

EXCLUSIVE

Gotcha!

Labour donor is Asian organised crime boss

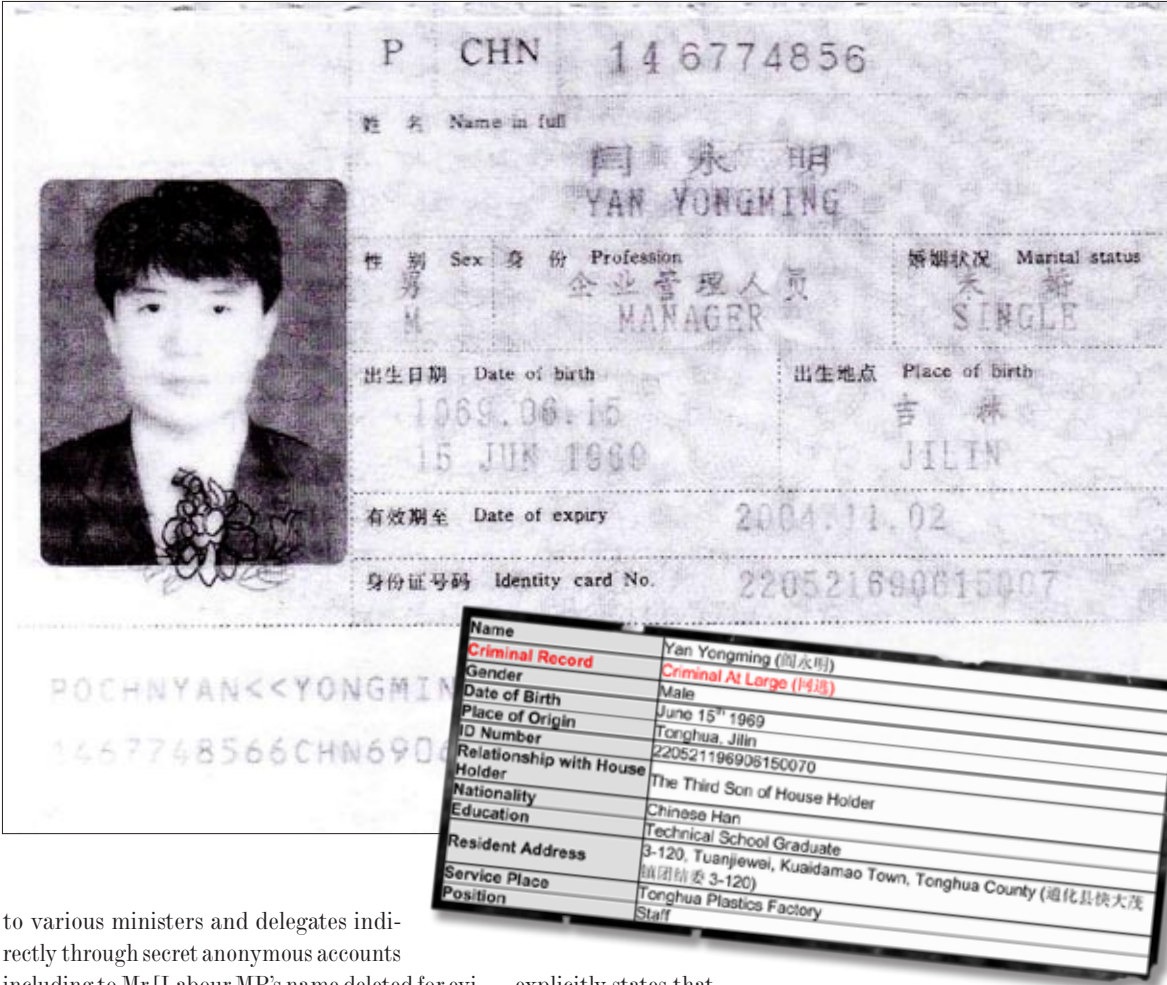
By Ian Wishart  
Editor, TGIF Edition

He's at the centre of a growing political scandal, and tonight *TGIF Edition* can reveal Chinese millionaire Yang Liu is not who he claims to be – his New Zealand passport, political donations, expensive properties, bank accounts, immigration status and company directorships were all obtained using a false name and identification.

Liu, whose political donations to the Labour Party were linked by Department of Internal Affairs staff in *TGIF* last week to his obtaining NZ citizenship via direct ministerial intervention, is wanted in China for trial on charges of embezzling quarter of a *billion* New Zealand dollars.

His real name, confirmed for the first time in this country by *TGIF Edition*, is indeed Yongming Yan (referred to from here in as Yan Yongming in the Chinese reverse style where the surname is used first) – the identity on a second passport published on the front page of last week's newspaper.

Even worse, an informant resource report to the Immigration Service last year, but apparently ignored by Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones, provides detailed information on Yan's involvement at the head of an Asian organised crime syndicate, which "paid large cash sums



to various ministers and delegates indirectly through secret anonymous accounts including to Mr [Labour MP's name deleted for evidential purposes] – some of these are 'worked' by [Yan] to have drunken dinners and then enticed to frequent some Chinese prostitutes with this person. Chinese have been practicing corruption for decades. New Zealand is new to it. [Yan] then uses this 'secret prostitution conduct' to force corruption and manipulation."

The report to the Immigration Service also

explicitly states that Bill Liu (Yan) "has paid substantial cash to wealthy associates to provide referrals to the Immigration Depart to support his arguments for remaining and having residence in NZ...has connections to the underworld...launder[s] cash", and it provided names, phone numbers and details. The big question for Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones tonight is why – knowing all this - he

Continue reading

on the

INSIDE



BOY RACER

'Vigilante' fined

Page 4



BODY HEAT

X-rated scanners

Page 10



'HEROES'

The giveaway

Page 13

The ties that blind

By Ian Wishart

Prime Minister Helen Clark's efforts to defuse a 'cash for passports' timebomb has failed – amid new revelations of the links between an accused Asian organised crime boss and the Labour MPs who helped give him New Zealand citizenship

As our lead story above confirms, the man named last week as Yang (Bill) Liu, and given a kiwi passport in that name, is in fact Yan Yongming, wanted for a quarter billion dollar fraud in China. Tonight, *TGIF Edition* can also reveal that one of Yongming's former associates in this country – Shane Phillips – was a Labour Party campaign manager,

and his brother Daniel Phillips works in the office of Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones – the man who gave 'Bill Liu' citizenship against the recommendations of officials who'd investigated his background.

That perceived conflict of interest was not disclosed by Prime Minister Helen Clark when she attempted to take the heat out of *TGIF Edition*'s story last weekend, by announcing an inquiry and revealing 'Liu' had donated \$5,000 to Labour MP Chris Carter.

Shane Phillips, also known as Shane Te Pou, began working with 'Liu', real name Yan Yongming, in 2005, and is alleged by witnesses to have helped

collect donations from 'Liu' for the campaigns of Labour MP Dover Samuels and also Internal Affairs minister Rick Barker.

Shane's brother, Daniel Phillips, currently works as an advisor to Associate Immigration minister Shane Jones but had previously been Labour MP Dover Samuel's private secretary at parliament.

Samuels was effectively the sponsor of 'Bill Liu's citizenship bid, writing strident letters to Internal Affairs minister Rick Barker urging his colleague to ignore allegations about Liu's alleged criminal activities, and give him NZ citizenship by ministerial prerogative.

But, as *TGIF Edition* revealed last week, New

Zealand's minister of Internal Affairs turned out to have a major conflict of interest – he knew 'Bill Liu' personally – and he had to call on Shane Jones to officiate as an "independent" cabinet minister in making the final decision. Except that with the brother of one of Bill Liu's assistants working in his office, there are now major questions about whether Shane Jones should have declared a conflict of interest as well.

This week, with Associate Immigration minister Shane Jones now refusing to answer his cellphone to numbers he didn't recognise, *TGIF Edition* instead put questions straight to Daniel Phillips, in his office.

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## off BEAT

### BEAST FEAST PROBLEM

London (DPA) — About half the dogs and a third of all cats in Britain are too fat, a veterinary charity warned today. Worse: most pet owners don't notice that their four-legged friends are packing too many kilos. According to the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, only a fifth of cat owners are aware that their pet has a weight problem. That applied to only a third of dog owners. Since so many dogs and cats are overweight, pet owners have unrealistic perceptions of the ideal weight and shape for their pet, said veterinarian Sean Wensley. He advises pet owners to check their pet's weight by hand. If you can no longer feel your pet's ribs or spine, the animal is overweight.

### A MINTIES MOMENT ON VIDEO

Johannesburg (DPA) — South Africans are splitting their sides over a video showing a po-faced politician disappearing into thin air with a loud crack when his chair broke during a TV interview. The chairman of parliament's portfolio committee on finance, Nhlanelahle Nene, was giving an interview to SABC public television on the morning of Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's budget policy statement Tuesday when the mishap occurred. A splitting sound heralds the demise of the chair but the bespectacled Nene, dressed in a natty pin-striped suit, merely winces and continues chatting with the female host about finance. Then suddenly, in a classic "candid camera" moment, the chair breaks beneath him and he falls from view, behind a desk, arms waving in the air. The presenter somehow manages to keep her composure and continues with the programme. The interview with Nene resumed later. Two days later, the video on Youtube.com had been viewed over 28,000 times, with one cheeky viewer wondering if Nene's response typified his approach to politics. "If you hear the first warning 'crack' of an impending crisis, do you ignore it and carry on as normal until everything cracks, breaks, and collapses and then end up on your proverbial backside?" the viewer asked. 

### SURVEY: POLES DREAD FRIDAYS

WARSAW, Poland, (UPI) — Canon Europe said a survey of adults in European countries indicates that the least-liked weekday among Polish workers is Friday. The company said its survey suggests that Italian and German workers carry the more traditional view of Monday as the worst the week has to offer, Poland Radio reported yesterday. Meanwhile, the workers questioned for the survey said they are productive during about 75 percent of the time they spend at work, with long waits for document printing and Internet-related delays as the most often-cited causes of productivity slumps. However, the majority of respondents said they do not believe cigarette breaks or conversations with co-workers to be major strains of productivity.

### AUSSIE SURVEY: DAILY DRINKERS HAPPIER

MELBOURNE, (UPI) — Researchers at Australia's Deakin University said a survey indicates that those in the country who consume alcohol daily are happier than those who abstain. The researchers said their twice-yearly Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, which was created from interviews with 2000 Australians, found respondents who said they drink alcohol every day also reported being the happiest overall, *The Age* reported this week. Those who do not drink at all were found to be the unhappiest by the survey. Bob Cummins, a professor of psychology at Deakin and author of the study, said the happiness reported by daily drinkers was likely the result of the socialization often accompanied by alcohol consumption and not a consequence of alcohol itself. The people who do well are those who have one or two glasses, he said. That probably means having a beer with your mates after work or going home and having a glass of wine with your partner. It's almost certainly that social connection that is facilitated by the process of moderate drinking that is beneficial to well-being rather than the alcohol itself, Cummins said. He said the findings of his study should be of interest to politicians who have attempted to crack down on the binge-drinking culture that involves many of the country's young people. Understanding the circumstances in which they drink and what they get out of it will result in a much more informed set of decisions about how we tackle binge drinking, Cummins said.

# Government pushing light bulb ban, regardless

Labour is bulldozing ahead with its plans to ban ordinary light bulbs, and may also pass laws restricting the number of lights allowed in a house.

National's energy spokesman Gerry Brownlee has released details of an Electricity Commission plan to spend \$3.5 million of taxpayer money in the current economic climate to 're-educate' New Zealanders about the benefits of using mercury vapour CFL eco lamps in homes, despite the known health dangers.

The Commission has drafted a Request For Proposal document that cites "misrepresentations and misconceptions in the market" about the dangers of CFL energy saver eco-bulbs as the reason for a new taxpayer-funded propaganda campaign to "educate the market" and give the impression of "independence... to increase the credibility and acceptance" of the Government's line that the light bulbs are safe.

The new spin is likely to be centralised to one particular PR agency, according to the Electricity Commission documents.

The Fire Service's Peter Wilding last month confirmed to *TGIF Edition* after checking callout files that the service has had more incidents linked to mercury vapour light bulbs in the past five years than it has to ordinary bulbs, and those incidents range up to energy saver lights catching fire.

More evidence that the energy saver bulbs are a fire hazard has come from the US this month, where Fox News TV anchor Geraldo Rivera's garage caught fire when a CFL bulb melted and set ablaze, destroying two expensive vintage Jaguar cars inside and nearly spreading to the adjoining house where residents were sleeping.

Rivera told Fox News viewers fire investigators had traced the blaze to the light, and he would be pursuing the lighting manufacturers under American product liability laws.

Apart from the fire hazard, the biggest concern about the new CFL eco light bulbs is the mercury content: three major studies have now confirmed broken bulbs can send mercury pollution spikes



**“MORE EVIDENCE THAT THE ENERGY SAVER BULBS ARE A FIRE HAZARD HAS COME FROM THE US THIS MONTH, WHERE FOX NEWS TV ANCHOR GERALDO RIVERA'S GARAGE CAUGHT FIRE WHEN A CFL BULB MELTED AND SET ABLAZE**

soaring in homes, sometimes hundreds of times higher than recommended safe limits.

Gerry Brownlee says National will overturn the light bulb ban if elected, and calls Labour's \$3.5 million propaganda campaign in hard economic times as a wake-up call for the public.

"It's a vote for a nanny state government, spending your taxes to tell you what light bulbs to use, how much hot water can flow through your shower head,

and how big your hot water cylinder can be.

"In tough economic times, kiwi bill payers will be questioning Labour's priorities."

The Electricity Commission report also signals a possible crackdown on the number of lights a house is allowed to have, as another way of saving money for the government.

**RELATED STORY:** *Investigate* magazine special report on CFL dangers



ACT Party Leader Rodney Hide, left, walks along with the wicked witch as she spansks Joe farmer at the Launch of the ACT New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme Policy, Cornwall Park, Auckland. NZPA / Wayne Drought.

## Act gets dramatic about ETS message

**WELLINGTON, OCT 24** — ACT made a dramatic point about its opposition to the Government's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) today.

It put on a piece of street theatre at Auckland's Cornwall Park where a "farmer" was whipped by a "witch".

The farmer was hauling a trailer carrying an oversized \$5 billion cheque made out to Russia on behalf of the New Zealand taxpayer.

ACT leader Rodney Hide argued that under the Kyoto Protocol New Zealand money would go to

countries such as Russia, which have large forests.

"This is sheer lunacy — New Zealand emits 0.02 percent of world CO2 emissions. Nothing we do will change the world's weather."

Labour say New Zealand exports would suffer if it did not participate in Kyoto and the ETS would reduce costs.

National would amend the ETS legislation. It has a goal of halving New Zealand's emissions by 2050.

— NZPA

## National gets a boost but polls present confusing picture

**WELLINGTON, OCT 24** — Two opinion polls released today have boosted National's chances of holding a majority in the next Parliament but they also added to the confusing picture of voter intentions.

The only consistent factor in the last four polls has been increased support for the Greens, while Labour has been up and down.

This morning a New Zealand Herald DigiPoll put National's party vote support down one point to 50.4 percent, which would still be enough to win 63 seats — an outright majority — on election night.

Labour was up 1.3 points to 37 percent and the Greens gained half a point to reach 5.4 percent.

A few hours later a New Zealand Morgan poll presented a different set of results — National up 2.5 points to 43 percent and Labour down 5.5 points to 32 percent.

The Greens shot up to a remarkable 11.5 percent, which appeared to be linked with Labour's decrease.

Although the Morgan poll showed National holding an 11 point lead over Labour, the centre-left and centre-right gap was much smaller.

Labour and the Greens together captured 43.5 percent of the party vote and National plus the ACT Party stood at 46.5 — a gap of only three points.

A TV3 poll last night showed the centre-right and the centre-left both holding 59 seats, with the Maori Party in a position to decide which of the main parties formed the next government.

New Zealand First dropped 0.7 of a point in the Herald poll and was on only 2.1 percent support, but the Morgan poll showed it gaining half a point to 4.5 percent — just half a point short of the 5 percent it needs to win seats.

— NZPA





# Reid takes the stand at murder trial

**CHRISTCHURCH, OCT 24** – Murder accused Liam James Reid paused for a deep breath and then described the rough sex – including rape, domination, and degradation – involved in his relationship with his ex-partner.

He took the witness stand on day 13 of his trial in the High Court at Christchurch, after the Crown closed its case at 10.54am, following evidence from the last of more than 100 witnesses.

Reid, 36, told of drug taking and rough sex with his partner, but he denies that he was the person who raped and murdered Christchurch woman Emma Agnew, or that he was the sex attacker who raped, sexually violated, robbed and attempted to murder a woman in Dunedin nine days later.

His ex-partner, who has name suppression, has alleged he admitted being involved, and Reid's evidence today targeted her credibility.

Defence counsel Glenn Henderson said the defence would call four witnesses, including Reid who then told the court of his relationship with his ex-partner.

He said he had lost count of the number of times she had dumped him.

The woman had claimed the relationship was "based upon sex" and Reid acknowledged that sex was a very big part of it.

"But it was a lot more complex than that because (the woman) and myself strove for the mental connection that goes along with the type of sex we have."

He disputed her portrayal that the sex was abnormal all the time.

"It was very normal on some days, and very abnormal on others depending on what mood took us at the time."

When main defence counsel David Bunce asked him about the woman's "sexual requirements", Reid

took a deep breath.

"She liked the thought of being raped and controlled. She liked being tied up and strangled. She liked being cut, or hit, or degraded. She liked forceful rough sex."

Mr Bunce asked: "If she did not get these things, what would be the outcome?"

Reid replied: "To put it mildly, you would lose your job."

He told of the woman leaving her family to join him in Otago, and said that she took a lot of cannabis and some BZP party pills with her, and acted as a drug dealer in the area.

He said on one visit, they had "smoked copious amounts of pot and had copious amounts of sex".

On another visit, she bought a lot of cannabis leaf – known as cabbage – and they baked a large cake with it.

He told how the couple had a safe word for when the sex became too rough and one of them wanted to stop.

The ex-partner had chosen the word "rape" but Reid said he would have preferred the word "mercy".

"For me, mentally, it was in context."

He told of spending time in a mental hospital near Dunedin and then being driven back to Christchurch by the woman.

He spoke of having sex with the woman with the car parked near in Linwood, but denied that he had punched her in the vagina as she claimed in evidence.

Reid said he had never punched her in the vagina at any time.

The Crown case has included evidence of a similar injury on Miss Agnew, and the woman in Dunedin being attacked in the same way.

– NZPA

# Commerce commission steps in over failed air show

**AUCKLAND, OCT 24** – The Commerce Commission says it had no choice but to step in to help ticket holders to a failed Waikato air and car show get a refund after the company was put into liquidation.

The intervention comes as the promoter behind the failed event faces further charges.

The Wings and Wheels over Waikato event was to have taken place on the weekend of March 7, but ended up being postponed indefinitely, leaving sponsors and ticket holders out of pocket.

The Commerce Commission obtained a court order in March, freezing the assets of event organiser Ken Ross and associated companies Hawker Holding Limited, Media Limited and airshow.co.nz Limited, so that ticket money would be available for refunds.

