

NZTONIGHT
Finance Minister has grim warning
 PAGE 2



WORLD
Mumbai: a survivor's story
 PAGE 8



SPORT
Beckham makes Gemma's day
 PAGE 11



FILM
Four Holidays reviewed
 PAGE 13



TGIFEDITION.TV



EDITION

Auckland Sat: 23°/11° Sun: 21°/14°	Hamilton Sat: 25°/12° Sun: 22°/10°	Wellington Sat: 20°/12° Sun: 19°/14°	Christchurch Sat: 19°/12° Sun: 23°/13°	Queenstown Sat: 20°/9° Sun: 22°/10°	Dunedin Sat: 17°/10° Sun: 20°/13°
--	--	--	--	---	---

THERE'S ONE EASY WAY TO GET THIS DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX EVERY WEEK...  **SUBSCRIBE TODAY, ONLY \$3 PER MONTH**
www.tgifedition.com

ISSN 1172-4153 | Volume 1 | Issue 18 | 5 December 2008

EXCLUSIVE

Goff in lockdown, Cunliffe implicated

By Ian Wishart
 Editor, TGIF Edition

Labour leader Phil Goff is in lockdown mode tonight as the Yang Liu citizenship scandal threatens to engulf his front bench, with another top Labour MP dragged into the controversy tonight.

Goff has been considering three questions from *TGIF Edition* since midday, but at 5pm his chief media advisor Gordon Jon Thompson revealed the Labour leader was choosing to stay silent.

The reason for Goff's silence is simple: the New Zealand Immigration Service has now implicated former Immigration Minister and Labour front-bencher David Cunliffe in the growing scandal surrounding Yang Liu's donations to the Labour Party and the government's subsequent decision to award him citizenship.

The revelation is a body-blow to Goff, whose attempts to lead Labour in a new direction are being overshadowed by what is shaping up as New Zealand's most serious political scandal in years.

Up till now attention has focused on former Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones, and his ministerial colleagues Rick Barker, Dover Samuels and – to a lesser extent – Chris Carter.

But the addition of David Cunliffe, Labour's former Minister of Immigration, to the list of those who were tipped off about Yang Liu's criminal record and who failed to act, means that Phil Goff's talent pool is now being seriously compromised by the scandal.

Liu, real name Yongming Yan, is wanted by Chinese police for an alleged company fraud involving up to a quarter of a billion dollars. Papers released to *TGIF Edition* by both Internal Affairs sources and the Department itself have revealed Liu's entire New Zealand identity appears to be fake. If true, that would mean dozens of breaches of the Crimes Act with maximum jail sentences of seven years or even higher on each count, because of the network of companies, bank accounts and official applications he has lodged under a false name.

TGIF Edition sought copies under the Official Information Act of the file that went to Associate Immigration Minister Shane Jones that "discussed the option of revoking the permanent residency of Yang (Bill) Liu".

Jones, as Associate Immigration Minister, was presumed to have seen immigration files on Yang Liu, in addition to his role as delegated Internal Affairs Minister. It was in that latter role that Jones gave Liu New Zealand citizenship, against the explicit warnings of officials who told him Liu's identity was believed fake and that his citizenship application was fraudulent.

Internal Affairs sources have told *TGIF* that a recommendation also went to the Minister of Immigration recommending Liu's permanent residency be revoked while it was still possible to do so, but the Minister overturned it.

TGIF spoke to then Immigration Minister Clayton Cosgrove who denied any involvement with the

[Continue reading](#)

BARBIE FORCES BRATZ RECALL



LOS ANGELES – The battle of the super-dolls has been decided. Mattel, the world's largest toy company and the maker of Barbie dolls, has won a crucial court battle that could prematurely end the career of Barbie's biggest-ever competitor, the sassy line of Bratz dolls.

In a court ruling released today, federal judge Stephen Larson granted Mattel's request to force Bratz maker MGA to stop making the multi-ethnic dolls and from using the Bratz product name. Earlier in the year, a jury found that the Bratz designer had developed the concept for the dolls while on an exclusive work contract with Mattel before moving to MGA. The jury awarded Mattel 100 million dollars in damages – just 5 per cent of what the company had sought.

