complicated construction project ever undertaken: the international space station.

The improvements are a birthday present of sorts for the station, which began its life 10 years ago today with the launch of a Russian-made, bus-sized module called Zarya. Two weeks later, it was joined in orbit by an American-made companion called Unity, carried up by the space shuttle Endeavour.

Today, after 10 years and US\$100 billion, the station is finally poised to become what it was always intended to be: a research outpost doing cutting-edge science. Scientists believe experiments done in microgravity can find cures for disease and develop powerful new drugs.

But funding worries — and the question of how American astronauts and equipment will get to and from the structure when it's finally finished in 2010 — leaves its future still uncertain.

The reason: the space shuttle is slated for retirement then, and there's no heavy-lifting rocket immediately available to replace it.

"The crisis in transportation is a big issue and we have to figure out what we are going to do when the shuttle retires," said Jeanne Becker, a scientist whose research project to find a vaccine for salmonella is currently flying on orbit.

The space station and space shuttle have always been intimately related. The shuttle, which can only circle Earth in low orbit, found a purpose in building the station. Its role in putting satellites in orbit was undercut by cheaper, safer unmanned rockets. The station and the shuttle seemed made for each other.

However, under current plans, the shuttle will retire in 2010 and NASA's next-generation rocket won't come online until 2015. Until then, Americans will have to rely on Russian-made Soyuz spacecraft to get to the station. The prospect leaves many politicians uneasy.

It leaves the space station's Japanese, Canadian

and European partners feeling even less comfortable. Their problem: with the retirement of the shuttle, nothing — including the shuttle's Constellation successor — will be able to take big experiments to and from the station.

"Ever since the retirement of the shuttle was announced it has been a big concern. It's the long pole in the tent," said a Western diplomat whose country is a key station partner.

The hope is that new rockets and capsules will be developed to take over where the shuttle will leave off. But that will take time, and European and Japanese space officials are under pressure to show a return from their investment in space station science.

Said James Muncy, a space policy consultant in

Frustration has plagued the project since President Ronald Reagan called for the creation of Space Station "Freedom" in the 1980s. By 1988, the project had grown to include Japan, Canada and several European countries. Plans called for it to be permanently manned by 1996, at a cost of \$23 billion.

That never happened.

In 1993, it survived a no-confidence vote in the U.S. House of Representatives by a single vote. It was only after President Bill Clinton saw the station as a foreign policy tool to keep Russian rocket scientists engaged in positive pursuits rather than peddling their skills to rogue nations that the idea of an "international space station" really took off.

"The partnership obviously has endured a long

field, weighing more than 284 tonnes, orbiting the Earth every 90 minutes.

"The true potential of the station is now starting to be realized. The vision of the station is now at hand," Zimmerman said.

A six-member crew should increase the time devoted to research. In April, the Government Accountability Office estimated that the current three-member crew did "no more than three hours" of science a week.

Once there are six astronauts, "we will have at least the equivalent of one dedicated crew member for research," said Mark Uhran, NASA's assistant associate administrator for the station. That means a minimum of 40 hours a week for science.



Washington, "The station has been a success in demonstrating the value of international partnerships in human spaceflight. Unfortunately, our partners are still waiting for the full research capabilities to come online."

Complaints about the space station aren't new. For everyone who hails it as a technological wonder, there's a critic labelling it an expensive boondoggle.

period when the station's development went far more slowly than the original vision. And that's been frustrating," said Jim Zimmerman, who served as NASA's representative in Europe from 1985 to 1997.

He said the 10th anniversary marks a pivotal moment as the nearly complete laboratory moves to double its crew to six members. It's now the largest spacecraft ever built, nearly the size of a football

“UNDER CURRENT PLANS, THE SHUTTLE WILL RETIRE IN 2010 AND NASA'S NEXT-GENERATION ROCKET WON'T COME ONLINE UNTIL 2015. UNTIL THEN, AMERICANS WILL HAVE TO RELY ON RUSSIAN-MADE SOYUZ SPACECRAFT TO GET TO THE STATION. THE PROSPECT LEAVES MANY POLITICIANS UNEASY.”

President-elect Barack Obama has said that he is committed to utilizing the station beyond 2016, when current U.S. policy sees America pulling out. The question is whether he will be able to find the funding and whether the station can live up to its promise.

"To do that, we need the shuttle, at least a little bit longer," said Zimmerman.

(Block reported from Cape Canaveral, Matthews from Washington.)

A momentous interview (Part 2)

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](#).

He motioned to the prisoners to follow him. Glenarvan and the rest walked across the "pah" and stopped before Kai-Koumou. He was surrounded by the principal warriors of his tribe, and among them the Maori whose canoe joined that of the Kai-Koumou at the confluence of Pohainhenna, on the Waikato. He was a man about forty years of age, powerfully built and of fierce and cruel aspect. His name was Kara-Tete, meaning "the irascible" in the native tongue. Kai-Koumou treated him with a certain tone of respect, and by the fineness of his tattoo, it was easy to perceive that Kara-Tete held a lofty position in the tribe, but a keen observer would have guessed the feeling of rivalry that existed between these two chiefs. The Major observed that the influence of Kara-Tete gave umbrage to Kai-Koumou. They both ruled the Waikato tribes, and were equal in authority. During this interview Kai-Koumou smiled, but his eyes betrayed a deep-seated enmity.