In an agreement reached between the airshow organisers and the commission in June, ticket holders' funds were paid into the trust account of the organisers' solicitors, with the organisers undertaking to administer the process of refunding ticket holders.

Commerce Commission Director of Fair Trading Adrian Sparrow said the commission had to intervene because the company had gone into liquidation in August, and the organisers had behaved in a manner inconsistent with the agreement.

Under the agreement, all refund applications were to be directed to the Minister of Commerce, Lianne Dalziel, instead of to the organisers.

The commission said ticket holders could now access a refund form via the home page of the Commerce Commission, and ticket holders were advised to disregard the refund form posted on airshow.co.nz.

Any ticket holders who had already sent refund forms to either the airshow or the minister's office were assured that their documentation would be collected and held by the commission.

"The commission has given the airshow organ-

isers ample opportunity to facilitate the refund process for ticket holders.

"However, recent developments, including the liquidation of the company and the organisers' directing that the refund form be sent to the wrong office, mean that the commission has no choice but to step in, in order to continue to protect the ticket holders' interests.

"At the same time we are in discussion with the liquidator regarding the status of the ticket holders."

Ticket holders should ensure they keep copies of any documentation of materials that they send to the commission, he said.

Although airshow.co.nz Limited is in liquidation, ticket holders' funds are being held in trust. The terms of the agreement between the commission and Mr Ross did not allow release of those funds to the liquidator.

The liquidation of the companies meant ticket holders could expect a continued delay in obtaining a refund, he said.

The commission is in discussion with the liquidator and will continue to take all necessary steps to protect the rights of ticket holders, he said.

It was possible the matter could be referred to the High Court, and if the court determined no trust relationship existed then ticket holders were likely to be treated as unsecured creditors. They would then share in the company's assets equally with all other unsecured creditors, he said.

Ross appeared in Hamilton District Court on September 28 on 232 charges laid under the Fair Trading Act.

The charges were filed against Ross' two companies, Hawker Holdings Ltd and Airshow.co.nz.

Ross also faced an extra two charges of fraud, bringing the total number of fraud charges to 12.

No pleas have been entered and he was remanded on bail until his next appearance in December.

– NZPA



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## Tauranga man fined for ramming into boyracer's car

**TAURANGA, OCT 24** – A Tauranga man who rammed a boy racer's car with his 4WD should be applauded – “to a point”, his lawyer told a court today.

The actions of Edwin Francis Murray, 53, a driller, were an understandable response from a citizen who had had enough of the irresponsible behaviour of young male drivers, said Viv Winiata.

But Mr Winiata conceded his client became “over-zealous” when he rammed the Nissan Cefiro a second time, punched the windows, kicked the door panels and yelled abuse at the driver.

Murray appeared before Community Magistrate Mary Symans in Tauranga District Court for a depositions hearing on charges of reckless driving, assault with a blunt instrument (a motor vehicle) and threatening to kill.

When police prosecutor Sergeant Craig Kitto withdrew the assault and replaced the threatening to kill with a count of using threatening language, Murray pleaded guilty.

He was fined \$500 plus \$130 court costs for reckless driving, disqualified for six months and ordered to pay \$500 reparation.

A \$200 fine but no court costs was the penalty for using threatening language.

The court was told how, on a wet evening in June, Murray heard the sound of wheels spinning near his Welcome Bay home, told his wife to ring the police and went outside where he could see and smell the smoke fumes.

He got into his 4WD and bailed up the Cefiro in the carpark of nearby tennis courts where it had allegedly been doing a burnout.

After the first ramming, the car's engine stopped. When it re-started, Murray drove into the vehicle again, pushing it 15m through a fence.

When police arrived, he said: “I am sick of them (boy racers). They are doing it all the time.”

Mr Winiata claimed his client had intended to



block the other vehicle from leaving until police got there.

Several residents, also fed up with their neighbourhood being used for illegal driving, had gathered and were “happy” with Murray's actions.

Other citizens should be apprehending

boy racers for the police, the lawyer suggested but added that Murray accepted he had “gone too far”.

Mr Winiata said the 18-year-old driver of the Cefiro had been taking a potential buyer for a test drive in the unwarranted car, which carried a red-sticker banning it from being on the road.

In July, the youth pleaded guilty to operating a vehicle with sustained loss of traction and was fined \$1000, disqualified from driving for eight months and ordered not to have any interest in a motor vehicle for a year.

Because there was fault on both sides, his client should not have to pay the \$1065 demanded in reparation, offering \$500 instead, Mr Winiata said.

He asked the magistrate to consider not disqualifying Murray from driving.

The teenager's contributory, provocative behaviour was “the genesis of what occurred here”.

Sergeant Kitto said Murray was trying to “pass on the blame” and diminish his own responsibility.

“The young man who was involved has appeared in court and has paid his dues to society.”

Although donuts, wheel spinning and burnouts were annoying and dangerous behaviour, dealing with it “vigilante-style” could not be condoned, said the sergeant.

Rather than taking the law into their own hands, people should take down a registration number and give it to the police.

After an adjournment to consider the case, the community magistrate found that there were no reasons sufficiently special not to disqualify Murray.

She considered \$500 a “reasonable” amount for reparation.

– NZPA

## Maori inmate ‘dies while being restrained by prison guards’

**WELLINGTON, OCT 24** – A police investigation is being held into the death of a Maori prison inmate in central Queensland last weekend.

Josen Tofia Mataia, 32, on remand at the jail 20km north of Rockhampton, reportedly died while being restrained by guards at the Capricornia Correctional Centre.

The Prisoners Legal Service (PLS) is calling for an immediate Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) investigation into the death.

Mataia was originally arrested in Cairns on break-in and entering charges, but allegedly assaulted an officer at a police station.

PLS spokeswoman Matilda Alexander told the ABC his death was seen by other inmates.

They “saw the prisoner being dragged along by between four and six officers in an inappropriate restraint position”.

The death raised questions of inappropriate use of force.

“There were witnesses to it and I certainly don't think that there's any doubt about the fact that he died while being restrained,” she said.

Sources told the Courier-Mail newspaper in Brisbane that Mataia had earlier assaulted two of the officers, and that at least one of the guards had clothing soaked in urine.

Prison guards at Capricornia walked off the job on Wednesday – leaving management and police to operate the high-security jail in lockdown – to protest about the officer being required to stay in wet clothes until police arrived to take custody of the clothing.

A local newspaper, the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin, reported it was initially claimed Mataia died after a heart attack.

– NZPA

## Report: Investors rush to finance companies

**WELLINGTON, OCT 24** – Investors are rushing to take advantage of finance companies' high interest rates, following the announcement of the Government's deposit guarantee scheme.

Investment advisers said finance companies had seen an explosion of new money in the two weeks since the policy was announced. *The National Business Review* reported today. Adviser Chris Lee said many investors were not waiting for the guarantee to be settled to invest in top-tier firms, but were not yet putting their cash into second-tier financiers.

Asia-Pacific Risk Management director Roger Kerr said many financiers were likely to cut deposit rates quite quickly as lending could not keep pace with the influx of funds.

– NZPA



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## Dismal weather dashes hopes for fine long weekend

**WELLINGTON OCT 24** – People looking forward to a sunny Labour Weekend will be bitterly disappointed by weather reports predicting wind, rain and snow.

However, the MetService said the wintry spell was expected to be brief with conditions clearing from Sunday. MetService issued a special weather advisory for Southland, Otago, Canterbury, Marlborough and the central North Island plateau, warning of a cold southerly blast expected to hit the areas.

The southerly was expected to spread over the south and east of the South Island on Saturday afternoon, and the southern and central North Island on Sunday.

Farmers were advised that conditions would be bleak for a time, especially for new born animals out in the open.

Motorists were also warned to drive to the conditions, with a likelihood that snow and ice could affect roads.

Snow was predicted down to about 400 metres in Southland and Otago, 600m in Canterbury and 800m on the Kaikoura coast.

The southerly was expected to reach the central North Island plateau about midday on Sunday, and snow could lower to about 1000m in the evening, affecting the Desert Road summit.

– NZPA



Editorial

Labour must tell truth

Last week, *TGIF Edition* broke what became an international news story – the mysterious citizenship application of Mr Liu, a donor to the Labour party who’d been given NZ citizenship only after the direct intervention of a Labour cabinet minister on his behalf.

The waters were muddled slightly when the National Party coughed to having received a donation in 2005 from Liu as well, but the reality is that National – unlike Labour – had no idea of Liu’s background. Nor was National the party that granted him citizenship. If they had been, we would certainly have deemed it relevant.

But it wasn’t, and it isn’t. Instead, tonight *TGIF Edition* has named Liu as someone else – real name Yan Yongming – wanted in connection with an alleged quarter billion dollar fraud back in China.

His entire New Zealand identity – now including a legitimate New Zealand passport thanks in large part to the actions of Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones, Internal Affairs Minister Rick Barker and Labour MP Dover Samuels – is a fake.

Not one of those Labour MPs has been willing to give *TGIF Edition* or any other media outlet

answers to a growing list of extremely serious questions this week. Internal Affairs Minister Rick Barker, for example, absented himself from a final decision on ‘Liu’ because, we learnt last week, he knew the man personally.

How likely is it, in a country of four million people, that a mate of the Internal Affairs minister would end up begging Labour for New Zealand citizenship?

There are fresh allegations this week, including that ‘Liu’ (in reality, Yan Yongming) may have donated cash to the campaigns of Rick Barker and Dover Samuels.

Prime Minister Helen Clark coughed to the existence of a \$5,000 donation to Labour MP Chris Carter, but no mention was made of any others.

Given that we’ve now revealed the Minister of Internal Affairs’ good friend Bill Liu is actually wanted criminal Yan Yongming, it’s about time the Prime Minister forced her minister to come clean – after all, as Helen reminded all of us, “this election is about Trust”.

Then there’s the revelation in tonight’s issue that the Immigration Service received written information midway through last year alleging Bill Liu, liv-

ing in the Metropolis, was a money launderer who’d allegedly bribed people in his bid to stay in the country. That tip off will form part of the public record deep inside the NZIS – Shane Jones’ department – and again the Prime Minister must now come clean on what NZIS knew about ‘Liu’ and when. Because those answers will help explain why Shane Jones acted twice: once to refuse to revoke what was then Liu’s permanent residency, and a second time to rubber stamp his citizenship application against the advice of the Internal Affairs Department.

It now appears certain both Shane Jones and Rick Barker were clearly on notice from a range of official sources about the bona-fides and activities of Yan Yongming, aka Mr Liu.

New Zealand now waits for an answer Prime Minister. What did Labour know and when? Why did Labour go against official advice to approve this man? And did it have anything to do, as numerous independent sources are now alleging, with bribes, sex and favours?

This is a matter of extreme public interest, virtually unprecedented in NZ political history. And this election is about “trust”.

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Comment

The fates conspire against John McCain

By Jonathan V. Last

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Campaigns look to historical parallels for comfort and guidance. Barack Obama hoped to run as Jimmy Carter in ‘76. John McCain’s best-case scenario was from the same election: He needed to run as Gerald Ford-plus, eking out a win where Ford’s late surge fell short.

But the way this race has turned out, the McCain campaign’s real parallel might be the Book of Job.

Job, you’ll recall, was a prosperous, pious man whose faith God tested with various unjust afflictions and calamities. McCain had been a (politically) prosperous man whose good fortune helped him capture the Republican nomination. But since June, the fates have scorned him.

Throughout his Senate career, McCain has made a point of working with Democrats. He passed the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance reforms, orchestrated the “Gang of 14” compromise on judicial nominations in 2005, and worked with Ted Kennedy on a failed immigration-reform package. For these efforts, he was roundly abused by Republicans.

Yet a few weeks into the race, it was Obama, who has never reached across the aisle on divisive issues, who was being hailed as the bipartisan uniter.

Furthermore, with one exception (Nebraska Sen. Chuck Hagel), no Republican in Congress had been more critical of President Bush’s administration than McCain. He was the only Republican to seriously oppose Bush in 2000, and the two had never been personally close.

And yet the Obama campaign, with some success, has depicted McCain as Bush’s heir. And it wasn’t just Bush who was being hung around McCain’s neck. In September, the Obama campaign ran ads tying McCain to Rush Limbaugh.

Limbaugh, of course, detests McCain, having said during the primaries that he would vote for Obama or Hillary Clinton before casting a ballot for the Arizona senator. McCain had always worn this scorn as a badge of honour. But now he was getting it coming and going.

By the time Hurricane Gustav forced McCain to cancel part of his national convention, it looked as though God himself really was against him.

But that was just the start of McCain’s troubles. Seven weeks before the election, Lehman Brothers collapsed, setting off a financial panic that has shaken the global economy and destroyed a couple of trillion dollars of Americans’ wealth. McCain was

punished in the polls because people concluded, reasonably (if not quite fairly), that the party holding the presidency is responsible for the economy.

The timing of the economic catastrophe couldn’t have been worse for McCain. If it had been seven weeks earlier, there would have been time for his campaign to assimilate the events and recover; seven weeks later, and it would have been a non-issue. But after simmering for six long years, the crisis manifested itself at the moment when it could do maximum political harm to McCain.

Injustice kept raining down from the heavens. Looking to further scapegoat McCain for Bush’s economic mess, Obama portrayed him as a maniac for “deregulation.”

In general, this charge is true of McCain and most conservatives. But in one essential failure of the subprime mess, McCain actually had been on the other side. In 2006, McCain called for the reform and regulation of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, a call resisted by Obama and the Democrats.

The final straw may have come last week, when the word terrorist could be heard among catcalls from the crowd at a McCain rally in Wisconsin. (It’s not entirely clear if the malcontents were referring to Obama or his

associate William Ayers.) The media had a fit, decrying the “insane rage” McCain was stoking on the right. Columnists, reporters and bloggers hyperventilated about dangerous, deranged Republicans.

This sensitivity seems somewhat selective. For the last six years, some on the left have constantly referred to President Bush as a war criminal. In 2002, a columnist for the New Statesman offered a bounty for killing Bush, the most direct of several left-wing allusions to assassination.

More recently, Madonna and Sandra Bernhard expressed hope that violence would be visited on Sarah Palin. And the son of an elected Democrat in Tennessee committed identity theft against her.

But you don’t hear much fussing about the insane rage of Obama supporters. The Atlantic Monthly serenely described the crime in Tennessee as an attempt to “vet” Palin.

So McCain has had it rough - Old Testament rough. Really, all that’s missing are frogs and locusts.

Of course, in the end, Job was rewarded for his steadfastness in the face of adversity. Which may be where the parallel with McCain breaks down.

Jonathan V. Last is a columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Readers may e-mail him at [jlast@phillynews.com](mailto:jlast@phillynews.com).

Letters

Time to come clean

"In the Business News October 2008 it states on the front page that Jeanette Fitzsimons is a share holder of Windflow Ltd. How very appropriate because Windflow is the company that produces those wind turbine electricity generators.

However when I read on I see that Helen Clark and some of her team visited Windflow to help them celebrate the opening of their new factory in Christchurch.

"In her address Clark noted it might be time for a state owned enterprise to support Windflow".

Wow Helen promising to spend money again! But watch out Helen, you will be putting tax payer money into Jeanette's pocket if you are not careful!

But hold on! Isn't this starting to look like a case of insider trading?

Well it is for a good cause isn't it?"

Geof Mead

Editor responds:

*Incidentally, the company that won multimillion dollar contracts to help supply mercury vapour 'eco bulbs' on various taxpayer-subsidised government arrangements is also closely linked to the Green Party.*

The meltdown

The present international, financial 'meltdown', would be like a hilarious pantomime if it wasn't so potentially dangerous. For years governments worldwide have been obliged to borrow their nation's financial needs from the centralised, international cartel-owned and controlled banking system.

Then, when the 'pavlova hits the fan' and the international bankers find themselves, or contrive to appear in 'trouble', they turn to governments – i.e. taxpayers – to bail them out of their dire straits.

The governments of USA, Iceland, UK, Russia, the EU, even NZ among many others have provided funds or promised funds in the hundreds of billions of dollars, to support these commercialised, confidence tricksters and profit takers.

But if governments/taxpayers – [governments don't have any money of their own] – in stable economic times, are obliged to borrow from international and central bankers, in order to function; where on earth are governments/taxpayers supposed to obtain the funds – in unstable economic conditions – to support a corrupt, greedy, over-stretched, international banking and financial system?

The government of the US is placing itself and its people, even deeper into debt by spending \$US700 billion in purchasing the loss-making debts of its financial institutions.

All the nations in the world, with the possible exception of Cuba, are in debt. USA's government debt is an insurmountable 11 thousand, billion dollars!!! Black African nations owe \$US2.1 trillion Other 3rd World nations owe equally horrendous amounts.

Nations, through their industry and natural assets, produce wealth!!

But nobody ever asks, why are all these nations in debt?

Or, how does the international and centralised banking system get to own and lend that wealth, at interest?

R. Jordan, Tauranga

Strong leaders

It concerns me greatly that a political leader like Helen Clark can suddenly change her mind on important issues when it seems she will gain an advantage. The good of our country takes second place to her ambitions. We need strong leaders with high ethical principles. Men and women who are not afraid to say they are wrong and who put our nations best interests before their own agenda. Clark wants power at any cost. It's time to vote in John Key. A man who admits if he was wrong and wants the best for NZ.

Letters to the editor can be posted to:

PO BOX 302188, North Harbour, North Shore 0751 or emailed to: [letters@tgifedition.tv](mailto:letters@tgifedition.tv)





Two medical workers operate on a plastic model at a national forum of public hygiene emergencies in Hangzhou in east China's Zhejiang province. The outburst of SARS and bird flu have awoken China's authority to invest in the emergency system. FEATURECHINA/Bu Ensa

# End of the world?

By Peter Curson

Over the last few years extraordinary attention has been directed towards the threat imposed by climate change and many of the world's politicians and press have taken up the clarion call for action. But is the end of the world nigh as some would have us believe?

Predictions of ecological doom, including many recent ones, have a less than impressive track record and people should, as the *Economist* once remarked, take many of them with more than a liberal pinch of salt, rather than just lapping them up with relish.

For reasons of their own, the world's leaders, politicians, academics and journalists will no doubt continue to peddle ecological catastrophes with undiminished zeal. The rest of us might do better to recall, when asked to contemplate the next doomsday event, the fate of the last.

Who now, for example, remembers the extraordinary debates during the 1920s and 1930s, when developed countries birth rates were at a historic low, of the eventual disappearance of Western civilisation? What happened? Well a baby boom followed World War Two, and such predictions of societal collapse became history. And what about the Club of Rome and their highly influential report called "The Limits to Growth" in 1972? This report claimed that the total global oil reserves amounted to 550 Billion barrels. Jimmy Carter went on record as claiming that within a decade or so the world could use up all its oil reserves. In fact, between 1970 and 1990 the world used 600 Billion barrels of oil. According to the Club of Rome figures, there should have been a shortfall of 50 Billion barrels. In fact in 1990 the world's unexploited oil reserves totalled 900 Billion barrels.