[Read more, page 10](#)

on the INSIDE



OBAMA DUMPED
 She hung up on him
[Page 9](#)



ROCKING REVEREND
 Al Green sings
[Page 14](#)



HEALTH MIRACLE
 Salmon's secrets
[Page 16](#)

Mumbai attacks highlight NZ security weakness

By Ian Wishart

Last week's terror attacks in Mumbai have exposed a glaring weakness in New Zealand's border security checks – a reliance on security assurances issued by overseas agencies.

As reported in *TGIF Edition* last Friday, and earlier on November 14, the Immigration Service cleared two Pakistani migrants to work in New Zealand on the basis of clean references from Pakistani security agencies.

However, the two men turned out to be members of Pakistani terror group Lashkar e Ta'iba (pronounced Lashkaree Ta'eeba) – the organisation now known to have carried out last week's massacre and hotel siege in India that killed nearly 200 people.

Indian and US agencies have discovered the Lashkar e Ta'iba training camps attended by the Mumbai attackers were held with the assistance of the Pakistani army and the country's rogue intelligence service, ISI.

Those revelations raise a major security conundrum for New Zealand: have members of terrorist groups been able to easily enter New Zealand because of our reliance on assurances from foreign governments?

Immigration Minister Jonathan Coleman told *TGIF* he'll seek a report from officials and has no further comment at present, but a lecturer in Afghan and Pakistani politics at Otago University, Najib Lafiaie, has warned New Zealand should exercise caution when accepting security clearances from offshore agencies.

"In general, it is true that Lashkar e Ta'iba has a very close relationship with Pakistan authorities," noted Lafiaie, although he added that relationship was with Pakistan's military agencies, rather than civilian organisations.

Lafiaie told *TGIF* it was legitimate to continue recognising foreign security clearances, but not to regard them as trumping clear evidence to the opposite effect.

"It makes sense, particularly if there is credible evidence, not to regard the security clearances as proof that there is no need for further investigation."

Documents obtained by *TGIF Edition* and *Investigate* magazine revealed the two migrants from Lashkar e Ta'iba had studied in hardline Islamic fundamentalist schools, or *madrasas*, as well as at commando training camps run by the terror group.

As previously reported, the Immigration Service cleared the men before a police investigation was complete, and without translating documents and videos in the Urdu language where membership of Lashkar e Ta'iba was discussed.

Before and after...
 trust Olympus
 The new E-410 from Olympus



For more information contact H.E. Perry Ltd. phone: 0800 10 33 88 | email: sales@heperry.co.nz | www.olympus.com

off BEAT

HOSPITAL SEEKS DEAD MAN'S CONSENT

MANCHESTER, England, Dec. 5 (UPI) – A woman said bosses at a Manchester, England, hospital asked that her deceased father sign a consent form before his death could be investigated.

Sally Guidon said she wrote to North Manchester General Hospital officials after the death of her father, James Johnson, 76, listing a series of complaints and asking for hospital staff to investigate the death, *The Daily Mail* reported today.

However, Guidon said hospital bosses responded with a letter saying they needed Johnson to give written approval before his file could be opened.

"I cried for about an hour and a half when I got the letter," Guidon said. "It was the final insult, I don't know why I was surprised by it after seeing the way they cared for Dad – it is typical of them to make such a basic error."

Hospital administrators said they apologized for the letter, which they blamed on an administrative error, and said the case will be investigated once Guidon's mother, who was listed as her husband's next of kin, gives permission to open the file.

MEMO TO COP: TAKE KEYS OUT OF CAR

JACKSON, Mich., Dec. 5 (UPI) – Authorities in Jackson County, Mich., said a 16-year-old girl being pursued by a police officer sped off in an unattended patrol car.

Blackman Township Public Safety Director Mike Jester said an officer responded to a domestic dispute early Monday morning and the 16-year-old, whose name was not released, fled on foot, the Jackson (Mich.) *Citizen-Patriot* reported today.

Jester said the girl evaded the officer and entered an unattended police car that had been left unlocked. The dispatch tape from the evening recorded the girl using the car's radio to taunt the officer for leaving his car unlocked.