Kai-Koumou interrogated Glenarvan.

"You are English?" said he.

"Yes," replied Glenarvan, unhesitatingly, as his nationality would facilitate the exchange.

"And your companions?" said Kai-Koumou.

"My companions are English like myself. We are shipwrecked travellers, but it may be important to state that we have taken no part in the war."

"That matters little!" was the brutal answer of Kara-Tete. "Every Englishman is an enemy. Your people invaded our island! They robbed our fields! They burned our villages!"

"They were wrong!" said Glenarvan, quietly. "I say so, because I think it, not because I am in your power."

"Listen," said Kai-Koumou, "the Tohunga, the chief priest of Noui-Atoua has fallen into the hands of your brethren; he is a prisoner among the Pakehas. Our deity has commanded us to ransom him. For my own part, I would rather have torn out your heart, I would have stuck your head, and those of your companions, on the posts of that palisade. But Noui-Atoua has spoken."

As he uttered these words, Kai-Koumou, who till now had been quite unmoved, trembled with rage, and his features expressed intense ferocity.

Then after a few minutes' interval he proceeded more calmly.

"Do you think the English will exchange you for our Tohunga?"

Glenarvan hesitated, all the while watching the Maori chief.

"I do not know," said he, after a moment of silence.

"Speak," returned Kai-Koumou, "is your life worth that of our Tohunga?"

"No," replied Glenarvan. "I am neither a chief nor a priest among my own people."

Paganel, petrified at this reply, looked at Glenarvan in amazement. Kai-Koumou appeared equally astonished.

"You doubt it then?" said he.

"I do not know," replied Glenarvan.

"Your people will not accept you as an exchange for Tohunga?"

"Me alone? no," repeated Glenarvan. "All of us perhaps they might."

"Our Maori custom," replied Kai-Koumou, "is head for head."

"Offer first these ladies in exchange for your priest," said Glenarvan, pointing to Lady Helena and Mary Grant.

Lady Helena was about to interrupt him. But the Major held her back.

"Those two ladies," continued Glenarvan, bowing respectfully toward Lady Helena and Mary Grant, "are personages of rank in their own country."

The warrior gazed coldly at his prisoner. An evil smile relaxed his lips for a moment; then he controlled himself, and in a voice of ill-concealed anger:

"Do you hope to deceive Kai-Koumou with lying words, accursed Pakeha? Can not the eyes of Kai-Koumou read hearts?"

And pointing to Lady Helena: "That is your wife?" he said.

"No! mine!" exclaimed Kara-Tete.

And then pushing his prisoners aside, he laid his hand on the shoulder of Lady Helena, who turned pale at his touch.

"Edward!" cried the unfortunate woman in terror.

Glenarvan, without a word, raised his arm, a shot! And Kara-Tete fell at his feet.

The sound brought a crowd of natives to the spot. A hundred arms were ready, and Glenarvan's revolver was snatched from him.

Kai-Koumou glanced at Glenarvan with a curious expression; then with one hand protecting Glenarvan, with the other he waved off the crowd who were rushing on the party.

At last his voice was heard above the tumult.



"Tapu (taboo)! Tapu!" he shouted.

At that word the crowd stood still before Glenarvan and his companions, who for the time were preserved by a supernatural influence.

A few minutes after they were re-conducted to Ware-Atoua, which was their prison. But Robert Grant and Paganel were not with them.

Kai-Koumou, as frequently happens among the Maoris, joined the title of ariki to that of tribal chief. He was invested with the dignity of priest, and, as such, he had the power to throw over persons or things the superstitious protection of the "taboo."

The "taboo," which is common to all the Polynesian races, has the primary effect of isolating the "tabooed" person and preventing the use of "tabooed" things. According to the Maori doctrine, anyone who laid sacrilegious hands on what had been declared tapu would be punished with death by the insulted deity, and even if the god delayed the vindication of his power, the priests took care to accelerate his vengeance.

By the chiefs, the tapu is made a political engine, except in some cases, for domestic reasons. For instance, a native is tapu for several days when his hair is cut; when he is tattooed; when he is building a canoe, or a house; when he is seriously ill, and when he is dead. If excessive consumption threatens to exterminate the fish of a river, or ruin the early crop of sweet potatoes, these things are put under the protection of the tapu. If a chief wishes to clear his house of hangers-on, he tapu's it; if an English trader displeases him he is tapu. His interdiction has the effect of the old royal "veto."