Over 30 years ago, Paul Erlich predicted that the battle to feed humanity was being lost and that in the 1970s the world would experience mass starvation with hundreds of millions of deaths. Population

growth, particularly in the developing world, was seen as a 'malignant tumour' and increasing hordes of Third Worlders an 'ecological cancer' threatening the health of the planet.

We were fed this unceasing diet of world population growth ushering in famine, epidemics, resource depletion, and environmental pollution and decreasing food stocks. But what actually happened? Generally food production kept pace with world population growth and when it did linger behind, it was usually due to political and commercial decisions made in the grain exporting countries. Also fertility rates began to fall and societies age, not only in the developed world, but also across a wide range of developing countries. In the early 1980s acid rain dominated the world's headlines, and then in the 1990s it was the world's forests. There were widespread reports of mass deforestation and that population growth was to blame. But was this truly the case? There would seem to be plenty of evidence to suggest that the real blame lay with national and multi-national corporations who were engaged in commercial ranching, mining, road building, logging and other developmental projects.

More recently, SARS and then Bird Flu were widely canvassed as rivalling the Black Death edging the world towards a pandemic of human influenza that would produce tens of millions of deaths worldwide. While it is true that we are overdue for another pandemic of human flu, there is no reason to suggest that Bird flu will be the agent that ushers it in.

Now it is the turn of climate change. We are told that if current trends continue world temperatures may increase by anything up to 4 degrees by the latter part of the century and that we could see significant rises in sea levels threatening many coastal cities, as well as widespread water shortages, mass extinctions, changes in the distribution of disease vectors, and major changes in the climate system. The Arctic sea-ice is melting at an unprecedented



rate, the permafrost in Siberia thawing, another ice shelf in Antarctica is breaking up, and carbon dioxide has been proclaimed the 'satanic' gas.

The story of global change is what newspapers call great copy. There is little doubt that people are more moved by the tempest than the gentle rain, and that bad news rather than good news appeals. So the media simply give people what they want. In the case of climate change it involves predictions of pestilence and disaster with the imprimatur of high quality science. The plague is on its way and it is coming to a suburb near you. Over the last 40 years the world has been subjected to an endless environmental demonology, replete with biological metaphors of doom and gloom.

Given this, one must ask as to whether it is useful to highlight (some might say exaggerate), problems such as climate change in a world where inequality still reigns supreme, where 33 million are currently infected with HIV, where 2.5 billion remain at risk from dengue, where almost 700 children die every day from childhood infections, where malaria causes at least 250 million cases and kills one million peo-

ple every year and where our biodiversity is under threat from urban development and agriculture?

Are our global priorities right? Some such as Bjorn Lomborg, would argue that they are not. On the other hand, many others would strongly argue that climate change must be at the top of the 'do something now' list. Given all this, one is tempted to ask whether it is possible to be in favour of the environment without being a pessimist? In addition, one of the major problems with the legions of climate change modellers and ecological doomsayers is that they have little real understanding of how people and societies behave when confronted by real or imagined threats, and the ability of individuals and societies to adapt to changing circumstances. But then, perhaps as H.L. Mencken once remarked, "the whole aim of practical politics, is to keep the populace alarmed . . . by an endless series of imaginary hobgoblins . . . and hence clamorous to be led to safety".

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



# Outside View: China’s silent dominance

By M D Nalapat

**MOSCOW** – Chairman Mao Zedong can finally rest easy in his grave. His country has now become the dominant partner in the Sino-Russian relationship, a complete reversal of the past.

Since the 1930s Mao had a tense relationship with the Russians, largely because of their view that China and the Chinese Communist Party were in a subordinate position to their Soviet counterparts. Although Soviet leader Josef Stalin was partly successful in holding the reins on the Chinese, these slipped away entirely during the time of Nikita Khrushchev. The Leonid Brezhnev era saw China cosy up to the United States in Washington’s bid to hobble Moscow.

Much of the credit for the success of the U.S. policy of containment against the Soviet Union in the decades leading up to 1992 belongs to the full-blooded way in which the Chinese Communist Party acted as an accomplice of successive Republican and Democratic administrations in Washington – of course, with substantial economic and other benefits.

Credit for China’s emergence as an economic superpower belongs to the U.S. policy of building up Beijing as a counter to Moscow, a partiality that continued for nearly a decade after the collapse of communism in Russia. Still today, the United States continues to be the primary provider of technology and markets to China, even though the country is suspected of being the ultimate source of the missile and nuclear capabilities of such problematic states as Pakistan, Iran and North Korea.

It was no accident that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev made Beijing his first port of call after taking office in May this year – excluding Kazakhstan. In Beijing he faithfully stuck to the CCP line on all issues ranging from Tibet to Taiwan and gave fulsome assurances of fealty.

In contrast, China was missing in action during Russia’s recent hour of need in the U.N. Security Council, when the United States, France and the United Kingdom harshly opposed Russia’s military action in Georgia. Again, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting convened in Tajikistan in late August, shortly after the incident, China ensured that any expression of support for Russia was expunged from the final document, allowing the passage of only an anodyne formulation that



even Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili could not object to.

The Russian propensity to volubly back the People’s Republic of China has been met with the latter’s reluctance to be seen taking the side of a country that is rapidly on the way toward becoming an Albania-style satellite. It was, after all, Tirana that stood by Beijing against Moscow for more than four decades of the Cold War, a conflict in which the PRC sided with the United States against Russia since the 1960s.

Although official estimates say that less than 1 million Chinese are resident in Russia, those familiar with facts on the ground say there are as many as 6 million Chinese in Russia, 95 percent of who are there illegally. Thanks to corruption and huge geographic gaps in administrative coverage, reportedly as many as 20 Chinese use the passport of a single legal entrant to get work and other privileges in Russia. Some marry Russian women for short

durations, thus winning the right to stay.

By 2015 it is estimated that up to 20 million Chinese will reside in Russia, more than half of who will be in the unpopulated reaches of Siberia. What the Japanese failed to achieve in the last century may now be accomplished by the Chinese – which is to take effective control of Siberia away from Moscow. Already, well-funded indigenous organizations sprouting in the territories are calling for the rollback of Moscow’s control, while much of the real estate and many businesses on the Sino-Russian border are in Chinese hands, even on the Russian side.

Some Russian analysts have been calling for migration from India as a counter to the Chinese influx, but pro-China elements in the Russian administration thus far have managed to prevent such a policy from being implemented. Although Moscow has a long way to go before the density of Chinese agents of influence there reaches the satu-

ration levels of Taipei and Washington, the number of officials and academics who toe the Beijing line is increasing every year. The China lobby is today by far the most powerful in Russia, dwarfing the once-muscular U.S. lobby.

India is a particular target of the lobby. Those who are pro-China have ensured that Indian cultural offerings such as movies and television channels enjoy only a niche existence in the country, even though there is immense popular demand for them. While Chinese channels are everywhere, Indian ones are excluded.

Since the mid-1990s, Russia has become an expensive and unreliable supplier of equipment and technology to India. Tellingly, although Moscow freely allows Beijing to access its high-tech pool, India is denied full technology partnerships. The one exception has been the hypersonic BrahMos missile jointly developed by India and Russia.

All this is despite the fact that in the 1990s it was orders from India that kept most Russian defence production platforms from closing down, and India has always been generous in its interpretation of terms. Thanks, for example, to its policy of valuing the rouble at much more than its current market value, India has transferred nearly US\$19 billion to Russia during the past 15 years – a gesture unmatched by China, which insists on getting full value for its money.

However, change may be ahead. Several Russian analysts are concerned at the way in which their country has become subservient to the geopolitical needs of China – often being used as a battering ram against the West, while China plays the good cop – and once again are turning to India. In turn, New Delhi has come to accept that a revival of the once-close partnership between Russia and India is key to ensuring that the country is not smothered by China.

The coming visit by year’s end of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is expected to rekindle an alliance that was once the closest that either New Delhi or Moscow had with another country. Should such an outcome take place, there may be a pause and possibly a rollback of the People’s Republic of China’s overwhelming dominance in Russia.

M.D. Nalapat is vice chair of the Manipal Advanced Research Group, UNESCO peace chair and professor of geopolitics at Manipal University.

– UPI

# Atlantic Eye: Ammar al-Hakim’s Iraq

**PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC** – He is vice president of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, the largest Shiite group in the Iraqi Parliament. He is heir to the prominent al-Hakim family. He exudes compassion and calm belying his age.

He is a key leader who will dominate Iraq’s future.

Last week, appropriately on Canadian Thanksgiving, a mixed group of 22 ambassadors, businessmen, academics and a member of Parliament received a private briefing. The conversation was open, occasionally tough, but always filled with respect. A man of the cloth, Ammar al-Hakim broke down barriers, engendered sympathy, listened intently – with moments of great humour – in a room largely filled with doubting Thomases.

The next day al-Hakim was part of Vaclav Havel’s annual Forum 200, a marquis Prague event that has existed for more than 10 years and attracts global participants. In his public comments, through a translator, al-Hakim repeated some of his thoughts from the previous evening.

On religion:

It is necessary to listen to the views of others, he stated at the beginning of his comments with a confident twinkle in his eyes.

“Dialogue is the most important aspect of religion. Religion helps to complete the spirit of man.

“Moses, Jesus and Mohammed were messengers of G-d. Each experienced violence to himself and

was never able to complete G-d’s message.

“Religion opposes war. It calls others onto the road to G-d by using good words, not violence. Some are using a dangerous distortion of religion to murder, oppress and persecute. It is wrong, and we are now living the consequences. This distortion leads to war and is not the language of coexistence. Issuing an order to murder in the name of faith is an abuse of G-d.

“We are a people of the middle, not of extremism. It should be the more G-d, the more humility.”

On democracy:

“Iraq was liberated from one of the cruellest totalitarian regimes in modern Iraqi history. There have now been three national and local elections, and a referendum on the constitution. This has been an honest experiment in democracy, and has taken place despite the violence. The elections have been monitored and even certified by the United Nations.

“Unfortunately, the liberation of Iraq left a vacuum. In this vacuum have come men who call themselves the guardian of man. But they have killed millions. They have done this in the name of religion, although the Koran forbids killing.

“The fight in Iraq, and in the surrounding areas, is between slavery and freedom.

“We reject bigotry. We want a national dialogue. We have even created a ministry to deal with the national dialogue. We have a national unity government, and it is transparent and honest. It respects

religion and ethnic groups. It is a difficult task to rebuild a country whose ancient roots have been destroyed by 80 years of intolerance.”

On economy and investments:

“We need the United States and Europe to invest in Iraq. This will help create stability. I can envision a future where we set up a sovereign wealth fund, but that time is not yet. We must still focus on our own infrastructure. We need the capital to stay in Iraq, to help build an economic middle class. The Iraqi people have a strong history – back to the time of Babylon – of being successful in business.”

Comments by others:

A prominent Arabic ambassador said to me: “Al-Hakim said the situation in Iraq is getting better because Iraqis are focusing on consensus between Shia, Sunni and Kurds. Al-Hakim was not in favour of the U.S. incursion, but he accepts it as reality – it happened. He is encouraging the transfer of Iraq to Iraqis – and he means all Iraqis.”

“He was quite clear,” said a Nordic ambassador, “those companies who invest now, who find a foothold, will have an advantage in the future. As to the United States: He was also clear that he is open to relations and that the United States absolutely has a role in training and strengthening the Iraqi armed forces. . . . I am sure I heard him say the U.S. should not leave until this job is completed,” the ambassador added.

Said another ranking diplomat: “I would agree

with al-Hakim that Iraq needs U.S. and European investments – not because they need the money – they are doing better than most others – but because they need the technology and management. . . . One thing I did not recall hearing him speak about is the relationship between the regions and the central government; this will be a key issue in keeping Iraq stable.”

Al-Hakim spoke of the Awakening Councils, which are the local and tribal units, said another dinner attendee. “He does not want to see the Lebanon-ization of Iraq. Iraq should be unified – though he accepts that quotas are necessary on the way to becoming a stable democracy.”

Said a former ranking Saudi diplomat: “G-d works in mysterious ways, but so does the devil; G-d is straightforward, while the devil is devious. “Extremists twist the words of religion and use it for their own selfish purposes. Bin Laden describes himself as a fundamentalist. Whatever it is, it is not Islam.”

My closing thoughts:

Your eminence al-Hakim, we developed a good rapport; we will surely interact again very soon.

Let us commit ourselves to our deeds following our words.

UPI International Columnist Marc S. Ellenbogen is chairman of the Berlin, Copenhagen and Sydney-based Global Panel Foundation and president of the Prague Society. He has advised political candidates and is a founding trustee of the Democratic Expat Leadership Council.

– UPI



# ‘World Government’ solution to crisis

**NEW YORK** — Saying US markets have lost some legitimacy as the world pace setter, the head of a new UN panel on the world financial crisis called for a broadened global finance summit after the G-20 leaders meet in Washington in mid November to resolve the economic meltdown.

“The hope is that it will begin a process, set the agenda and it needs to be a multilateral approach in which the voices of all the countries are heard,” said Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001.

In close collaboration with the European Union, US President George W Bush is convening a limited financial conference on November 15 in Washington next month.

Bush ignored the suggestions over the weekend by European Union current president Nicolas Sarkozy, who is president of France, and by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to hold the conference at the UN in New York.

Stiglitz said the current global economic crisis is a difficult time that needs the participation of the United Nations.

“The UN is the one source of international legitimacy,” he told reporters following a meeting with Ban.

“I think that some aspects of the old order, in which US financial market were seen as a font of wisdom and the source of stability to the global economy, are over,” he said.

“They have lost that legitimacy,” he said “In that context it’s very important that the UN is one place where all nations come together because this global financial crisis is beginning to affect everybody.”

Stiglitz was appointed by Ban and the UN General Assembly as head of the Interactive Panel on the Global Financial Crisis, which is scheduled to hold its first meeting October 30 at UN headquarters in New York.

Miguel d’Escoto, the president of the 192-nation assembly, said the panel was set up “in response to the current turmoil in the financial crisis.”

The UN panel will discuss also ways to review the role of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the worst global finance meltdown since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Ban will attend the November 15 meeting in



Washington after failing to convince Bush to convene a larger conference at UN headquarters.

Sarkozy also wanted the conference to be held in New York, since the crisis began there and should be resolved there, he said on Saturday.

The UN panel is to undertake a “comprehensive review of the international financial system” and suggest steps to be taken by UN members “to secure a more stable global economic order.”

Miguel d’Escoto said in a statement that there was

growing recognition “that the current turmoil in the financial system cannot be solved through piecemeal responses at the national and regional levels but requires a coordinated effort at the global level.”

He said developing countries have not been represented in the Bretton Woods institutions to fight for their economies. He said it is time for the world body to seek the design of a new economic architecture that is inclusive and democratic to be “credible and sustainable.”

Miguel d’Escoto has called for democratizing the United Nations since he assumed the presidency of the 192-nation assembly in September, criticizing the world’s major political and economic powers of dominating the UN.

He is a former foreign minister of Nicaragua’s leftist Sandinista government in the 1980s, which fought the US government at the height of the Cold War.

— DPA

# ‘The One’ on track to win

By Steven Thomma and Marc Caputo

McClatchy Newspapers

**INDIANAPOLIS** — A series of new polls released this afternoon found a bleak outlook for John McCain, even in traditionally Republican states, and a potential landslide victory for Democrat Barack Obama on Nov. 4.

The polls found McCain trailing Obama in the battleground states of Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania and suggest that he’s behind even in solidly red states such as Indiana, and they also suggest that his talk about “Joe the Plumber” has done little to help his cause.

Separately, a new CBS News/New York Times poll found that a number of groups that supported President Bush in 2004, including married women, suburban voters and white Roman Catholics, now prefer Obama to McCain. Even white men, long solidly Republican, favour Obama, according to the poll, which overall found Obama leading McCain by 51 percent to 38 percent.

“Senator Obama is no longer the candidate of the young, the well-educated and minorities. He is now virtually the candidate of the ‘all,’” said Peter Brown, the assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, which conducted one of the polls. “He is winning among all age groups in all three states. He wins women by more than 20 points in Ohio and Pennsylvania and is competitive among men in all three states. Whether voters went to college or not, they are voting for him.

“If these numbers hold up, he could win the biggest Democratic landslide since Lyndon Johnson in 1964,” Brown said.

In Florida, where a Mason-Dixon poll earlier this week suggested that talk of the economy had helped McCain, a new Miami Herald poll today found the Arizona senator trailing Obama by 49 percent to 42 percent.

The Herald poll, done in conjunction with the St. Petersburg Times by Republican and Democratic polling companies, was one of four surveys out today that found the election map becoming more unfavourable to McCain.

Perhaps the most alarming of all, from a Republican perspective, was one sponsored by universities in the eight states that make up the Big 10 Conference of college sports teams. That survey found Obama ahead in all eight Big 10 states, including Ohio, Indiana and Iowa, three states that Bush carried four years ago.

That was a dramatic shift from September, when the Big Ten Battleground Poll found the race a dead heat in all the states except Illinois, Obama’s home state.

Now Obama is leading by double digits in all eight states, including Indiana, long a GOP stronghold, where the new poll found Obama ahead by 10 points. The last Democrat to carry the Hoosier state was Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

“If the Republican is only winning Indiana by 1 or 2 points, he’s in serious trouble,” said Charles Franklin, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and the director of



the Big Ten Battleground Poll. “McCain still has a chance to get to 270 electoral-college votes, but it’s a narrow one.”

The Big 10 poll found Obama up by 11 points in Pennsylvania, 12 points in Ohio, 13 points in Wisconsin and Iowa, 19 points in Minnesota and 22 points in Michigan. In his home state of Illinois, according to the poll, Obama is up by 29 points.

The Quinnipiac survey of Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania found similar results. That survey found that:

➤ In Ohio, Obama leads by 14, up from 12 at the

beginning of the month.

➤ In Pennsylvania, Obama leads by 13, down slightly from 14 points.

➤ In Florida, where Obama led by 8 points at the beginning of October, he now leads by 5 points.

## ON THE WEB:

Poll: Independents boost Obama in Florida

Quinnipiac University poll

Big Ten Battleground Poll

CBS News/New York Times poll

— MCT



# Canada bans plastic baby bottles amid BPA scandal

By Susanne Rust and Meg Kissinger  
*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

**MILWAUKEE, WIS.** — A government report claiming that bisphenol A is safe was written largely by the plastics industry and others with a financial stake in the controversial chemical, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel found.

The news comes as Canada today became the first country to ban plastic babies’ bottles containing the chemical.

Although the Food and Drug Administration will not reveal who prepared its draft, the agency’s own documents show that the work was done primarily by those with the most to gain by downplaying concerns about the safety of the chemical.

That includes Stephen Hentges, executive director of the American Chemistry Council’s group on bisphenol A, who commissioned a review of all studies of the neurotoxicity of bisphenol A and submitted it to the FDA. The FDA then used that report as the foundation for its evaluation of the chemical on neural and behavioural development. The American Chemistry Council is a trade group representing chemical manufacturers.

The FDA’s draft, released in August, found no cause for worry about bisphenol A, which is found in thousands of household products, including baby bottles, infant formula containers and the lining of aluminium cans.

That finding is at odds with the conclusions of the FDA’s own advisers from the National Toxicology Program. The NTP announced in September that the chemical is of some concern for effects on the development of the prostate gland and brain, and for behavioural effects in fetuses, infants and children. The NTP also found some concern for the neurodevelopment of young children, infants and fetuses.