The girl also used expletives to tell the female dispatcher to shut up, the tape recorded.

Jester said the teenager drove the car for less than a quarter mile before crashing into another patrol car. He said both cars sustained heavy damage in the collision.

"She hit the car on purpose," Jester said.

The girl was taken to the Jackson County Youth Centre on suspicion of assault with a dangerous weapon, malicious destruction of police property, unlawfully driving away an automobile and resisting, opposing and assaulting police.

STOLEN RING RETURNED MYSTERIOUSLY

HOUSTON, Dec. 5 (UPI) – A Houston woman whose Texas A&M University ring was stolen from her car more than a year ago said the ring was mysteriously returned to her in the mail.

Betty Ghio, 52, said the ring was stolen – along with an iPod, a cell phone, purses, three dozen new golf balls and about \$100 – while her PT Cruiser was parked outside of a bank in June 2007, the *Houston Chronicle* reported today.

"I was just shattered, coming out to my car and seeing this, Ghio said. It was only about \$1,800 in goods that were stolen. But my A&M ring, you couldn't put a value on that."

Ghio said she received a plain brown envelope in the mail just before Thanksgiving that bore no return address and contained only the ring and a note from someone who identified herself only as Martha.

The sender said the ring, which had Ghio's name inscribed inside the band, had been discovered by her friend's husband. She said the man works as a maintenance man for a Houston apartment complex and found the ring in an apartment after the renters had moved out.

"It's great to see such a random act of human kindness that makes you feel good about people, Ghio said. I believe things happen for a reason. I'm not sure why this happened, but there's a reason."

WALRUS SAX DRAWS CROWD

ISTANBUL, Turkey, Dec. 5 (UPI) – Keepers of a walrus at an Istanbul, Turkey, zoo said the water mammal's repertoire of human imitations includes the ability to play the saxophone.

Sara the Walrus' Russian trainer, known as Sergiy, taught the whiskered wonder to hold the saxophone between its flippers and blow a note for the crowd at the Istanbul Dolphinarium, which opened to the public Monday, *The Daily Telegraph* reported today.

Officials said Sara's talents also include blowing a train whistle while dressed as a railway platform conductor.

The walrus is also well known for catching roses and skills with balls and hoops.

Mountain brings friendship to tragic end

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Two Japanese climbers stranded on Aoraki/Mt Cook were not just guide and client – they were family friends.

Kiyoshi Ikenouchi, 49, died on the mountain, while Hideaki Nara, 51, was rescued at 5.30am today.

Both men were from Tokyo, and had been trapped above 3700m since last weekend.

Though Mr Ikenouchi has been described as Mr Nara's guide, police said the two were family friends.

Mr Nara is in Christchurch Hospital suffering from frostbite to his hands and face.

He was in a "comfortable condition" but did not want to speak to media and asked for his privacy to be respected, Canterbury District Health Board spokesman Rachel Solotti said this afternoon.

Mr Ikenouchi's body was taken to Timaru Hospital for an autopsy.

The pair were attempting Mt Cook's Grand Traverse, climbing from the Hooker Valley to the South Peak, summiting from there, before heading down to Plateau Hut.

Mr Ikenouchi was believed to have died just hours before this morning's dramatic rescue, after the pair's tent was buried in snow and they were forced into the open in temperatures of about minus 20degC.

Extreme winds had halted rescue efforts to reach them all week, with an Alpine Rescue Team on constant standby to go into the mountain if a gap in the weather arose.

Department of Conservation area manager Richard MacNamara said the waiting had been stressful for the search team.



The supplies dropped by air can be seen in the red pack outside the tent. Sadly, the Japanese climbers never realised the supplies were there. / NZPA

It was "extremely hard" to know Mr Ikenouchi died within hours of rescuers reaching him, he told *The Press*.

"The only good thing to come out of it is that at least there is some closure for the family."

On Wednesday, a search helicopter was able to get close enough to the men's tent site to drop a pack of emergency supplies and a radio, but once again wind prevented a rescue.

Police Inspector Dave Gaskin said rescuers con-

firmed this morning the pair were unaware of the supplies that had been dropped to them.