If an object is tapu, no one can touch it with impunity. When a native is under the interdiction, certain aliments are denied him for a prescribed period. If he is relieved, as regards the severe diet, his slaves feed him with the viands he is forbidden to touch with his hands; if he is poor and has no slaves, he has to take up the food with his mouth, like an animal.

In short, the most trifling acts of the Maoris are directed and modified by this singular custom, the deity is brought into constant contact with their daily life. The tapu has the same weight as a law; or rather, the code of the Maoris, indisputable and undisputed, is comprised in the frequent applications of the tapu.

As to the prisoners confined in the Ware-Atoua, it was an arbitrary tapu which had saved them from the fury of the tribe. Some of the natives, friends and partisans of Kai-Koumou, desisted at once on hearing their chief's voice, and protected the captives from the rest.

Glenarvan cherished no illusive hopes as to his own fate; nothing but his death could atone for the murder of a chief, and among these people death was only the concluding act of a martyrdom of torture. Glenarvan, therefore, was fully prepared to pay the penalty of the righteous indignation that nerved his arm, but he hoped that the wrath of Kai-Koumou would not extend beyond himself.

What a night he and his companions passed! Who could picture their agonies or measure their sufferings? Robert and Paganel had not been restored to them, but their fate was no doubtful matter. They were too surely the first victims of the frenzied natives. Even McNabbs, who was always sanguine, had abandoned hope. John Mangles was nearly frantic at the sight of Mary Grant's despair at being separated from her brother. Glenarvan pondered over the terrible request of Lady Helena, who preferred dying by his hand to submitting to torture and slavery. How was he to summon the terrible courage!

"And Mary? Who has a right to strike her dead?" thought John, whose heart was broken.

Escape was clearly impossible. Ten warriors, armed to the teeth, kept watch at the door of Ware-Atoua.

The morning of February 13th arrived. No communication had taken place between the natives and the "tabooed" prisoners. A limited supply of provisions was in the house, which the unhappy inmates scarcely touched. Misery deadened the pangs of hunger. The day passed without change, and without hope; the funeral ceremonies of the dead chief would doubtless be the signal for their execution.

Although Glenarvan did not conceal from himself the probability that Kai-Koumou had

given up all idea of exchange, the Major still cherished a spark of hope.

"Who knows," said he, as he reminded Glenarvan of the effect produced on the chief by the death of Kara-Tete - "who knows but that Kai-Koumou, in his heart, is very much obliged to you?"

But even McNabbs' remarks failed to awaken hope in Glenarvan's mind. The next day passed without any appearance of preparation for their punishment; and this was the reason of the delay.

The Maoris believe that for three days after death the soul inhabits the body, and therefore, for three times twenty-four hours, the corpse remains unburied. This custom was rigorously observed. Till February 15th the "pah" was deserted.

John Mangles, hoisted on Wilson's shoulders, frequently reconnoitred the outer defences. Not a single native was visible; only the watchful sentinels relieving guard at the door of the Ware-Atoua.

But on the third day the huts opened; all the savages, men, women, and children, in all several hundred Maoris, assembled in the "pah," silent and calm.

Kai-Koumou came out of his house, and surrounded by the principal chiefs of his tribe, he took his stand on a mound some feet above the level, in the centre of the enclosure. The crowd of natives formed in a half circle some distance off, in dead silence.

At a sign from Kai-Koumou, a warrior bent his steps toward Ware-Atoua.

"Remember," said Lady Helena to her husband. Glenarvan pressed her to his heart, and Mary Grant went closer to John Mangles, and said hurriedly:

"Lord and Lady Glenarvan cannot but think if a wife may claim death at her husband's hands, to escape a shameful life, a betrothed wife may claim death at the hands of her betrothed husband, to escape the same fate. John! At this last moment I ask you, have we not long been betrothed to each other in our secret hearts? May I rely on you, as Lady Helena relies on Lord Glenarvan?"

"Mary!" cried the young captain in his despair. "Ah! dear Mary -"

The mat was lifted, and the captives led to Kai-Koumou; the two women were resigned to their fate; the men dissembled their sufferings with superhuman effort.

They arrived in the presence of the Maori chief.

"You killed Kara-Tete," said he to Glenarvan.

"I did," answered Glenarvan.

"You die to-morrow at sunrise."

"Alone?" asked Glenarvan, with a beating heart.

"Oh! If our Tohunga's life was not more precious than yours!" exclaimed Kai-Koumou, with a ferocious expression of regret.

At this moment there was a commotion among the natives. Glenarvan looked quickly around; the crowd made way, and a warrior appeared heated by running, and sinking with fatigue.

Kai-Koumou, as soon as he saw him, said in English, evidently for the benefit of the captives:

"You come from the camp of the Pakehas?"

"Yes," answered the Maori.

"You have seen the prisoner, our Tohunga?"

"I have seen him."

"Alive?"

"Dead! English have shot him."

It was all over with Glenarvan and his companions.

"All!" cried Kai-Koumou; "you all die to-morrow at daybreak."