Last week, the government of Canada declared that bisphenol A is a toxin and is banning its use in baby bottles and other products used by children.

The FDA draft finding no harm is under review by a subcommittee, which will decide if the conclusions need to be amended. That assessment is expected to be released any day and will be presented Oct. 31 in Washington

The Journal Sentinel reported earlier this month that subcommittee chairman Martin Philbert is founder and co-director of an institute that received



\$5 million from a retired medical supply manufacturer who said he considered bisphenol A “perfectly safe.” The donor, Charles Gelman, told the newspaper that he has expressed his views to Philbert in several conversations.

Philbert at first denied ever having been contacted by Gelman about bisphenol A. He now says that he is aware of Gelman’s views but is not influenced by them.

A congressional committee launched an investigation into the connection, citing the newspaper report.

Those same congressional investigators are now looking into other possible conflicts of interest.

They are scrutinizing the role that ICF, a consulting firm whose clients include the American Chemistry Council and the American Petroleum Institute, had in preparing the FDA draft.

Neither ICF nor the FDA would say what role the consulting firm had in the agency’s review of the chemical. But the newspaper found reports issued to the FDA by the consulting firm from 2000 to 2007. Those reports included reviews of government and industry studies on the effects of bisphenol A on animal health.

The task force used ICF’s reviews in its draft.

ICF spokesman Douglas Beck declined to comment on his company’s involvement in the study of bisphenol A.

FDA spokesman Michael Herndon is referring all questions about the draft to congressional investigators.

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce and its subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation have asked FDA Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach to appear for an interview by committee staff to explain the agency’s decision-making relating to bisphenol A.

“Specifically, why industry-funded studies provide the basis of your regulatory decisions and why the totality of the science around the chemical continues to be ignored by your science-based agency,” the committee letter said.

The newspaper reviewed the body of evidence that the task force considered. It found memos with entire sections blacked out, reviews commissioned by the American Plastics Council, an arm of the American Chemistry Council, and reviews completed by consulting firms with clients who have financial interests in the sale of bisphenol A.

Many of these reviews of individual studies are at odds with the NTP’s reviews of the same studies.

Bisphenol A was developed in 1891 as a synthetic estrogen.

It came into widespread use in the 1950s when scientists realized it could be used to make polycarbonate plastic and some epoxy resins to line food and beverage cans.

The chemical is used in a host of products from dental sealants and eyeglasses to CDs and water bottles. Bisphenol A has been detected in the urine of 93 percent of Americans tested.

Sales of the chemical reached US\$6 billion worldwide in 2007.

# Queen Elizabeth tours Slovakia

**BRATISLAVA** — Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II arrived in Slovakia overnight for her first visit to the ex-communist country that went independent 15 years ago and became an economic success story.

The queen and her husband, Prince Philip, came off a trip to Slovenia, a smaller country to the south that once was part of Yugoslavia.

In Slovakia on Thursday, the queen met with President Ivan Gasparovic, Prime Minister Robert Fico and Sir Nicholas Winton, 99, a Briton who saved hundreds of mostly Czechoslovak Jewish children from Nazi concentration camps on the eve of World War II.

Dressed in a red hat and coat and equipped with an umbrella, she toured the overcast and rainy downtown Bratislava, greeted by hundreds of onlookers.

She also unveiled a memorial dedicated to the Iron Curtain, the heavily fortified frontier between the Eastern and Western blocs during the Cold War era, at a site near the Slovak-Austrian border outside the capital.

On Friday, the queen’s schedule includes a trip to the High Tatra mountains.

She was to visit a historic church and open an ice-hockey friendly between Slovak and British clubs in the mountain city of Poprad.

Excitement spilled from the pages of the Slovak newspapers in the days before the royal stay, scheduled to end tomorrow.



**“DRESSED IN A RED HAT AND COAT AND EQUIPPED WITH AN UMBRELLA, SHE TOURED THE OVERCAST AND RAINY DOWNTOWN BRATISLAVA, GREETED BY HUNDREDS OF ONLOOKERS**

“The visit of the British Queen Elizabeth II is one of the greatest diplomatic events in Slovakia’s contemporary history,” the *Sme* daily newspaper wrote.

“Only a trip by George Bush, Vladimir Putin or Pope John Paul II could match it,” the paper said.

Slovakia and the Czech Republic, once united as Czechoslovakia, split ways peacefully in 1993 after communism fell.

Slovakia joined NATO and the European Union in 2004.

In a sign of its economic success, the country of 5.4 million is due to switch to the euro on January 1.

— DPA





ANC leader Jacob Zuma addresses hundreds of supporters. Halden Krog/ Rapport

## South Africa sliding toward bloodshed

**JOHANNESBURG** — The split in South Africa's ruling African National Congress took an increasingly nasty turn overnight, with supporters of the biggest faction loyal to party leader Jacob Zuma threatening to kill dissidents planning to form a rival party.

A group of Zuma supporters demonstrated outside a hall in a township south of Johannesburg where former ANC chairman and splinter faction leader Mosiuoa Lekota was due to address a rally.

"Kill Shilowa, kill Lekota," they were quoted by SAPA news agency as chanting.

Mbhazima Shilowa, the popular former premier of Gauteng province, where Johannesburg and Pretoria are situated, is the other face of the group of breakaway ANC members that plan to launch a rival party to challenge elections scheduled for next year.

The ANC's decision to demand that Thabo Mbeki resign as president in September has deepened the divide within the party between Mbeki and Zuma camps.

Former defence minister Lekota was one of 10 ministers and deputy ministers who quit government in protest over Mbeki's axing.

Lekota and Shilowa have accused the Zuma leadership of the ANC of betraying the party's ideals of non-racialism and respect for the rule of law.

Zuma supporters are often seen in tee-shirts vaunting him as a "100 per cent Zuluboy". The ANC has also been calling for a state corruption case against Zuma to be abandoned "in the public interest."

The ANC has dismissed their complaints as mere sour grapes but has been visibly rattled by images

of thousands of people flocking to hear Lekota and Shilowa speak at rallies across the country.

In recent days, the rhetoric has become increasingly sinister, with senior ANC members accusing the dissidents of being "traitors" and "dogs."

The new party, which is to be officially launched on December 16, is deemed no match for the powerful ANC, but political analysts say it could take enough votes to rob the party of its more-than-two-thirds majority in parliament.

The ANC would need a two-thirds majority if it wanted to pass a constitutional amendment protecting Zuma from prosecution if, as expected, he becomes president. Until now, the ANC has remained mum on whether it would consider such a move.

— DPA

## 3D strip-search scanners under fire



**STRASBOURG** — The European Parliament today criticized the use of virtual strip-search machines (due for release in NZ airports soon) in Europe's airports, saying they could violate citizens' privacy.

Body scanners use radio waves to display full-body images that reveal whether passengers are concealing weapons or explosives under their clothes.

These machines are already being used at London's Heathrow and Amsterdam's Schiphol airports to speed up security checks and to avoid hand-frisking passengers.

But members of the European Parliament (MEPs) say such machines can have "a serious impact on the fundamental rights of citizens".

"This technology has the potential — and, I stress, the potential — to force air passengers to undergo what could be seen as undignifying treatment, and this is certainly not a small technical step," said Philip Bradbourn, a British conservative.

MEPs also worry that body images revealing people's private parts could end up being posted on the Internet.

"As I understand, storing of images is not the initial intention, but this is not to say that it is not possible to do so," Bradbourn said.

The European Union's executive arm, the European Commission, in September suggested that body scanners could be used as a means of reducing waiting times at security checks; it normally takes about three seconds to undergo such a scan.

Commission officials said they would be taking privacy concerns "very seriously" and noted that any proposals would not be adopted before 2010.

Approving a resolution by 361 votes in favour, 16 against and 181 abstentions, European lawmakers urged the commission to first carry out a thorough impact assessment to determine whether body scanners are harmful and worth the investment.

— DPA



## Nazi massacre orders 'appalling'

**MUNICH** — Enlisted men in a German Army unit were appalled at having to massacre Italian villagers in 1944, an 84-year-old former serviceman told the war crimes trial of their former lieutenant in Munich this morning.

The lieutenant, 90, is accused of 14 murders in the Tuscan village of Falzano in 1944. He allegedly ordered the reprisal killings.

None of the company of Battalion 818 of the German Army mountain combat engineers approved of the reprisal, said the witness.

His fellow enlisted men had "deplored" having to dynamite a house with 11 prisoners inside it. The blast killed 10.

"To this day I do not know who ordered it," said the retiree, who added he had no acquaintance with the accused.

The witness said he had been a telephone operator in the engineering company.

He denied being present during the attack on the civilians. "I only heard about it," he said. At the time

of the violence he had been escorting an Italian prisoner back to base at the orders of his sergeant, the witness told the court.

At the start of the trial last month, the accused denied through his lawyer that he even knew at the time about the atrocity, which allegedly began with the Germans shooting dead three men and a woman.

While the accused has been named in international media, German media have not generally published his name because of defamation rules.

An Italian court at La Spezia sentenced the 90-year-old in absentia to life imprisonment in 2006. Germany is trying the former lieutenant anew because it does not extradite its own citizens.

The reprisal allegedly happened after partisans killed two of the engineering unit's men in the village.

The trial continues, with an Italian police officer scheduled to testify at the next hearing, on November 13.

— DPA



## Let slip the dogs of war

**CAIRO** — Israel has deployed about 3,000 dogs on the Egyptian-Israeli border, witnesses said today.

The dogs were deployed in the centre of the Sinai peninsula to protect the advanced early warning radar system Israel recently received from the US.

The dogs are also intended to prevent Africans

trying to migrate into Israel to find jobs.

Since the beginning of this year, more than 25 Africans have been shot dead by Egyptian security forces, while dozens were detained for attempting to cross the border into Israel through the central Sinai region.

— DPA



# Seymour snares unexpected bonus from injury

By Cathy Walshe of NZPA

**WELLINGTON, OCT 24** – Silver Ferns captain Julie Seymour has found one unexpected bonus from the achilles tendon injury which has almost certainly ruled her out of the upcoming two-test tour against Australia.

The 37-year-old midcourter, who first played for New Zealand in 1994, was forced to sit on the sidelines for the Silver Ferns’ deciding third test against England last Saturday in Palmerston North.

She did not enjoy the experience. “It was so hard watching, even though they did so well. I wanted to be part of it – it made me think ‘gee, I want to play netball for ever’ because I really hate sitting on the sidelines,” she told NZPA.

After a 39-goal first-test victory against England on October 13, the Silver Ferns lost the second test in Dunedin two days 40-38 later before rebounding last Saturday to a comprehensive 61-22 win.

Seymour was a late withdrawal from the playing seven after she tweaked the troublesome achilles on the morning of the final test. Five days later, already a non-starter for the first test in Melbourne on Sunday and doubtful for the second a week later in Brisbane, she admitted the injury had been slow to improve.

“It’s not flash – probably the chances of playing in the second test are slim, but I guess it’s nice to have that window still open just in case miracles happen,” she said.

“It’s got a little tear, and by all accounts they don’t heal really quickly.”

Even if she doesn’t take the court, Seymour’s vast international experience should prove invaluable as the Silver Ferns look to build on the momentum from their third-test win over England.

“Consistency has got to be the keyword. Honestly, we’ve all learned heaps about everything, especially preparation and attitude, after that first test.

“We didn’t mean to be complacent and we certainly weren’t outwardly, but everyone being five or 10 percent off their game can all add up to quite a lot.”

Seymour said the Silver Ferns were only too well aware that the Australians would severely punish any sub-standard effort over the next two tests: “We know the Australians never lay down and die.”

Australia and the Silver Ferns finished all square in the New Zealand leg of their tour last month, the

Australians winning the first test 53-51 while New Zealand took the second 38-31.

“We’ve been using the word urgency right from the start, and that’s what we lacked in Dunedin. Everyone was thinking ‘Oh we’ll come right, we’ll win, it’ll happen’ and we weren’t urgent enough right from the start.

“Those kind of mistakes that happened in the first quarter are just as vital as the ones that happened in the last quarter.”

It was important to be able to quickly recognise changes in the game and adjust patterns of play accordingly, Seymour said.

“Netball is a game of flow and rhythm, and confidence to let the ball go. If things aren’t going well, and you hold onto the ball a bit too long then the person you were going to pass to is all out of position, and that goes on down the court.

“We talk about timing a lot. When you’re playing well and things are working, you’ve got that nice timing and it all just clicks.”

As well as Seymour’s injury, the Silver Ferns are without defender Leana de Bruin, who is unavailable for personal reasons. Liana Barrett-Chase, called into the squad last Saturday, is joined by Southern Steel midcourter Wendy Telfer for the Australian trip.

With the Australians also missing some key players, Seymour said the next week presented the ideal chance to regain some lost ascendancy.

“It’s a great opportunity to really stamp our authority and get that world No 1 spot back that we lost.”

Australian shooter Catherine Cox has been ruled out of the two tests with an ankle injury she suffered when the Diamonds toured New Zealand last month.

First-choice captain and goal attack Sharelle McMahon has also missed the entire international campaign due to knee surgery.

Cox said she wasn’t sure what to expect from New Zealand after the England series.

“I don’t know that I have witnessed anything like that, obviously they (New Zealand) are beatable,” Cox said earlier this week.

“We know that, we’ve done it this year, but the last game they played was obviously a good one and they’ve got some good form heading into the series against us.”



NZPA / Ross Setford

“SEYMOUR WAS A LATE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PLAYING SEVEN AFTER SHE TWEAKED THE TROUBLESOME ACHILLES ON THE MORNING OF THE FINAL TEST

# Stuart lays down challenge to kiwis

By Mark Geenty of NZPA

**SYDNEY, OCT 24** – Kangaroos coach Ricky Stuart has boldly thrown down the challenge to the Kiwis declaring: we’re the best rugby league side in the world, come and get us.

Having kept a low profile in the buildup to Sunday’s World Cup opener at the Sydney Football Stadium (10pm kickoff NZT), Stuart emerged to say the team were comfortable with their \$1.15 favouritism to make it eight consecutive wins against the Kiwis, rated \$5 outsiders.

“It’s not something we’re concerned about because it’s typical of when you put an Australian jersey on, you’re favourites to win that game. That’s sometimes good,” he said.

“Because we are the best team in the world and we’ve got that favourites’ tag to live up to, it’s an extra bit of pressure but at this level it’s something we’ve got to put up with.”

Stuart named a side with four debutants – Canberra wing Joel Monaghan, Gold Coast forward Anthony Laffranchi and Manly forwards Glenn Stewart and Josh Perry – and said the newcomers added some spark to a lineup missing previous frontliners Willie Mason, Mark Gasnier, Justin Hodges and Greg Bird.

They only assembled last weekend and had no warmup match, but crucially he pointed out their

four key men had all formed combinations in State of Origin for Queensland – fullback Billy Slater, gun halves Jonathan Thurston and Darren Lockyer and hooker Cameron Smith.

But Stuart wasn’t expecting his side to wipe the floor with Stephen Kearney’s Kiwis, not publicly anyway.

Perhaps well aware of the distinct lack of interest around Sydney for the World Cup, both among the public and media, Stuart was keen to talk up the challenge both New Zealand and England would offer in the next month.

He noticed a certain swagger about the Kiwis under Kearney and his assistant Wayne Bennett.

“They’ve certainly got the talent there to beat us. They’ve got some outstanding footballers and I know they’re very, very confident.”

That was epitomised by reborn five-eighth Benji Marshall who clearly has a target on his head for the Kangaroos. Stuart said he was hugely impressed by Marshall’s recent form.

“They were typically big, robust, strong (in the 56-8 win over Tonga), and I thought Benji Marshall ran the show and stole the day. He was outstanding,” Stuart said.

“He’ll play first pass off the ruck and he’ll be the main indicator in the game. He’s a special talent and it’s a big stage, and that’s where the best players



Kiwi Simon Manering scores against Tonga in an International Rugby League match, Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland. NZPA / Wayne Drought

step up to the plate.

“Of course you talk about shutting him down, you talk about shutting down all the great players.”

Stuart also changed his tune about centre Steve Matai, who questioned his tackling technique after he was sent off in the 0-58 thrashing in Wellington a year ago.

“He’s had an outstanding season, he’s the sort of player you’d love to have. He’s tough, he’s fast, he’s hard. He’s going to be tough to deal with because he’s a tough character.

“I’m expecting a big game from him. Look at his game in the grand final, he was outstanding.”

Stuart’s biggest wish for Australian-turned-English referee Ashley Klein was to let it be a tough test

match with a physical contest at the tackle – not a physical game of touch.

Marshall, Matai and wing Manu Vatuvei give the Kiwis an x-factor in the backs which sees them match up well with their opposites. The onus will be on the forwards, dominated by Warriors and Storm players, to hold their own against the powerful Kangaroos, and for halfback Thomas Leuluai and Marshall to provide some direction.

The Kiwis went into lockdown mode last night after their final serious hit-out at Concord Oval, with Kearney and captain Nathan Cayless to offer their final thoughts tomorrow. After an unseasonably chilly week in Sydney, the mercury is forecast to reach 26degC on a fine Sunday.



# Liverpool in injury drama

**LONDON** — Liverpool have three fresh injury doubts ahead of Sunday's top of the table meeting with Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Already without striker Fernando Torres, who suffered a hamstring injury while on international duty with Spain last week, they could also find themselves missing forward Robbie Keane and midfielders Steven Gerrard and Xabi Alonso.

All three were taken off during Liverpool's 1-1 Champions League draw away to Atletico Madrid on Wednesday.

"It was a little bit of a muscle problem for Robbie," said manager Rafa Benitez.

"Gerrard is okay. He was really tired and Alonso has a knock on his knee."

The sides are both unbeaten this season and both have 20 points, but while Liverpool have already beaten Manchester United, this is Chelsea's first game against another member of the Big Four.

Their captain John Terry will play after overcoming a back problem to star in the 1-0 win over Roma on Wednesday, and they have a number of other players returning after injury.

Goalkeeper Petr Cech and defender Ricardo Carvalho both made their comebacks in the Roma game, forward Joe Cole will almost certainly be fit, while striker Didier Drogba and full-back Ashley

Cole have a decent chance of being ready for the Liverpool game.

Elsewhere, Wayne Rooney is targeting the 100th goal of his club career as Manchester United travel to the club for whom he scored his first, Everton.

"It would be special to do it at Everton," he said. "It's always nice to get to 100 goals when you're a striker and, if I could do it back at Everton, the club where I started, that would be really pleasing for me. That would be a really sweet moment."

Rooney has scored nine in his last seven games for club and country and, given Everton have leaked 18 goals this season — the worst record in the division, he must be confident of continuing that streak.

The other big game on Saturday is the Tyne-Wear derby at Sunderland, where Newcastle are unbeaten in 27 years.

Midfielder Joey Barton could make his return for Joe Kinnear's side after a six-game ban for assaulting his then Manchester City team-mate Ousmane Dabo.

Third-placed Hull could go level on points at the top of the table if they win away at West Brom.

Tottenham fans are planning a demonstration against the board ahead of their game against Bolton, while Arsenal travel to West Ham.