It would not have made much of a difference in the end, as the pair were very well equipped, he said.

Mr Ikenouchi was part of the rescue team that helped when two Japanese climbers were hit by an avalanche on Zurbriggen's Ridge on the mountain five years ago. One of the climbers died.

– NZPA



Finance Minister warns deficit crisis looming

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – The international economic storm has turned the Government's books a nasty shade of red.

The headline operating surplus plunged to a \$3.5 billion deficit – \$5 billion worse than forecast – on the back of the global financial meltdown, according to the Crown accounts out today.

The government's financial statements shows the crown operating balance was \$3.5b in deficit at October 30, against a forecast surplus of \$1.5b.

The big blow in the first four months of the financial year came from unrealised losses on government investments as a result of severe turbulence on global sharemarkets.

The losses were \$4.3b greater than expected.

However the news is not all bad for new Finance Minister Bill English, as once unrealised investment losses are stripped out the operating balance it comes in at \$898m in surplus – \$117m better than forecast.

The cash deficit was \$900m better than expected, coming in at \$3.7b due to delays in transferring \$700m to the previous government's Fast Forward research fund and higher than expected petroleum mining royalties.

Mr English said the deficits showed the need for action to make the economy more productive and competitive.

"They also show Labour's legacy of deepening operating balance deficits, rising debt and a deteriorating economic and fiscal situation," Mr English said.

Next year would be a challenging year for everyone and the books would get worse before there was any improvement.

National would press ahead with its three year plan of tax cuts, boost infrastructure spending, reform the Resource Management Act and get the New Zealand Superannuation Fund to invest 40 percent of its assets locally.

The Crown accounts today showed that it was super fund that took the biggest from the economic turmoil with a \$3.5b hit, while ACC suffered \$600 million in losses and the Earthquake Commission (EQC) \$200 million.

The super fund's return for October was minus 13.5 percent, the lowest return for a single month since it was set up in late 2003.

The fund's annualised return since inception is now 4.86 percent compared to 6.92 percent for the risk free rate of return.

The separate Government Superannuation Fund and ACC also recorded losses of \$1b and \$400m respectively as a result of revaluations of liabilities.

The accounts show gross crown debt climbing \$3.1b higher than expected to \$33.6b – 18.8 percent of GDP.

This was mainly due to the popularity of government stocks as nervous investors put cash into safe havens.

Net core crown debt was \$1.9b lower than forecast at \$2.2b, mainly due to the lower than expected cash deficit and higher than forecast circulating currency.

Tax revenues overall were about \$400m more than forecast, but that was probably due to timing issues, Treasury said.

– NZPA



NZPA / Ross Setford

Fairfax's Captain Kirk beams up, and out

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Fairfax Media chief executive officer David Kirk will be missed by the New Zealand arm of the business. Mr Kirk, who was a former All Blacks captain, resigned as boss of the Australian media company today and is leaving immediately. He has lived in Australia for many years.

Fairfax Media shares surged as much as 8.7 percent after the announcement but eased back to be up 9 cents to \$A1.58 (\$NZ1.94) in afternoon trading, Reuters reported.

Joan Withers, chief executive of the company's New Zealand business, said she heard about Mr Kirk's resignation just before lunchtime.

Ms Withers said Mr Kirk visited New Zealand frequently and had been over three times in the last few months.

Mr Kirk chaired an advisory board for TradeMe, the online auction site Fairfax owns in New Zealand. He chaired a meeting of the board this week.

"He was very involved and he was always there for me personally," Ms Withers said.

"It will be business as usual, but obviously everyone in New Zealand knows David.

"We in the business know what a great leader he is, so he will be very much missed."

Fairfax has 18 business divisions in New Zealand. Its newspaper titles include *The Dominion Post*, *The Press*, *The Waikato Times*, *The Manawatu Standard*, *The Marlborough Express*, *The Nelson Mail*, *The Southland Times*, and the *Sunday Star-Times* and *Sunday News*.

There has been speculation that Fairfax is interested in a 39.1 percent stake being sold in rival media company APN News & Media Ltd, which publishes the New Zealand Herald newspaper.