— DPA



## Armstrong still in doubt for Tour

**BERLIN** — Seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, who last month said he was returning to competitive cycling, remains doubtful for the Tour de France.

The American, who will be riding for the Astana team, was not at the official presentation of next year's Tour stages yesterday, but said he would be holding talks with Tour organizers. Tour director Christian Prudhomme remains neutral whether Armstrong would be competing next year. "The invited teams nominate their own cyclists. Armstrong said that he regards the Giro d'Italia as his main race. It is his decision if he competes in the Tour thereafter.

Prudhomme said it was neither positive nor negative if Armstrong entered the race, but added that he would have to undergo the same doping tests as everybody else.

"I know that there will be a new leadership at the organizers. I am looking forward to forthcoming discussions with them and toward the future. I am looking forward to next year," Armstrong said.

Many experts doubt that Armstrong, who will compete at the Giro for the first time next year, will also race in the Tour. "I do not think so," cycling legend Eddy Merckx said.

— DPA

The Belgian also believes that Armstrong's team-mate Alberto Contador had a moral right to be team leader.

Milram's Gerry van Gerwen said that Armstrong was simply looking for coverage and PR for his cancer foundation. "He has had plenty of both simply by announcing that he was coming back. I do not think that he will come back."

Armstrong said that he thought it was too early to decide on the different roles within the Astana team. "It makes no sense to decide in October who will be the captain.

"We are blessed with the strongest team and I am looking forward to cycling with them. I have been around for a long time and I know that cycling is a team sport and the strongest cyclist is supported by the rest of the team, regardless of who that person is, whether it is me, Alberto Contador, Levi Leipheimer or Andreas Kloeckner."

Contador is regarded as the best stage cyclist in the world and won the Tour de France, the Giro and the Vuelta in the last 15 months. He decided last week to stay with the team even though they had hired Armstrong.

— DPA

## Federer dominant

**BASLE, SWITZERLAND** — Roger Federer stretched his dominance over Finland's Jarkko Nieminen this morning, winning a hard-fought second-round match-up 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-1) at his home Swiss Indoors.

Federer raised his record to 10-0 against his friend from junior days and one-time doubles partner a decade ago.

"This was a good match but not my best. I was playing passive sometimes and waiting for him to make the errors," said the top seed looking for a trophy hat-trick at the St Jakobshalle.

"Even when I was down I never felt endangered, since I have such a record against him," said Federer, who moves into a quarter-final against Italian Simone Bolelli.

Nieminen had said he was working to win at least a set after entering the contest standing 0-18 on that count. But after he missed on two set points in the first, with Federer saving and then reaching 5-5 with an ace, the opener was still not out of reach.

Federer clinched the set in a decider and then recov-

ered from an early break in the second before spinning out another tiebreak success for the victory.

The Finn had come to the court saying that to have won a set might have felt like a victory as the pair played a repeat of the 2007 final.

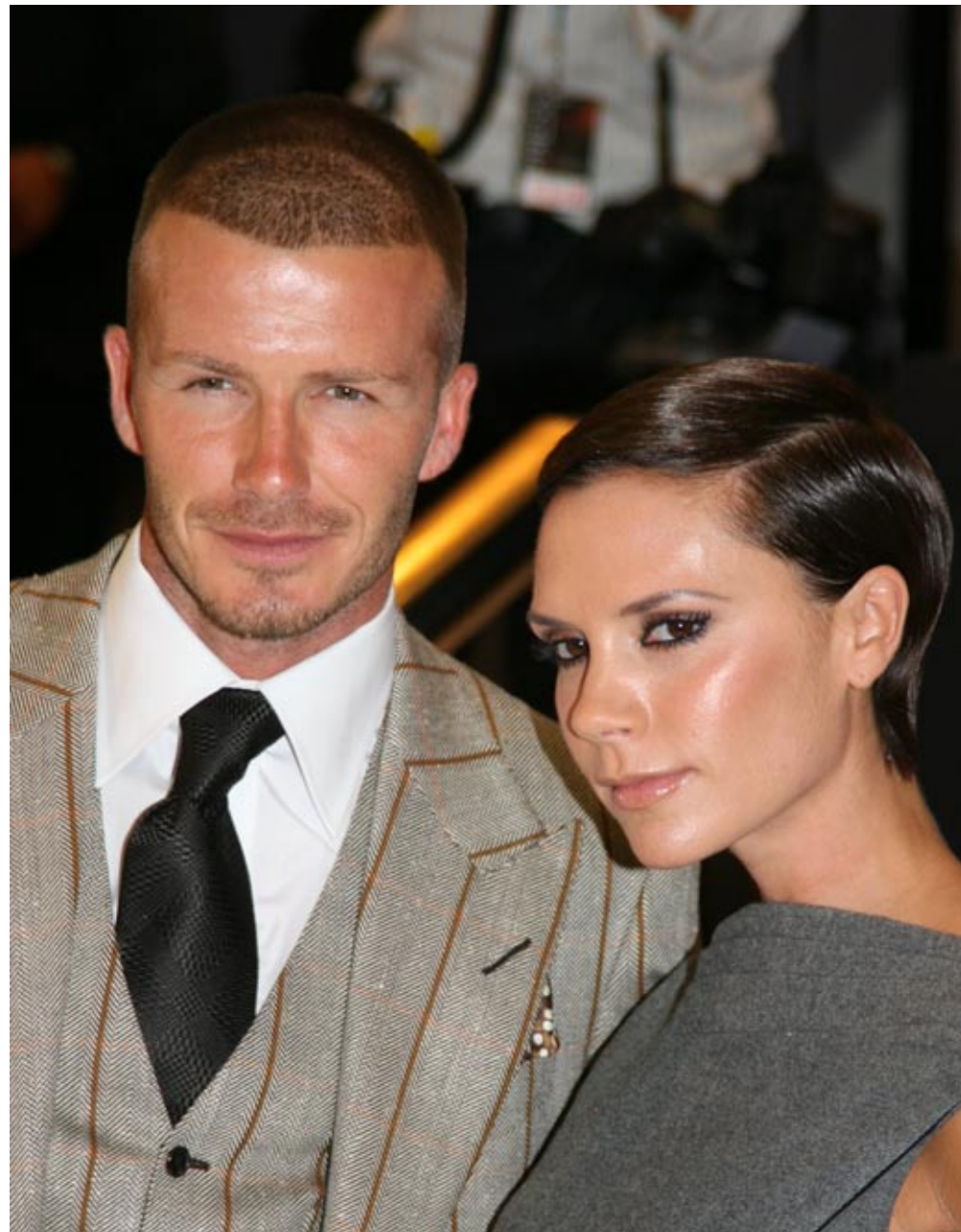
Second seed David Nalbandian needed nearly two and a half hours to subdue qualifier Kristof Vliegen, advancing 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (7-4).

The Belgian refused to fold against the world number eight, who says he will skip the season-ending championships in China despite being on course to qualify for the eight-man field.

The Argentine is devoting his full focus to the November 21-23 Davis Cup final against Spain in Mar del Plata, where the South American nation will attempt to come good after losing title challenges in 1981 and 2006.

Nalbandian lifted the Basle title in 2002 and is playing the indoor event for the seventh time in Roger Federer's hometown.

— DPA



## Spend it on Beckham

**LONDON** — Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp said today that he would be interested in signing David Beckham on loan if a proposed deal to take the England midfielder to AC Milan falls through.

Beckham, who plays in the MLS for Los Angeles Galaxy, is in talks with Milan over a possible three-month deal from January to March, that would allow him to keep fit and so be available for England duty.

His agent has stressed that this would only be a temporary measure during the MLS off-season, and that Beckham intends to see out the remainder of his contract at the Galaxy.

But Redknapp might step in if negotiations in

Italy falter. "If he doesn't go to Milan maybe I'll try to sign him myself," he said.

"He would be a great loan for anybody. I haven't made an enquiry but it has crossed my mind. Maybe I'll try tomorrow if it doesn't happen with Milan.

"David is still a great player, and you can't tell me he wouldn't be a great benefit to our Peter Crouch and Jermain Defoe with his crossing.

"The fact is he is still a top player and wants to play. And I'm sure we wouldn't be the only ones interested if he didn't go to Milan. They would be queuing up."

— DPA



## TV &amp; Film



# Robert Forster of *Heroes* speaks – but he won't spill

By Kate O'Hare

Arthur Petrelli may be flat on his back in a hospital bed, only able to speak by using some sort of mental telepathy or appearing in the prophetic dreams of Company honcho Angela Petrelli (Cristine Rose), but on the *Heroes* set in August, actor Robert Forster is upright and speaking normally.

Regarding what he was doing in the scene right before he stood upright and started to speak – we'll leave that to your imagination.

Veteran actor Forster (*Lucky Number Slevin*, *Touching Home*, *Jackie Brown*) made his first appearance in the latest season of the NBC superhero drama. We learned Petrelli is still powerful and not as dead as believed; he's got a really fancy bed; and he shares the same last name as two out of three of Angela's sons – Nathan (Adrian Pasdar) and Peter (Milo Ventimiglia).

The actual surname of the third, Gabriel Gray (Zachary Quinto), aka brain-and-superpower-sucking psycho killer Sylar, has yet to be absolutely confirmed. His mother, Angela, gave him up for adoption, but whether or not he's a full-fledged Petrelli by birth remains an open question.

Asked if he can share any more information, Forster says, "Nothing. I am sworn to silence, with handcuffs. Never had a show before that needed to be as secret as this."

But Forster is familiar with *Heroes* – even if it didn't happen all at once.

"Oh, sure, I saw it," he says. "I didn't understand it. You have to see the first episode, otherwise you don't know what's going on. My daughter said she was crazy about this show, and that I should watch it. But when I did, I didn't understand what was happening.

"Then I went to Bulgaria, and I lost the rest of the season."

Forster headed to Bulgaria to shoot the caper drama *The Code* which also stars Antonio Banderas and Morgan Freeman.

"It's a jewel-theft movie," Forster says. "I play the cop that can't catch them."

But he did catch up with *Heroes*.

"I don't watch much more than news," Forster says. "I'm the old fogey. Except that, I'll watch this. I've seen the whole second season. They sent the episodes to me, so when I was catching up, I saw a lot of this show."

"I saw the first episode of this season just now at lunch. I had gotten the scripts to two, three and four, and I arrive in five. You have to know where your story is and has been and is going. This is episode nine, I guess. This is the halfway point for me."

In Forster's long career – the IMDB lists his first feature film as *Reflections in a Golden Eye* from 1967 – he's done a lot of drama on the big and small screens, including a lot of crime drama, with a fair sprinkling of science fiction and horror.

So it shouldn't be surprising that he feels very comfortable in the comic-book-flavoured world of *Heroes*.

"Oh, wait a minute," he says, "this is better than straight drama, far better than a straight drama. How many times can you say, 'Bring me the file,' 'Arrest them,' 'Throw them in jail'?"

"These are interesting scenes. I could not imagine doing a show that was the kind of shows that are very successful (right now), that actors love to work on because they are successful. Oh, boy, a procedural show would be murder. This is fun. These are interesting scenes."

While Forster may be a bit more senior than some members of the cast, he's happy to not be the only veteran.

"There are guys I know and guys I like," he says. "I'm trying to remember the two guys...there was one I just worked with, Malcolm McDowell, and one guy I know but have not worked with, Eric Roberts."

"So you got really good – I don't want to say 'oldsters,' but we fall into some category."

As to whether he's setting an example for the younger performers, Forster says, "I have four children, and I remind other parents that, since they will mirror your worst stuff, be the one you hope they will turn into."

"I wouldn't say that I'm good at it, but I'm reasonably good. So the point is, you're supposed to set a decent example."

— MCT



**GIVEAWAY:** Universal Pictures has provided us with three copies of *Heroes*, season 2, to giveaway on DVD. To go in the draw [simply click here](#) with name and address, and *Heroes 2* in the subject line. Note: R13, contains violence and horror scenes

## entertainment NEWS



### TWO HALF-MEN FOR SHEEN, WIFE

**LOS ANGELES, (UPI)** — Charlie Sheen's publicist has confirmed the Hollywood actor's wife Brooke is pregnant with twin boys. Sheen, the star of the TV sit-com *Two and a Half Men*, is already the father of three daughters. His representative told *Usmagazine.com* he will soon be adding twin boys to his brood. The twins will be the actor's first sons and his first children with Brooke, whom he married last May. "Brooke and I are thrilled! She's the best stepmom Sam, Lola and Cassandra could ever hope for," Sheen told *Usmagazine.com*, referring to his two preschool-age children with ex-wife Denise Richards, and 23-year-old Cassandra, his daughter with ex-girlfriend Paula Profitt.

### ANDREA CORR TO MAKE LONDON STAGE DEBUT

**LONDON, (UPI)** — Irish singer and film actress Andrea Corr is set to make her London stage debut in the Old Vic's production of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*. The BBC said Corr will star opposite Niamh Cusack in Friel's play about five sisters living in rural Ireland in the 1930s. The production is slated to open in February. Corr's screen credits include *The Commitments*, *Evita* and *The Boys from County Clare*.



### UGLY BETTY LOSES LINDSAY LOHAN

Lindsay Lohan's guest-starring stint on *Ugly Betty* has been trimmed from six episodes to four. Everyone seems to agree on that. But as for the reasons why? Well, that's where the story gets interesting. Depending on whom you ask, either Lohan was a diva on the set of the ABC series who clashed with the show's star, America Ferrera, or Ferrera was "mean" to Lohan and engineered the *Mean Girls* star's exit. First, the pro-*Betty* side. "It was a mess," a "production source" tells the *New York Post's Page Six*. "Lindsay would show up every day with an entourage of people." The source also says Lohan's dressing room was in such poor shape that it had to be repainted. The source also claims Lohan refused to be on set until after Ferrera was already there, and when they rehearsed a scene from Thursday's (Oct. 23) episode, titled "Granny Pants," in which Ferrera's Betty de-pantses Lohan's character, "she wasn't wearing any underwear." Not so, claims a Lohan defender – or, as *Page Six* quotes this person, "Bulls\*\*\*!" Lohan was, in fact, wearing a G-string in the aforementioned scene, and didn't think Ferrera was going to pull her pants down in the rehearsal. "But she did," the "Lohan pal" says. "Lindsay was so embarrassed, she started crying." As for the entourage claims, the friend says Lohan's "sober companion," assistant and manager were on set, along with girlfriend Samantha Ronson, and that her publicist showed up a handful of times too. The dressing room was also used by cast members of the Fox show *Fringe* "so maybe they messed it up." Meanwhile, E! is saying that creative issues forced the issue, quoting a source saying that Lohan's interpretation of her character wasn't in line with *Betty's* tone.



## Music



New Kids On The Block (l-r) Joey McIntyre, Jonathan Knight, Jordan Knight, Donnie Wahlberg, Danny Wood performing live at the Staples Center in their first world tour in 15 years Los Angeles, California. PHOTO Aaron D. Settipane/WENN

# Old Kids make a mint

By Jon Bream

Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

What is the price of reliving your early teen years? For Kim Carlton and Alexis Lomen, it's US\$375 each. That buys the 31-year-old BFFs a chance to meet their childhood idols, the New Kids on the Block, and sit near the stage when they come to town.

"I'm so excited to finally get my Donnie hug," gushed Carlton, referring to New Kids leader Donnie Wahlberg.

"Having an outlet for that stupid energy you have when you're 13 is kind of important," said Lomen, who is blogging with her pal about their trips to five New Kids reunion concerts at [www.projectnkotb.com](http://www.projectnkotb.com). "I guess you carry that with you for the rest of your life."

Thanks to devoted thirtysomething fans like Kim and Alexis, New Kids have become the unlikely pop-music comeback of the year. Their new album, "The Block," debuted at No. 2 last month, selling 139,000 copies, and their tour of the United States, Canada, Mexico and Europe is the hottest-selling reunion since the Police in 2007.

"The tour is going amazing, really. It's like a time warp," said Jordan Knight, 38, once known as the cute New Kid. (Now he's the handsome one.) "It's almost the same. We're all a little older, a little wiser and we pace ourselves a little more. But it feels exactly the same."

At the height of NKOTB's popularity, a New York critic said that New Kids were selling sincerity, and sincere about selling it. From 1988 through 1990, the Boston quintet issued two studio albums, a Christmas CD and a remix album, which together sold more than 70 million copies worldwide and featured eight top 10 singles including "Step by Step" and "I'll Be Loving You (Forever)." They were the top-gross-

ing show-biz act of 1990.

So what are NKOTB selling now?

"It's sincerity, it's love for what we do, it's nostalgia," Knight said before going onstage in Sacramento. "And we're selling good old-fashioned entertainment. Not too many gimmicks and special effects. We're five creative guys. We're not over the hill; we're in our prime. You're going to see a show that brings you back in time and is up to date. It is now and is cool and is hip."

There has been talk of a New Kids reunion ever since their 1994 breakup.

"MTV tried to put us back together, VH1 tried to put us back together, different record companies, different promoters," Knight said. "Everyone heard talk of it because they were trying to get us back together. (But) not 'til a year and a half ago, we all five didn't start talking about it. We weren't going to sell out for somebody else just because they're flashing an idea in front of us and saying 'You guys can make so much money.'"

Conceived by R&B producer Maurice Starr as a white version of the black vocal group New Edition, New Kids started in 1986 as mere teenagers, playing bubble-gum ballads and derivative R&B with rap touches. In 1994, after the ill-fated "Face the Music" album, they pulled the plug. Still, New Kids became the prototype for such boy bands as Backstreet Boys and 'N Sync.

Unquestionably, the key man for this year's reunion is Wahlberg, who has become a successful actor (though not as successful as younger brother Mark). Executive producer of "The Block," he co-wrote nine of the 13 tracks on the CD, which features such famous guests as the Pussycat Dolls, Akon, Ne-Yo and New Edition and A-list producers Timbaland and Polow Da Don. New Kids also hired a new manager — Irving Azoff, who works with the Eagles, Guns 'N Roses and Neil Diamond, not boy bands.

One of the concerns about the reunion is Jonathan Knight's attitude toward performing. During NKOTB's heyday, he reportedly suffered from panic attacks.

"He's doing amazing," Jordan said of his older brother. "He's moved beyond it, to tell you the truth. It's quite natural to get nervous before a show. I would say it's almost a non-issue. All we need Jon to do — and I even tell him this — is just get onstage and look good. That's not a slap in the face; he looks like a fricking model."

Jordan is not sure where New Kids fit in today's pop world.

"I hope to think we're making our marks," he said. "Before, it was kind of like we did it, we faded away, we left a mark but maybe it was a flash in the pan. Now, by doing this, it's really branding us as the real deal. That's why I'm glad we came back, to prove to the world that we're the real deal and to prove to the fans that they weren't crazy for believing in us and liking us."

That's music to the ears of eternal Blockheads like Lomen and Carlton.

## LIFE AFTER NKOTB

OK, Jordan Knight admits that he did "The Surreal Life" in 2001 because he was bored and looking for a career boost. "Looking back, for me, it wasn't smart," he said. "I'm not that type of personality." Here's what each of the New Kids has done since their 1994 breakup — embarrassing or not.

**DONNIE WAHLBERG** > Although he produced the 1991 hit "Good Vibrations" for his brother Marky Mark and solo albums for ex-bandmates Joey McIntyre and Jordan Knight, he has mostly pursued acting, earning respect in more than 20 feature films ("Ransom," "The Sixth Sense") and several TV series and movies ("Boomtown," "Band of Brothers," "Runaway").

**“THE TOUR IS GOING AMAZING, REALLY. IT'S LIKE A TIME WARP. IT'S ALMOST THE SAME. WE'RE ALL A LITTLE OLDER, A LITTLE WISER AND WE PACE OURSELVES A LITTLE MORE. BUT IT FEELS EXACTLY THE SAME**

**JOEY MCINTYRE** > The youngest and most versatile New Kid, he has appeared on Broadway (*Wicked*), in films (*The Fantasticks*) and on TV (*Boston Public*, *Dancing With the Stars*). He also released four solo albums, scoring a top 10 single, "Stay the Same," from 1999 debut; 2006's "Talk to Me" is a collection of covers.

**JORDAN KNIGHT** > A 1999 solo album yielded the top 10 hit "Give It to You." He offered the embarrassing indie project "Jordan Knight Sings New Kids on the Block," a 2004 one-man remix CD, and 2006's "Love Songs," including a duet with Deborah Gibson. Desperate to keep his name out there, Knight was on VH1's third season of "The Surreal Life" and a judge on "American Juniors," an "American Idol" spinoff.

**JONATHAN KNIGHT** > On "Oprah," he revealed that he suffered panic attacks and was clinically depressed after NKOTB disbanded. He became a real estate developer in Massachusetts.

**DANNY WOOD** > He released little-noticed solo albums in 1999 (as D-Fuse), 2003 and 2007. The tattooed, muscle-bound Wood has acted in a few movies, including *Tequila Express*.

Summertime



NEW CD RELEASES

Jolie Holland  
➤The Living and the Dead  
➤Anti  
★★★★☆



On 2006’s superb “Spring-time Can Kill You,” for instance, Holland sounded like an old soul coming to terms with the modern world. “The Living and the Dead” often shuns the rustic trappings: It’s Holland’s most electric and outward-looking work.

Guitarists M. Ward and Marc Ribot and Holland’s former Be Good Tanyas bandmate Samantha Parton drop in, but the focus is on Holland’s voice, an arid Texas-bred twang that conveys sorrow and resignation even on relatively rockin’ songs like “Corrida Por Buddy” and the Stones-y “Your Big Hands.” She sounds most at home, though, on haunting, late-night meditations like the introspective “Fox in Its Hole” and the violin-laced “Sweet Loving Man.”

— Steve Klinge

Jazmine Sullivan  
➤Fearless  
➤J  
★★★★☆



Jazmine Sullivan is just 21, but the North Philadelphia soulstress has seen her share of music industry ups and downs. She sang on “Showtime at the Apollo” at 11, was signed to Jive records by the time she was 15, and was dropped before she was old enough to vote. Her impressive debut — which shares a title with teen country star Taylor Swift’s sophomore album, due next month — means to make the most of her long-time-in-coming opportunity, by displaying the full range of her old- and new-school R&B interests.

Sometimes the album’s multiple-producer strategy works against her. Fearless features contributions from Amy Winehouse collaborator Salaam Remi and Norwegian duo Stargate, among others. And the Missy Elliot-assembled motivational club track “Dream Big” takes a too-obvious page out of Kanye West’s bag of tricks by sampling French techno duo Daft Punk. But along with her big, creamy voice and thoroughly assured delivery, Sullivan has ideas aplenty and a wide array of stylistic moves, from the murderess’ revenge of “Call Me Guilty” to the girl-group sweetness of “One Night Stand” to the vulnerable streak that runs through “Fear.” A bit all over the place, but loaded with promise.

— Dan DeLuca

Brett Dennen  
➤Hope for the Hopeless  
➤Dualtone  
★★★★☆



A hulking redhead, Dennen may remind you of Gossamer, Bugs Bunny’s old cartoon nemesis. Until you hear his music. An adept lyricist, Dennen writes songs that jingle like a tambourine. His work is reminiscent of Paul Simon back in his “There Goes Rhymin’ Simon” days. The difference is Dennen’s salty, yearning voice, which can be a liability.

The music is bright and sunny even when the message is downbeat. For instance, “San Francisco,” a tour guide to Baghdad by the Bay, is pretty jaunty for a breakup song.

Though he swiped his album title from Philadelphia songwriter Phil Roy, this is a nice showing for Dennen. The melodies fall just this side of beautiful, but Dennen’s potential is obvious.

— David Hiltbrand

Books

The Jewel of Medina, isn’t as fiery as claimed

The Jewel of Medina  
➤By Sherry Jones  
➤Beaufort Books, US\$24.95

*The Jewel of Medina*, Sherry Jones’ hot-potato novel about the Prophet Muhammad and his child-bride Aisha, comes not from a field of spuds, but a Mideast quarry some consider bedrock-hard in its historical clarity, others soft and uncertain.

Dropped by other publishers because of fear of violence, *Jewel* now arrives — nervily — from Beaufort. As that house demonstrated with an earlier tome — *If I Did It*, by O.J. Simpson — it knows how to look for trouble.

No part of the life of Muhammad (A.D. c. 570-632) makes Muslims more uncomfortable than the romantic and sexual appetites of their Prophet — according to tradition, he logged nine wives and four concubines — and above all, his betrothal at 50 to 6-year-old Aisha.

Christians aren’t used to the founder of a major religion displaying such prodigious human inclinations. While books crop up about Jesus’ possible entanglements with Mary Magdalene or others, they remain fringe items, largely ignored, because scholars widely regard them as bogus claims.

By contrast, Muhammad, much of whose later life is well documented, left us many details, thanks in part to Aisha and others.

The core facts are largely undisputed. Muhammad and Aisha married when he was 53 and she was 9, making her the third of his 8 wives after a 25-year monogamous marriage to his first wife, Khadija, who was 15 years older than him. Most scholars believe his marriage to Aisha was not consummated until she reached puberty.

By all accounts, Aisha became Muhammad’s favourite wife, and the two loved and supported each other with great devotion. According to Sunni tradition, Muhammad died in her arms. Aisha, widely recognized for her wit, outspokenness and loyalty to Muhammad, lived to age 65, and became the source of some 2,000 sayings of the Prophet.

The scholarly assessment of Muhammad’s romantic life and roughly 9-year marriage to Aisha, like the size-up of Islam itself, swings between two extremes.

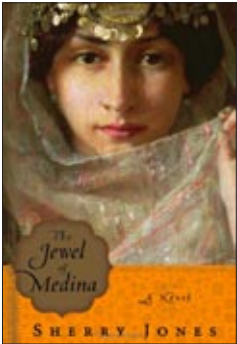
In the pro-Muhammad column fall writers such as Karen Armstrong, who has championed his life as “a tireless campaign against greed, injustice, and arrogance.”

Armstrong observes in *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time* (Atlas Books, \$21.95), that “Muhammad’s harem has excited a good deal of prurient and ill-natured speculation in the West, but in Arabia, where polygamy was more common ... it would have been commonplace.”

She continues: “There was no impropriety in Muhammad’s betrothal to Aisha. Marriages conducted in absentia to seal an alliance were often contracted at this time between adults and minors who were even younger than Aisha. This practice continued in Europe well into the early modern period.”

Other scholars disagree with Armstrong, and criticize Muhammad, not just for marrying Aisha, but also for his announcement of special rules for himself (e.g., having more than the allowed limit of four wives), and his marriage to Zaynab, beautiful wife of his adopted son Zaid, whom Zaid divorced after Muhammad glimpsed her “lightly clad” (in one translation) and expressed interest.

Ibn Warraq in *Why I Am Not a Muslim* (Prometheus, US\$25.95), asserts apropos of Muhammad’s practices, “What is clear is that women are seen as objects.” Muhammad’s marriage to Aisha, he writes, “encourages Muslim society to continue with this



iniquitous custom.” After examining Muhammad’s actions, Ibn Warraq reports, “the conclusion forces itself upon us that in later life, he consciously fabricated ‘revelations,’ often for his own convenience, to sort out his domestic problems.”

Where does *The Jewel of Medina* fall on this spectrum? Its cancellation by Random House came after a scholar of Aisha, Denise Spellberg, denounced the novel as a “very ugly, stupid piece of work,” and expressed concern it would trigger violence.

That reaction now looks overwrought and tone-deaf. *The Jewel of Medina*, granted, isn’t Proust. No sooner do we encounter, on page 3, “Pain wrung my stomach like strong hands squeezing water from laundry, only I was already dry,” than we understand Jones is not Aristotle’s sought-after “master of metaphor.” When Muhammad replies to his cousin Ali, “Divorce my Aisha? I would rather cut out my own heart,” we miss the poetry of the sutras.

But neither is *The Jewel of Medina* tripe. Jones claims she read scores of books on Islam and Aisha. It shows. *Jewel* faithfully tracks the known story, dramatizing celebrated moments.

Its departures from solid historical facts — one of Spellberg’s chief complaints — lie within the normal ambit of historical fiction. Its sympathies tilt completely toward Muhammad and Aisha. Controversial aspects — Aisha’s possible flirtatiousness and fibbing, her jealousy, her sharp tongue (she once implied that Muhammad made up a Koranic sura only to justify marrying Zaynab) — all stem from Islamic history itself.

Only a Muslim who rejected Muhammad’s life-long insistence that he was a man like other men could find *The Jewel of Medina* objectionable or anti-Islam. They, and perhaps a scholar like Spellberg, author of *Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of Aisha bint Abi Bakr* (Columbia, 1994), who didn’t like a mere journalist muscling in on her territory.

What’s precious about *The Jewel of Medina* is its unapologetic reimagining of a marriage that may outrage some, but inspired millions more. The Wall Street Journal article that stoked the brouhaha over *The Jewel of Medina* screamed, “You Still Can’t Write About Muhammad.”

That’s the headline that matters. Because, as even Armstrong acknowledges in regard to Muhammad’s life, “The ‘sunnah (customary practice) taught Muslims to imitate the way Muhammad spoke, ate, loved, washed, and worshipped, so that in the smallest details of their daily existence, they reproduced his life on earth. ...”

*The Jewel of Medina* rightfully reopens the “loved” part. Betrothal of female children to decades-older men continues in Yemen and elsewhere, as do other practices opposed by Westerners.

In the West, we arrest middle-aged men for desires Muhammad shared. At the same time, Armstrong correctly argues that in the context of his time, Muhammad (as opposed to some later Muslim leaders) sought “the emancipation of women.”

Is Western culture’s current opposition to men taking multiple wives, or middle-aged men desiring young girls, a modern taboo that Islam exposes as rooted in debatable psychological theory rather than custom? (Recall that Eleanor of Aquitaine, that mate of “The Lion in Winter,” was married at 15.)

Or does Islam perpetuate a backward vision of male-female relations in which men simply rule over women?

If newspapers now publish as much about the “content” of Sherry Jones’ brave novel as they did about the easier issue of free expression, *The Jewel of Medina* will truly prove an ornament to our supposedly freethinking culture.

— By Carlin Romano

Conquering our addiction to oil

The Plan: How to Rescue Society the Day the Oil Stops — or the Day Before  
➤By Edwin Black  
➤Dialog Press, US\$12.95 via Amazon

I was expecting a dark tale of gloom and doom, a post-apocalyptic tableau of a born-again, prehistoric oil-free society. After all, Edwin Black is the author of the chillingly revelatory “IBM and the Holocaust,” a disheartening expose of America’s disgusting attraction to the racist pseudo-science of eugenics, “War Against the Weak,” and other sobering and impeccably researched investigative works.

Surely Black’s new book about ending our country’s self-destructive addiction to fossil fuels would be brilliant, but dark and deeply depressing.

Wrong!

Black states the problem clearly and without hyperbole or hysterics. He then presents a sane and remarkably rational step-by-step scheme for quitting our fossil fuel dependency. Along the way, he cites published, noncontroversial works plus his own primary research, which keeps the proceedings well out of the realm of science fiction, except perhaps for one element (I’ll get to that in a bit).

The fact that this unending and expanding thirst for oil is the world’s economic and political choke point is no accident, as Black recalls from his previous book, “Internal Combustion.” Throughout history, fuel has been controlled by political and commercial interests that were, as now, two sides of the same coin. And despite the fact that oil pollutes, affects all other prices and forces us to play nice with interests that are antithetical to our own, a huge socioeconomic infrastructure supports and promotes its perpetuation. But rather than pound the obvious, Black calmly sets the table, then moves on to his recommendations for extricating ourselves from the nightmare.

The required actions are all rational and involve the use of existing technologies — electricity, bio-fuels, hydrogen fuel cells and more. Black lays it out week by week, with each successive step building upon previous ones to move away from the petroleum morass.

The auto industry will have to be a large part of the solution. One would consider this a no-brainer with the economy in the dumper right now. Manufacturing and selling gas-free vehicles could revive the industry.

But according to Black, automakers that have already developed the technology are reluctant to fully roll out new vehicles to compete with their large stock of unsold gas guzzlers. But the good news is that they would be forced to do so as their business spirals downward.

The challenge is to get past the incumbent infrastructure. Between lobbyists, politicians and the public, the addiction to oil is entrenched. That’s where *The Plan* requires some suspension of disbelief. With their profits on the line, we can expect a fierce and concerted campaign of fear, uncertainty, doubt and obfuscation to dissuade the migration from oil. The government, which should be part of the solution, is still a large part of the problem. The EPA, for example, makes conversion of internal combustion engines to alternative fuels more difficult, according to Black. And its determined indifference toward mileage standards has encouraged inefficiency, too.

So is Edwin Black’s Plan the road map to our future? Maybe, but at worst, it’s an excellent point of departure from our current suicidal path. Highly recommended.

— By Richard Pachter





# Doctor shares secrets to calm your child

By Nicole Paitzel

It's a parent's initiation into the land of Munchkins — hours of crying, nights with no sleep and temper tantrums in the grocery store.

But paediatrician and author Harvey Karp says parents can eliminate these difficult moments with the right technique. His best-selling books and accompanying DVDs, "The Happiest Baby on the Block" and "The Happiest Toddler on the Block," give parents step-by-step instructions on how to soothe their children in minutes.

With infants, it's Karp's five "S's" — swaddling, positioning on the side or stomach, shushing, swinging and sucking — that quiet a squalling baby.

But each of these common tricks must be performed using a specific method. Shushing, for instance, should be done as loudly as the baby's cry and taper off as the crying subsides. And combining the S-tricks in the correct order can lull the little one into a deep, lasting sleep.

But the parenting secrets don't end with infancy. According to Karp, parents should relate to toddlers as they would little cavemen. Short sentences, repetition, tone of voice and body gestures are the best communication tools.

In his "Happiest Toddler" book, Karp gives an example of a bored 15-month-old who starts banging on the door to go outside. Instead of having an even-toned conversation explaining why it's not time to go outside, the "prehistoric parent" should energetically reflect the request by saying "Out ... Out ... Out! You are bored, bored, bored, and you want out!" Once the child calms, parents can offer a distraction.

Here are the ideas behind his methods:

**Q:** What do you think is fundamentally wrong with the way most people try to soothe babies?

**A:** Parents don't appreciate the concept of the missing fourth trimester. We think that babies are ready to be born and on their own; we're trying to teach them to be independent and self-soothing. But it turns out that they're really born three months before they're ready to be in the world, and they

need us to continue some of the symphony of sensations of the womb. I'm not saying we need to carry them 24 hours a day, but even 18 hours a day is a dramatic decrease from what they're used to.

Another huge misconception is that babies cry because they're over-stimulated, but that's hardly ever the case. If you take most babies to a loud basketball game, they'll fall asleep. It turns out that most of our babies are under-stimulated.

One of the big parts of that is sound.

The sound in the womb is twice as

loud as a vacuum cleaner, and

to put them in a quiet room

is actually sensory deprivation.

That's why we use white noise,

and parents (who

use this method)

are given a CD

of white noise

to play all night

long.

**Q:** How did you

determine the five S's?

**A:** The five S's have been known for thousands of years. There have been lots of studies on those things, but what people didn't know was how to do them correctly. Babies are born with a reflex that works as an off switch for crying. But like the knee reflex, you have to do it exactly right. It's an all-or-nothing phenomenon. Parents who are doing these things, but not doing them exactly right, usually get frustrated.

**Q:** How did you find the perfect technique for each of the five S's?

**A:** I did it by trying it on thousands of babies as a paediatrician. I was in paediatric practice for 27 years and worked to refine it with dozens and dozens of house calls. And now it's really connected with people. The whole idea of baby calming and baby sleep is a serious public health issue. We're hav-



ing talks with the Virginia Department of Health to teach this in clinics all over the state. It (crying babies) pushes women over the edge for postpartum depression, leads to breast feeding failure, leads to maternal smoking and is the No. 1 trigger for shaken baby syndrome. It puts a wedge between parents who want to feel competent and do well, but the crying makes them feel like they don't want to be around the child.

**Q:** Tell us a little more about the caveman toddler.

**A:** That approach is for kids

8 months to 5 years of age,

although the techniques work

well beyond 5 years old. We

all know how tough it is to

raise a toddler, but it's really

tough to be a toddler. The

left brain is immature,

which is the informa-

tion and logic centre.

That's why they're

less verbal and

logical and more

emotional. When

they're stressed,

their left brain

shuts off totally. And

any parent of an 8-month-

old knows that they're completely

uncivilized.

The other thing that is tough is that the world we put them in is strange. They expect to be born and run around outside together. If you keep them cooped up in a house all day long, it's like putting Tarzan in a tuxedo and making him live in a studio apartment. We need to understand that they get primitive when they get upset and that requires us to change the way we speak to them.

**Q:** How should "prehistoric parents" interact with their cavemen?

**A:** The more upset they get, the more calm we get, and that's the opposite of what we should be doing. It makes the child think we don't understand

them. We naturally reflect a little bit of the person's emotion when we speak to them with our tone of voice. But when people get upset, there's an emotional disconnect that we're taught. Rather than acknowledging some of their feelings, we immediately try to make them not have those upset feelings. But what feels best to the child is to reflect some of those upset feelings. Parents have been taught the opposite, and it makes the child feel misunderstood, so often they'll cry even louder and harder.

**Q:** Why do you think your philosophy is so different from many of the infant and toddler care books out there?

**A:** Until "The Happiest Baby on the Block" came out, people were confused because most books will tell you that we don't know why young babies cry. This book has revolutionized the way we understand babies, and is being endorsed and recognized by many health care professionals. We now have about 1,600 educators teaching this around the world and another 1,200 in training. This is growing faster than childbirth classes did in the 1960s.

**Q:** Do you have any ideas on how to have the happiest teenager on the block?

**A:** I can't tell you the whole secret approach, but I can tell you part of it uses a lot of duct tape. In a lot of ways, they're like toddlers — they want a lot more authority than they're prepared to handle, and they've got a lot of immaturity. A lot of the communication techniques that work with toddlers works with them as well. What hasn't been acknowledged is how important the nonverbal part of communication is. The way you acknowledge someone's feelings is actually more important than what you say. Even with the right words, if it's done in a very flat, psychiatrist voice, it makes you want to be more distant and find someone who does understand you. These books deal with discipline as well, but it turns out that 90 percent of getting your kids to behave well is respectful communication.