But Mr Kirk said last month that: "We don't have any intentions with APN and we won't be part of the (sale) process."

Brian McCarthy has been named as acting CEO of the Australian parent.

Mr Kirk, who had been at the Fairfax helm since 2005, also issued a statement to end a period of speculation over his future.

"It has been a privilege to lead Fairfax Media during this period of great change and challenge for media companies all over the world," Mr Kirk said.

"A lot has been achieved and I thank especially the board and the many managers throughout the business who have contributed to the re-positioning of Fairfax Media for continued success in the future."

A Rhodes Scholar, Mr Kirk captained the All Blacks to their only World Cup victory, in 1987.

Fairfax chairman Ronald Walker announced the resignation but provided no explanation.

"During his more than three years in the role, David has been an outstanding CEO of Fairfax Media," Mr Walker said in a statement.

"He and his team have led the complete re-positioning of the company, from a metropolitan newspaper publishing business to a position in which the company is now clearly the leading media company in Australasia."

Mr Walker said Mr Kirk had helped operational improvements including cost reductions and achievement of all synergies from acquisitions as well as growth of circulations at the major metropolitan newspapers.

Fairfax said today that Fairfax Business Publishing was formally established this week. The company said it was New Zealand's largest business publishing unit.

It publishes *The Independent*, *PC World*, *Computerworld*, *CIO*, *Reseller News*, *Unlimited magazine* and youth publication *Actv8*. Fairfax said there had been some redundancies as a result of merging three separate businesses to create the unit.

– NZPA

Greens seek consumer protection

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – The Green Party wants the Ministry of Consumer Affairs to enhance its product protection regime to counter "emerging risks" in the market.

The party's consumer affairs spokeswoman, Sue Kedgley, said today briefing papers to incoming minister Heather Roy acknowledged that globally there was a 47 percent increase in "serious risk" notifications from 2006 to 2007.

She said the papers, released yesterday, showed 50 percent of 472 products that were recalled last year came from China.

"That's a huge increase in one year and it shows that our present passive system, based on waiting for consumers to complain about unsafe products, is woefully inadequate," Ms Kedgley said.

"We need to beef up our regime so that we can ensure that imported products are safe and don't pose a risk to consumers."

Ms Kedgley said the recently-signed free trade

agreement with China meant more and more consumer products were entering New Zealand.

She said the papers noted that products safety risks were increasing, partly as a result of the growing number of products manufactured in newly-industrialised countries.

"Other countries are responding to the increased risk of these products entering their markets by intensifying their consumer protection strategies and New Zealand must follow suit," Ms Kedgley said.

When Ms Roy released the papers she said her aim was to ensure New Zealand's product safety regime was appropriate and struck the right balance between consumer choice and protection.

"High levels of consumer confidence in product safety frameworks enhance support for open borders, free trade and innovation," she said.

"This is beneficial to individual consumers and also the New Zealand economy."

– NZPA

Tamihere denied parole for eighth time

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Convicted double murderer David Tamihere has been denied parole for the eighth time.

Tamihere, who is now 55, has spent nearly 20 years in prison after being convicted for the murders of Swedish tourists Urban Hoglin and Heidi Paakkonen in 1990.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum non-parole period of 10 years.

Tamihere had skipped bail for a 1986 rape and was on the run when the murders were committed.

He also has a conviction for the 1972 manslaughter of an Auckland prostitute.

The Parole Board released its latest decision today after a hearing on November 20.

The board said its decision to deny parole was guided by the unanimous conclusion from the psychological and other reports, that Tamihere had a high risk of reoffending.

He had undergone 20 sessions of psychological treatment before terminating them.

His latest psychological report said Tamihere's conviction history indicated "criminal versatility with serious violent and sexual offending characterised by sadistic elements prominent in the latter part of his offending".

The psychologist recommended Tamihere attended ongoing psychological treatment, and said it was thought there would need to be at least two years of treatment and even then there was uncertainty about whether this would reduce his risk of reoffending.

"In short we do not think at the present time a full release on parole would be a safe one for the community," the board said.

The issue of Ms Paakkonen's body, which was never recovered, was also raised.