*The Happiest Baby on the Block*, by Harvey Karp; Bantam Books, 260 pages. Available at Borders, and Amazon.com.

*The Happiest Toddler on the Block*, by Harvey Karp; Bantam Books, 297 pages. Available at Borders, and Amazon.com.

## How to bring joy back into your life

By Judi Light Hopson, Emma H. Hopson, R.N., and Ted Hagen, Ph.D.

Does life feel overwhelming and weird these days?

Has it been years since you felt a sense of peace and harmony? Many people say they feel locked into a life struggle that leaves them without joy.

A woman we'll call Katherine told us, "I don't remember feeling happy in a long time."

The truth is that too much responsibility, too little relaxation time, and a sense of urgency can erase one's joy.

Here's how to take back joy you've lost:

➤ Take time for joy. Even if you have only five minutes to take a walk or read a magazine, allow yourself to focus on what pleases you.

➤ Reflect on happier times. Even if you suffered a painful period in life, try to dwell on the happy moments that came during that time.

➤ Focus on creating joy now. For example, do take 10 minutes to watch children play or carve out time to watch an old "I Love Lucy" rerun.

A man we'll call George is sitting by his wife's hospital bed these days. He is trapped in a world of watching her die.

"I do go outside the hospital and look at the sky and trees," says George. "I focus on nice paintings in the hospital hallway, and I get a real kick out of having my favourite coffee before I go into the hospital chapel to meditate."

George knows that joy is all about focus. He finds small bits of time to focus on what feels harmonious and right. Without these moments, his spirit would die.

A divorced woman we'll call Sandy says she hated reflecting on the town she grew up in. Sandy had bad memories of her first marriage there.

"But," says Sandy, "one day I called my 83-year-old mother. I told Mum that we should walk around

our hometown and reflect on the good times. We talked about the joys of my grandmother's house, hiding Easter eggs, and how we grew ecstatic when the carnival came to town."

Sandy emphasizes that focusing on joyful moments in the past, present, and future makes her now feel in control of her life.

"Hard days are a lot easier if you've had an ongoing infusion of joy," says Sandy.

"I practiced finding joyful moments a lot over this past summer," says Joy. "It's a good thing I did. When I ran into my ex-husband's sister, she tried to slam me with hurtful words. I kept smiling and told her I was sorry she was having such a bad life!"

Sandy knows that joy is an armour of self-protection. If we layer it on often enough, it begins to ooze out of our pores.

"When I ran into my ex-sister-in-law, I had just had my hair done and I had been working out at the gym," says Sandy. "Looking good always helps ward off an enemy attack!"

Before Sandy started trying to access joy, she says she was too tired to exercise and didn't take much pride in her appearance.

If your physical appearance needs work or your house is messy, you might ask yourself if you're lacking joy. It's the ticket to turning things around.

Ever notice that it takes less energy to spiff up things when you're feeling good? You can whiz through bed making, bathroom cleanups, and carpooling with less stress.

Most of us can stick with a diet, stick with exercise, and get more work done for our employer if we energize ourselves with joyful thoughts and feelings.

Judi Hopson and Emma Hopson are authors of a stress management book for paramedics, firefighters and police, *Burnout To Balance: EMS Stress*. Ted Hagen is a family psychologist.

— MCT



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# Egyptologists crack Great Pyramid

By Sumathi Reddy and Nia-Malika Henderson  
*Newsday*

Using cutting edge technology, Egyptologist Bob Brier of the C.W.Post Campus of Long Island University delved into the only standing wonder of the ancient world, the Great Pyramid, and uncovered the mystery behind cracks in the massive Egyptian structure, unearthing a new room along the way.

Brier, French architect Jean-Pierre Houdin and a team of software specialists from Dassault Systems in Paris used 3-D modelling software to determine that the burial chamber’s stone support beams cracked as final construction of the Giza wonder was near completion 4,500 years ago.

The team discovered that the cracks occurred when three things happened: one wall of King Khufu’s burial chamber settled, stone rafters in a room above the chamber slipped, and the height of the pyramid reached 392 feet.

Brier and Houdin are presenting their findings at a Microsoft Innovation Management Forum in Seattle on Tuesday.

“I thought it was important to look back in time to look forward in time,” said Simon Floyd, world-wide industry technology strategist for innovation at Microsoft and one of the organizers of the conference. “The Egyptians were great innovators. They were perhaps the first documented innovators that we could look at. I felt that this would be a fantastic sort of look back in time to see how an ancient civilization was able to do some incredible things that have been long-standing in time.”

Floyd said Brier’s collaboration with Houdin is



The cracks had been a known but poorly understood fact about the pyramid – the largest and oldest of the three on that site – since the 1880s

especially innovative. “They’ve applied a fantastic new technique ... to help prove out many of his theories,” he said.

The cracks had been a known but poorly understood fact about the pyramid – the largest and oldest of the three on that site – since the 1880s. The

team found that the pyramid’s architect, Hemien, cut a tunnel into a sealed space above the burial chamber to assess the damage and filled the cracks with plaster that would indicate if the cracks were widening.

The ancient fix-it job worked: the beams held and

the pyramid was complete.

The discoveries are detailed in a book by Brier, released last week, called *The Secret of the Great Pyramid: How One Man’s Obsession Led to the Solution of Ancient Egypt’s Greatest Mystery*. Brier will also speak Monday at C.W.Post.

# To infinity, and beyond

**NEW DELHI** – The first 36 hours of India’s moonshot project have gone without a hitch, after a “perfect” lift-off of the unmanned Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft, placing the country among a select group of nations that have sent lunar missions.

The 44-metre tall Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle rocket carrying the Chandrayaan probe lifted off yesterday afternoon from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, 80 kilometres north of the southern Chennai city.

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chief G Madhavan Nair described it as a “historic moment” as scientists congratulated each other at the space port.

“India has started its journey to the moon,” Nair said after the launch, adding “The first leg has gone perfectly well. The spacecraft has been launched into orbit.”

“The mission has opened a new chapter in the Indian as well as global space community,” he said.

“We will raise the spacecraft’s orbit step by step,” Nair said adding it was a “complex mission” involving orbit determination, navigation and guidance of the equipment at huge distances.

The Chandrayaan, which means moon craft in Sanskrit, aims to prepare a three-dimensional atlas of the moon, map the distribution of elements and minerals below the lunar surface and look for water deposits in its polar regions.

The 3.86-billion-rupee (79-million-dollar) Chandrayaan project carries 11 experimental payloads, five of them developed by ISRO and six by the European Space Agency, the United States’ NASA and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The solar-powered spacecraft, cuboid in shape and weighing 1,380 kilograms, includes an impact probe that will crash into the surface and plant the



Indian national flag around November 15, staking the South Asian country’s claims to the moon.

The mission is expected to investigate the presence of helium-3 an isotope, believed to be abundant on the moon and sought for nuclear-fusion research and energy generation.

ISRO scientists said the rocket put Chandrayaan into a “transfer orbit” around Earth 19 minutes after launch.

The spacecraft will make a few orbits of Earth and then fire its onboard motor to take it to a lunar orbit by November 8.

Indian scientists called the mission a major step toward building India’s technological capability and will help the nation catch up in a 21st-century space race with Chinese and Japanese spacecraft already orbiting the moon.

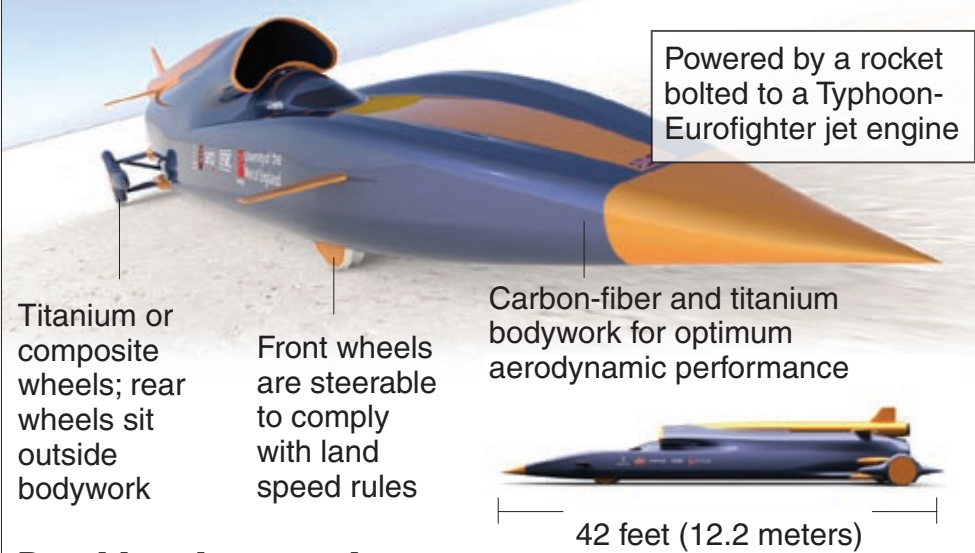
It will also lay the foundation to build India’s capacities for interplanetary missions in the coming years.

There have been more than 65 manned and unmanned missions to the moon in the past five decades, most of them launched by US and the erstwhile Soviet Union.

– DPA

## Bloodhound SSC

The British team that has held the world land speed record for 25 years unveils its latest supercar.



### Breaking the records

Year	Vehicle	Power	Speed
1935	Bluebird	Piston (IC)	301.13 mph (484.62 kph)
1938	Thunderbolt	Piston (IC)	345.49 mph (556 kph)
1947	Railton	Piston (IC)	394.19 mph (634.39 kph)
1965	The Green Monster	Turbojet	576.55 mph (927.87 kph)
1970	Blue Flame	Rocket	622.41 mph (1,001.67 kph)
1983	Thrust 2	Turbojet	633 mph (1,019.47 kph)
1997	Thrust SSC	Turbofan	766 mph (1,233.70 kph)
2011*	Bloodhound SSC	Jet/Rocket	1,000 mph (1,610 kph)

Source: Curvanta, AP  
Graphic: Scott Bell

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# The world’s fastest car

**LONDON** – The British team that already holds the world land speed record said today it plans to build a 1,000-miles-an-hour (1,600 kilometres) car in the next three years.

The Bloodhound SSC (supersonic car) will be 13 metres long, six metres wide and be powered by a jet engine normally used on the Eurofighter, plus a rocket, said project leader Richard Noble.

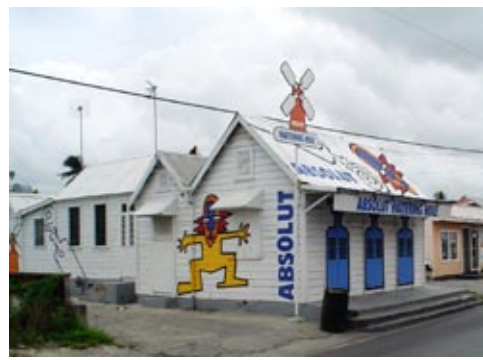
“We have to defend our record,” said Noble, whose

team in 1997 produced the current record-holder which reached a speed of 1,228 kilometres (785 miles) an hour, breaking the sound barrier.

Noble said the new car would be faster than a bullet, covering the distance of four football fields in a second. It would be driven by military pilot Andy Green, who drove the earlier record-breaking car in the Nevada desert.

– DPA





# If you're a rum drinker, Barbados is the promised land

By Jody Kurash

**BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS** – Warmhearted smiles welcome me as I stride into the John Moore bar, the oldest rum shop in Barbados. I've been in the Caribbean for only a few days, but I feel as though I belong when I order a "Black and Coke," which is the native slang for Extra Old rum served with Coca Cola.

Embarrassingly, my cover is blown when I use a large bill to pay for my drink, which costs less than half as much as the cocktails at the beach resort where I am staying. After obviously outing myself as a naive tourist, I take my drink to an outdoor table and exchange small talk with an old man whose charming grin and musical lilt in his voice overcome the fact that he is missing a few teeth. Soon, I am conversing with a group of islanders as the sun begins to set. A hint of ocean salt lingers in the evening breeze.

Like many Caribbean islands, Barbados is a dream destination filled with silky white beaches, beautiful turquoise water, sunshine and slowly flowing time. Visitors have their choice of luxurious resorts and top-notch restaurants with stunning ocean views.

But the sociable rum culture of Barbados makes it stand apart from other island destinations. Ireland has its pubs, France has its cafes, but Barbados has rum shops, which are a pillar in Bajan (as the natives refer to themselves) life. Although estimates vary, more than 1,200 rum shops dot the 32-kilometre-long by 23-kilometre-wide island.

People gather all day at the shops to share stories, play dominoes, commiserate, celebrate and solve the world's problems. Young and old alike mix in harmony. The shops are simple settings, usually small open-air wooden shacks painted with colourful advertisements on the outside. The drink selection is minimal, usually rum, Banks, the local beer, soft drinks and little else. The furniture is bare. However, the openness of the people inside allows visitors to

immerse themselves in local life, culture all amid generous laughter.

The history of rum and the history of Barbados go hand in hand. Rum is believed to be the oldest distilled spirit in the world and Barbados is considered its birthplace. The book "Rum: A Social and Sociable History of the Real Spirit of 1776," by Ian Williams, states that "rum originated in Barbados as a by-product of sugar refining."

According to Bajan legend sailors brought back bottles of Barbados rum to England as proof of having sailed across the Atlantic.

To learn more, I head to the Mount Gay Visitor's Centre near the capital of Bridgetown, which features educational tours and tastings. Mount Gay was founded in 1703 and claims to be the oldest rum producer in the world.

Brightly coloured buildings decorated with murals sit among a lush tropical garden at the visitor's complex. I begin my visit with a sampling with master blender Allen Smith.

Smith invites four of us into a room that looks like a laboratory. It is a simple working room, not a Disney-fied studio created to show off for tourists. He speaks in a colloquial manner, more like a conversation one would have if you just happened to run into a man who knows entirely too much about rum and has no problem sharing his expertise.

Smith discusses how Barbados rum is made. Mount Gay is a blended rum concocted from a combination of continuous distilled and double-distilled rums. The different distillates are aged in charred white oak barrels imported from Kentucky. The barrels, which were once used to make bourbon, bring a distinctive flavour and colour to the spirit.

Smith has the enviable job of sampling the rum straight from the barrels to deem its readiness, and blending it to perfection.

During the tasting, we learn to distinguish the differences in flavour during the various stages of the rum-making process. Single distillate has a potent smack and aroma while the double distillate

exults a deeper and more robust character. We detect the oak and vanilla hints that come from the aging rum in the oak barrels.

Jasen and Kristen Converse, from Frederick, Md., join me during the tasting. Jasen tells Smith a funny story about how he learned to drink by sneaking Mount Gay rum from his grandfather's liquor cabinet. For our final taste, Smith pours us two styles of recently blended rum - Eclipse and Extra Old. The Eclipse is filled with subtle hints of citrus and vanilla. The Extra Old flaunts a complex, deep character with sweet and fruity notes. The rum from these newly blended batches will soon be dispatched to the bottling plant on the premises

**“THE SHOPS ARE SIMPLE SETTINGS, USUALLY SMALL OPEN-AIR WOODEN SHACKS PAINTED WITH COLOURFUL ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE OUTSIDE. THE DRINK SELECTION IS MINIMAL, USUALLY RUM, BANKS, THE LOCAL BEER, SOFT DRINKS AND LITTLE ELSE**

and shipped across the globe. I feel privileged to have tasted it first.

The next stop is the History & Tradition tour. The bubbly Maria Elias leads a group of visitors through rooms colourfully decorated with historical photos, memorabilia, huge copper pot stills and other rum-making equipment. Elias discusses the history of rum, the distillery and the rum-making process. Her Caribbean-lilted voice is peppered with humorous stories and an infectious laugh.

We line up at table covered with large glass jars where we smell the elements (sugar cane, molasses

## IF YOU GO

Several airlines fly to Barbados from the United States, including American Airlines and Air Jamaica

I stayed at the Colony Club hotel, which is situated on the island's tranquil east coast. The resort, which has an elegant British ambiance, was restored from a former private club and suggests a place that Sean Connery, the original James Bond, may have stayed. Some of the rooms have private plunge pools. [www.colonyclubhotel.com](http://www.colonyclubhotel.com)

The John Moore bar, is located on the waterfront in Weston in St. James Parish. Most cabdrivers or bus drivers are familiar with the local haunt. The colourfully painted Looker's rum shop, located on Black Rock Main Road St. Michael Parish, has been photographed for tourist brochures.

The Mount Gay Visitor's Centre, near Bridgetown, offers 45 minute tours from 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., Monday to Friday. Tasting and luncheon tours are also available. [www.mountgayrum.com](http://www.mountgayrum.com)

Lorenzo's Scuba Dreams is a small dive shop that provides personal service. I dove one-on-one with my dive master. [www.cariboceandivers.com](http://www.cariboceandivers.com).

Sandy Lane in St. James is one of the most celebrated resorts in the Caribbean. Tiger Woods was married here in October 2004. The beachfront restaurant Bajan Blue features a grilled seafood buffet. The spa at Sandy Lane is a luxurious full-service spa set in a Romanesque atmosphere. After my massage, I spent time unwinding in one of their relaxation rooms. Sandy Lane offers three courses for golfers. [www.sandylane.com](http://www.sandylane.com)

The Calabaza Restaurant North of Batts Rock Bay is decorated in cheerful Caribbean colors and perched on a small cliff overlooking the sea. The eatery boasts a creative menu of fresh seafood. [www.calabazabarbados.com](http://www.calabazabarbados.com)

and distilled un-aged alcohol) used in the making of rum. Elias jokes that Barbadians use the rum base as a perfume. We stop at a replica of an authentic Bajan rum shop where Elias tells us to order a "Black and Coke" if we want to sound like a local. (Too bad she didn't tell me to leave the 50 Bajan dollar bill at my hotel.) A visit to the bar caps off the excursion. Tourists line up as bartender Chris Breedy pours samples of rum and whips up tall glasses of colorful cocktails. Breedy mixes me a frosty drink of his own creation, "the locomotion," a combination of rum, chocolate syrup, and coconut cream. A perfect antidote for the scorching Caribbean sun.

In rum-soaked Barbados, visitors may imbibe the local spirit in many different atmospheres. The island is ringed with casual outdoor beachside bars with daiquiri blenders. Bartenders at posh resorts will eagerly whip up exotic fruity concoctions garnished with tiny umbrellas or fresh flowers. My favourite is the Bajan version of rum punch: a mixture of rum, lime juice and Angostura bitters. The colourful not-too-sweet drink boasts a spicy, crisp and refreshing flavour.

Rum is not the only story in Barbados, 2,600 km east of Miami. Visitors may Scuba dive on the elaborate coral reefs and snorkel side-by-side with giant turtles. On the windswept west coast, choppy waves crash into carved stone rocks jutting from the sea. Those seeking a more tranquil experience should head to the Sandy Lane spa for utter bliss and relaxation. Golfers have their choice five resorts with courses. Top-rated restaurants with dramatic ocean views compete for the discerning diners. Those looking for a more casual meal should check out a local fish fry or a Roti stand.