Police, as well as Ms Paakkonen's family, have urged the board not to make any decision releasing Tamihere



HIS LATEST PSYCHOLOGICAL REPORT SAID TAMIHERE'S CONVICTION HISTORY INDICATED "CRIMINAL VERSATILITY WITH SERIOUS VIOLENT AND SEXUAL OFFENDING CHARACTERISED BY SADISTIC ELEMENTS PROMINENT IN THE LATTER PART OF HIS OFFENDING

until information about the body was revealed.

However, as at all previous hearings, Tamihere said he had no idea where the body was.

"He denies having any involvement in her murder and does not know of anyone who could let police or others know where her body is."

– NZPA



DANSKE MØBLER means

THE ESSENCE OF DANISH DESIGN IS HIGH QUALITY, TIMELESS ELEGANCE, SIMPLICITY, FUNCTIONALITY AND BEAUTY.

DANISH FURNITURE means

SINCE 1958, THE DANISH HERITAGE OF DANSKE MØBLER HAS INSPIRED THE DESIGN DIRECTION OF DANSKE MØBLER'S FURNITURE.

DISTINCTIVE OUTDOOR DESIGN

THE ESSENCE LIVES ON IN THE EDEN OUTDOOR COLLECTION, DESIGNED AND CRAFTED TO SUIT THE NEW ZEALAND CLIMATE AND LIFESTYLE.

A STUNNING COLLECTION OF IMPORTED OUTDOOR FURNITURE COMPLEMENTS THE NZ MADE EDEN RANGE.

SHOWROOMS

www.danskemobler.co.nz

PROUD TO BE **NZ MADE**

983 Mt Eden Road
Three Kings
Auckland
Ph 09 625 3900

13a Link Drive
Wairau Park
Auckland
Ph 09 443 3045

501 Ti Rakau Drive
Botany Town Centre
Auckland
Ph 09 274 1998

716 Victoria Street
Hamilton
Ph 07 838 2261

29 Totara Street
Taupo
Ph 07 378 3156

NATIONWIDE: WHANGAREI Fabers Furnishings TAURANGA Greerton Furnishings GISBORNE Fenns Furniture NEW PLYMOUTH Cleggs WELLINGTON Heartlands Outdoor Living CHRISTCHURCH McDonald & Hartshorne

DANSKE MØBLER

Parole Board floats 'halfway house' compromise

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Sex offenders and the communities they live in could benefit from a system of halfway houses, the Parole Board says.

In the board's annual report released today, chairman David Carruthers said halfway houses, particularly for sex offenders, would provide "a better test of freedom" than the current parole protocol.

International research found managed release on parole was at least twice as successful in preventing re-offending as automatic release at the end of

sentence, Judge Carruthers said.

"The Canadian Parole Board reports a much higher rate of success than that, which seems to be related to its use of halfway houses."

The use of such institutions was a matter for government consideration, he said.

"The considerable success of these institutions in Canada speak for themselves and that success awaits us here."

Judge Carruthers said changes to home detention

legislation last year had improved the parole system.

"The amending legislation also gave us the power to monitor release on parole and this has proven to be a most useful additional tool."

Offenders could now be "brought back" every three months during the crucial first year of release.

"The board has the right to recall a prisoner at any one of these hearings so the power to review and monitor is a real one," he said.

– NZPA



FROM FRONT PAGE

Liu case and said such cases would normally have been handled by the Associate Minister. Cosgrove subsequently told us this week he'd received a verbal briefing from officials confirming they believed Liu's residency had been obtained fraudulently, and that he was under investigation. But Cosgrove reiterated he had never seen Liu's file or received any written briefing.

Yet our OIA request to the Immigration Service for the file to Shane Jones recommending residency be revoked turned up a surprise answer:

"Papers of that nature were sent to a previous Minister of Immigration and are withheld," confirmed Api Fiso, the Group Manager for Border Security at the Immigration Service.

With Cosgrove out of the picture, that left his predecessor David Cunliffe in the gun. It now appears Cunliffe was, like Jones, explicitly warned about Yang Liu's fraudulent residency application, yet for inexplicable reasons chose not to revoke the Labour party donor's visa when he had the chance.