While the world-class resorts and activities may be this destination's top selling points, the memories that endure are the cheerful faces and the lingering conversations carried out while sitting at picnic tables outside the wooden drink shacks. The hospitable personalities and grinning faces create the true heart and soul of Barbados.

— MCT



# The road to Auckland

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](#).



"Have the rebels been successful up to this time?"

"Yes, Madam, and the English themselves have often been compelled to admire the courage and bravery of the New Zealanders. Their mode of warfare is of the guerrilla type; they form skirmishing parties, come down in small detachments, and pillage the colonists' homes. General Cameron had no easy time in the campaigns, during which every bush had to be searched. In 1863, after a long and sanguinary struggle, the Maoris were entrenched in strong and fortified position on the Upper Waikato, at the end of a chain of steep hills, and covered by three miles of forts.

"The native prophets called on all the Maori population to defend the soil, and promised the extermination of the pakehas, or white men. General Cameron had three thousand volunteers at his disposal, and they gave no quarter to the Maoris after the barbarous murder of Captain Sprent. Several bloody engagements took place; in some instances the fighting lasted twelve hours before the Maoris yielded to the English cannonade. The heart of the army was the fierce Waikato tribe under William Thompson. This native general commanded at the outset 2,500 warriors, afterward increased to 8,000. The men of Shongi and Heki, two powerful chiefs, came to his assistance. The women took their part in the most trying labours of this patriotic war. But right has not always might.

"After severe struggles General Cameron succeeded in subduing the Waikato district, but empty and depopulated, for the Maoris escaped in all directions. Some wonderful exploits were related. Four hundred Maoris who were shut up in the fortress of Orakau, besieged by 1,000 English, under Brigadier-General Carey, without water or provisions, refused to surrender, but one day at noon cut their way through the then decimated 40th Regiment, and escaped to the marshes."

"But," asked John Mangles, "did the submission of the Waikato district put an end to this sanguinary war?"

"No, my friend," replied Paganel. "The English resolved to march on Taranaki province and besiege Mataitawa, William Thompson's fortress. But they did not carry it without great loss. Just as I was leaving Paris, I heard that the Governor and the General had accepted the submission of the Tauranga tribes, and left them in possession of three-fourths of their lands. It was also rumoured that the principal chief of the rebellion, William Thompson, was inclined to surrender, but the Australian papers have not confirmed this, but rather the contrary, and I should not be surprised to find that at this moment the war is going on with renewed vigour."

"Then, according to you, Paganel," said Glenarvan, "this struggle is still going on in the provinces of Auckland and Taranaki?"

"I think so."

"This very province where the *Macquarie's* wreck has deposited us."

"Exactly. We have landed a few miles above Kawhia harbor, where the Maori flag is probably still floating."

"Then our most prudent course would be to keep toward the north," remarked Glenarvan.

"By far the most prudent," said Paganel. "The New Zealanders are incensed against Europeans, and especially against the English. Therefore let us avoid falling into their hands."

"We might have the good fortune to fall in with a detachment of

European troops," said Lady Helena.

"We may, Madam," replied the geographer; "but I do not expect it. Detached parties do not like to go far into the country, where the smallest tussock, the thinnest brushwood, may conceal an accomplished marksman. I don't fancy we shall pick up an escort of the 40th Regiment. But there are mission-stations on this west coast, and we shall be able to make them our halting-places till we get to Auckland."

On the 7th of February, at six o'clock in the morning, the signal for departure was given by Glenarvan. During the night the rain had ceased. The sky was veiled with light gray clouds, which moderated the heat of the sun, and allowed the travellers to venture on a journey by day.

Paganel had measured on the map a distance of eighty miles between Point Kawhia and Auckland; it was an eight days' journey if they made ten miles a day. But instead of following the windings of the coast, he thought it better to make for a point thirty miles off, at the confluence of the Waikato and the Waipa, at the village of Ngaruawahia. The "overland track" passes that point, and is rather a path than a road, practicable for the vehicles which go almost across the island, from Napier, in Hawke's Bay, to Auckland. From this village it would be easy to reach Drury, and there they could rest in an excellent hotel, highly recommended by Dr. Hochstetter.

The travellers, each carrying a share of the provisions, commenced to follow the shore of Aotea Bay. From prudential motives they did not allow themselves to straggle, and by instinct they kept a look-out over the undulating plains to the eastward, ready with their loaded carbines. Paganel, map in hand, took a professional pleasure in verifying the minutest details.

The country looked like an immense prairie which faded into distance, and promised an easy walk. But the travellers were undeceived when they came to the edge of this verdant plain. The grass gave way to a low scrub of small bushes

bearing little white flowers, mixed with those innumerable tall ferns with which the lands of New Zealand abound. They had to cut a path across the plain, through these woody stems, and this was a matter of some difficulty; but at eight o'clock in the evening the first slopes of the Hakarihoata Ranges were turned, and the party camped immediately. After a fourteen miles' march, they might well think of resting.

Neither wagon or tent being available, they sought repose beneath some magnificent Norfolk Island pines. They had plenty of rugs which make good beds. Glenarvan took every possible precaution for the night. His companions and he, well armed, were to watch in turns, two and two, till daybreak. No fires were lighted. Barriers of fire are a potent preservation from wild beasts, but New Zealand has neither tiger, nor lion, nor bear, nor any wild animal, but the Maori adequately fills their place, and a fire would only have served to attract this two-footed jaguar.

The night passed pleasantly with the exception of the attack of the sand-flies, called by the natives, "ngamu," and the visit of the audacious family of rats, who exercised their teeth on the provisions.

Next day, on the 8th of February, Paganel rose more sanguine, and almost reconciled to the country. The Maoris, whom he particularly dreaded, had not yet appeared, and these ferocious cannibals had not molested him even in his dreams. "I begin to think that our little journey will end favourably. This evening we shall reach the confluence of the Waipa and Waikato, and after that there is not much chance of meeting natives on the way to Auckland."

"How far is it now," said Glenarvan, "to the confluence of the Waipa and Waikato?"

"Fifteen miles; just about what we did yesterday."

"But we shall be terribly delayed if this interminable scrub continues to obstruct our path."

"No," said Paganel, "we shall follow the banks of the Waipa, and then we shall have no obstacle, but on the contrary, a very easy road."

"Well, then," said Glenarvan, seeing the ladies ready, "let us make a start."

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## FROM FRONT PAGE

chose not to revoke the Asian crime lord's residency when he specifically had the chance last year. For the record, Jones is refusing to answer any questions from the media on this issue. Additionally, after reading our major investigation on Yan's links to the Labour Party and his fast-tracked citizenship application last week, a police source contacted us claiming a police investigation into him commenced by the Asian Crime Unit in Auckland several years ago had been shelved after what he called "political interference" from Wellington.

When we contacted Asian Crime Unit boss Detective Sergeant Tim Chao for comment, he refused to discuss why the investigation was in limbo, referring all inquiries to Police National Headquarters in Wellington where, apparently, the file now sits.

Coming hard on the heels of allegations that Yan, using the alias Yang (Bill) Liu, curried favour with Labour politicians to boost his citizenship bid, the claim Police HQ has smothered a live criminal investigation into the Chinese businessman is more potential dynamite the Government won't be wanting to face just two weeks out from a must-win election — was the police investigation "pulled" as a result of Yan's business and political clout?

Police National HQ deny, for the record, that they're sitting on the file for "political" reasons.

But just how hard is it to find out more about Yan? It might have been difficult for Police HQ, but evidently not for *TGIF Edition*.

Using the identity information published last week, we can confirm that of the two passport identities, only Yan Yongming has any official family history (registered family members) we can locate in China, and Yan Yongming is the name of the man officially facing massive fraud charges in China. Yang Liu appears to be the alias Yan used to create a fake identity with in New Zealand.

Yan Yongming was born in 1969, the third son of factory-working parents of modest means, in the town of Tonghua, in Jilin province. His mother, Deng

Yuling, is Yan's official next of kin.

*TGIF*'s Asian contacts scanned official databases and the Chinese media for information on his background, and reported back to us yesterday.

"Yan Yongming, former Chairman of Tonghua Jinma Pharmaceutical, has a severe economic criminal record in China who fled to overseas countries with illegally collected funds in 2000.

"Yan Yongming was born in Tonghua in 1969. He is said to have little education but claims to graduated from Peking University major in Economic Management.

"Yan Yongming founded Tonghua Sanli Chemical Industry Company in 1992 with registered capital RMB 460 million (US\$66 million). Yan held 96% of the shares. His wealth is of concerns since at the time he was only 21 with no previous significant career accumulation.

"Sanli Chemical invested in Tonghua Biochemical Pharmaceutical Factory prior to its IPO in 1993 and through a series [of] acquisition and restructuring actions, Sanli became the biggest shareholder of the public company, later known as Tonghua Jinma, and Yan Yongming the Chairman. According to some insiders, Yan was backed by some capable person whose identity was unknown.

"In 2000, Tonghua Jinma bought Qi Sheng Capsule technology and further acquired Wuhu Zhang Heng Chun Pharmaceutical. In November the same year, Tonghua Jinma announced net profit RMB 242 million (US\$34 million).

"While in 2001, the company's performance plunged and the loss was RMB 584 million; 318 million Yuan disappeared in one year's time. Yan resigned Chairman in October and fled to Australia and New Zealand two month later.

"Yan was charged for accounting frauds and



fund embezzlement of public company, the amount was said to be RMB 720 million or 1.08 billion (between NZ\$167 million and NZ\$257 million)."

One of the most significant aspects of the report, apart from the sheer sums of money involved, is the suggestion that Yan Yongming is someone else's glove puppet, that he's been "backed by some capable person whose identity was unknown".

The Interpol red alert against Yan Yongming was issued by China's Public Security Authority (national police).

In contrast, a search of the name Liu Yang, which he uses in New Zealand, turned up no media reports in China on his criminal status, except for those reports that resulted directly from last week's *TGIF* story.

A story on China's state-run CCTV News published on June 7, 2007, detailed how Yan Yongming had fled to Australia in December 2000, and how NZ\$5 million was eventually confiscated and repatriated to China by the Aussie courts last year. The TV reports stated Yan Yongming was the subject of "a significant economic criminal charge".

Back here in New Zealand's Asian community there is also some awareness of Yan Yongming's fraud, although not the precise details because no one knew his real name:

"No one has yet obtained factual documentary evidence of where the multi-millions this person manages come from," one Asian community figure told *TGIF Edition* this week. "The anecdotal story as to what enterprise he operated in China to make so much large sums of money is as follows:

"He set up with accomplices a pharmaceutical company in China that produced placebo tablet medicine. The medicine was sold mass market to thousands of doctors and hospitals who were paid under the table on a percentage of sales basis to

promote the sale of the medicine. The medicine was sold as part of other drugs as a 'no risk' accompanying advisable treatment.

"The growth in sales was phenomenal. The company listed on the stock exchange and the shares escalated at a rate of value that was billions in dollar value. [Yan] sold out his shareholding and left China with the proceeds."

Which of course dovetails exactly with the now documented evidence *TGIF* obtained out of China this week.

So who is Bill Liu? It appears Liu was an alias created by Yan to help him flee China and set up residence in New Zealand. The cover story he provided for the Liu character includes a claim that he's a member of the persecuted Falun Gong sect. It was under the name Liu that Yan applied for and received New Zealand permanent residency. It was as Liu that he donated to Labour politicians Chris Carter, Dover Samuels and Internal Affairs minister Rick Barker, as well as National's John Key — although neither Key nor National's Pansy Wong had any idea of his background, unlike the Labour MPs. And it was under the name Liu that Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones decided not to revoke his residency but instead approve Liu's application for a New Zealand passport, against the advice of officials.

As a result, until the *TGIF Edition* report last weekend, Liu had got away with creating an entirely fictitious new identity with the help of friendly but gullible Labour MPs.

There is now a serious risk, however, that NZ Immigration officials will be ordered by the government to immediately arrest and deport Yan Yongming, which would not only remove an election embarrassment but also prevent any further law enforcement inquiries into either Yongming himself, or the alleged political corruption surrounding him.

**RELATED STORIES:** [The Ties That Blind](#)

[Last week's TGIF story on Yang Liu](#)

[Back to the front page](#)

## FROM FRONT PAGE

"Given that your brother Shane worked with 'Bill Liu' at one stage is there a conflict in your Minister giving final approval on the 'Yang Liu' file?"

"I can't comment on any of this, sorry Ian. I'm not in a position to comment on any of this Mr Wishart."

Clearly Phillips knew what we were asking, and equally clearly, Shane Jones' offside didn't want to talk about it.

Next stop was Phillips' brother, Shane Te Pou.

"Given that you used to do work for 'Bill Liu', is there a conflict of interest do you think in Shane Jones giving citizenship approval to Yang Liu?"

"I'm sorry, Ian, I don't know you, and I really don't want to answer any questions that you may have over the telephone."

Te Pou, sounding extremely nervous, offered an email address for written questions, saying "send me an email and I'll deal with it". So we did, but he didn't.

"Given your past work with 'Bill Liu', and the fact that you were Dover Samuels' campaign manager, and the fact your brother is currently employed by Shane Jones who made the call on Bill's citizenship application, do you believe this created a conflict of interest that Shane Jones should have declared?"

"I will not be making any comment to you on any matter," he responded. "Please do not call or contact me again."

When *TGIF* confronted Shane Jones' press secretary over whether his minister had a massive conflict of interest in agreeing to rule on Liu's citizenship, given the ties between Daniel Phillips, Shane Te Pou and 'Bill Liu', he told us his minister had chosen to make "no comment".

"See my lawyer!" spat Dover Samuels down the phone.

"One question, did you receive a donation from Bill Liu before 2005 —"

"I'm not prepared to answer any more of your questions! You can see my lawyer, John Billington!"

It wasn't as if *TGIF* was accusing the over-sensitive Samuels of anything illegal. Receiving a donation is something politicians do frequently and perfectly legally, and Dover was certainly no stranger to

getting some large handouts, as a check of his 2005 Candidate's Election Donations Return reveals.

As well as party donations, electorate candidates are required to list monies handed to them locally for the purposes of funding their local campaigns.

In Dover's case, he declared donations totalling \$30,796.62. Of that, just under \$8,000 was a contribution from Labour's head office, and a further \$3,000 was kicked in by Dover Samuels himself, according to the document.

Quite why Samuels, an experienced MP, declared a donation of his own money is unclear, because the law itself says "Donations to be declared are money, goods or services of a value of more than \$1,000 (including GST) that are donated to a candidate for his or her election campaign or paid for or on behalf of the candidate *by any other person*."

Was Dover's \$3,000 supposed to represent an anonymous donation from someone else? It was impossible for us to know, as Samuels was refusing to take further questions from *TGIF*.

But that strange donation is only the first of a number of interesting ones. The biggest single donation, totalling nearly \$10,000, was funnelled to Samuels by Equinox Capital Limited, the Asian immigration and investment company owned by Auckland businessmen Chong du Cheng and Kerry Knight.

Cheng, whose projects include Auckland's Britomart, was described in *Metro* magazine by one of his colleagues, Tony Gapes: "Chong Du Cheng... has, says Gapes, 'wealthy Asian friends'. Cheng, in fact, had arrived in New Zealand as a Vietnamese boat person, and eventually found a niche settling Chinese immigrants in New Zealand and liaising between Asian money and New Zealand projects looking for finance."

There's no obvious reason as to why the Te Tai Tokerau MP for the northern Maori region was attracting big Asian money, but the Equinox donation was not the only Asian cash swinging Dover's way.

Also on the return is \$3,000 from a 'Wendy Wu' at a Remuera address. The property is owned by a 'Weimei Wu', who also happens to hold an 85% shareholding (8.5 million shares) in a tobacco company called Sino-New Zealand Tobacco.

A further \$5,000 was given to Dover Samuels by the oddly-named 'Tamaki ki te Paki Wu', apparently residing at a house in Derrimore Heights in Manukau City.

So, according to the official documents, two separate Wu's slipped a total of eight grand between them into the Dover Samuels campaign fund. But who was this mysterious Mr Tamaki Wu?

A check of the Manukau address Dover had given for him provides an added twist to this story: it was registered not to Mr Wu but to Daniel Phillips — Dover's former private secretary now working for Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones.

So \$5,000 had come to Dover from the address of a man whose brother was involved with Chinese businessman 'Yang Liu' (real name Yan Yongming), yet the money was not in Daniel Phillips' name, but a person or entity named Tamaki Wu.

Daniel Phillips in Jones' office wasn't talking to *TGIF Edition*, but we could see from the documents that he and his wife Alison had registered a company that actually owned their house and administered it while they themselves were based in Wellington, and both were directors of this company. We rang Alison to see if she could tell us about Tamaki Wu:

"Who?"

Resisting the urge to say, "No, Wu," we instead repeated the name: "Tamaki Wu. Is he or it a tenant of your Auckland home at Derrimore Heights?"

"I've never heard of Tamaki Wu," she answered. "But if you do find out, let me know!"

We asked Shane Te Pou about Tamaki Wu, who according to Dover's official return was living at Shane's brother's house.

"What's your involvement with Tamaki Wu?"

"Pardon???"

"What's your involvement with Tamaki Wu?"

"Tamaki Wu? Who the hell is Tamaki Wu? You must be culturally ignorant! Tamaki is a Maori name, and Wu is some form of Asian name. What the hell are you on about? What are you smoking brother?! What stolen information have you got your hands on now?," spluttered Te Pou, not even pausing for breath between his rapid-fire questions back at us. Evidently Mr Wu didn't ring any bells with

Shane Te Pou either.

"When did you finish working for 'Bill Liu' or are you still working for him?," we pressed.

"I'm not answering any questions. You're on a huge fishing expedition here and I'm not answering any questions."

"It's very simple, Shane, it's as simple as saying, 'Look, here's what happened'."

"Ian. Here's what happened: You've sent me two emails. I've told you not to contact me again."

According to Labour sources, Te Pou helped procure donations from 'Liu' for Dover Samuels and Internal Affairs Minister Rick Barker, donations which Prime Minister Helen Clark did not mention last weekend.

*TGIF Edition* gave Barker an opportunity to confirm or deny the claim, in an email midweek.

"Rick intimated to us on Friday that he had NOT received a donation from 'Bill Liu', although he may have been responding to an implied time frame of this year.

"We are now in possession of fresh information, and would like to offer the Minister a chance to clarify his answer, and specify the amount received and the other people involved in handling that donation... I would also remind the office that the Minister promised, as 'part of a package of answers' to confirm when he first met Yang Liu, and under what circumstances, and what the nature of their relationship is."

Despite the opportunity, Barker has refused to comment, or to explain why he still presides over the inquiry process given his conflict of interest.

*TGIF* checked Barker's candidate donations return from 2005, and found a mystery donation of \$5,000 from "anonymous" was declared.

The amount is similar to what 'Bill Liu' paid both Labour MP Chris Carter and the National Party.

Barker has refused to reveal how he knows 'Bill Liu' and what their dealings have been. Given that Bill Liu has now been positively identified as Yan Yongming, and linked to Asian organised crime, these are crucial questions that journalists should be demanding answers to as a matter of extreme public interest.

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