TGIF Edition left messages for Cunliffe this week that were not returned, so this morning we fired three questions to Cunliffe's new boss, Phil Goff.

1. Can you please offer any explanation as to why a senior cabinet minister would not take

the opportunity to revoke Yang Liu's residency when his officials discovered his identity (and thus original application) appeared to be fake?

2. What do you plan to ask Mr Cunliffe about this case?

3. As a new broom at the helm of the Labour Party in parliament, would you welcome an independent inquiry into the actions of former ministers and officials in the Yang Liu case as a means of clarifying what happened at a ministerial level (as opposed to the separate investigation into Liu himself)?

Goff, as you've seen, sent an email at 5pm refusing to answer those questions tonight, but he can't escape the growing political heat. So far, the scandal has claimed former Labour associate minister **Dover Samuels**, who backed Yang Liu (real name Yongming Yan) to the hilt. It has also claimed former Internal Affairs Minister **Rick Barker**, whose socialising with Yang Liu was so close he had to declare a conflict of interest and deputise **Shane Jones** to sign off on Liu's citizenship application. But revelations that Jones was explicitly warned about Liu's criminal activities and told to DECLINE the application – which he ignored – have effectively destroyed any hope that Jones could ever serve as a cabinet minister again.

Labour front bencher **Chris Carter** was dumped

in the frame by the Internal Affairs Department two weeks ago when released papers showed Yang Liu, who had donated \$5,000 to Chris Carter, then benefited when Carter wrote a character reference to Internal Affairs on Liu's behalf.

But tonight's *TGIF* revelations are the biggest hit yet: **David Cunliffe** was seen as a potential leadership rival to Phil Goff and is ranked third in the Labour line-up. Cunliffe, like Goff, wasn't taking calls from *TGIF* this week, but if he had the chance to revoke Liu's residency on official advice, and didn't, his competence to ever serve as a Minister again will be called into question, as Shane Jones' has.

[Back to the front page](#)

"People must understand that the government and New Zealanders do not tolerate people on illegal status," Cunliffe told an Indian community newspaper in February 2006. PHOTO: IndianNewslink



EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

the ordinary becomes
special

Epson Stylus Photo TX800FW

Captured something unique?
Ensure you make it a special photographic print by using an Epson printer. 71% of professional photographers do*. All you need is in the range - 4800dpi scanner, Claria individual ink cartridges, Epson PhotoEnhance, memory card slots, 7.8" touch sensor operating panel, 3.5" LCD viewer, 4"x6" photos in 10 secs, Italian styling. The Epson Stylus™ Photo range - All Special.

*Taverner Research (NZ) October 2005

For further information please call 0800 377 664 or visit www.epson.co.nz

Buy Genuine Get Rewards

Epson Stylus Photo TX700W

Epson Stylus Photo R230

Epson Stylus Photo RX610

Epson Stylus Photo 1410

Epson Stylus Photo R1900

EPSON®



New fundraising T-shirt for Project Crimson

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – A new fundraising t-shirt will help raise funds to protect pohutukawa and rata trees.

The t-shirts are a collaboration between Project Crimson and Starfish.

Starfish owner and designer Laurie Foon said they were gorgeous and stylish and "it does a double whammy on the eco front".

"Our customers love well made, enduring, beautiful clothes and if it's eco-savvy then that's even better."

Project Crimson executive director Bridget Abernethy said New Zealanders associate the pohutukawa and rata flowers with the New Zealand summer.

"This t-shirt is a celebration of the New Zealand summer and recognises the pohutukawa bloom is an integral part of that experience."

– NZPA

NZ dollar hangs around in a range



WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – The New Zealand dollar finished a week in which central banks around the world slashed interest rates trading in a fairly familiar recent range.

The New Zealand dollar was US53.37c at 5pm, little changed from the US53.27c

level at 8am and US53.25c level at 5pm yesterday.

"We had a dip as the Dow gave up ground in its last hour," said Murray Hindley, ANZ Institutional Bank chief foreign exchange dealer.

But he said the New Zealand dollar was still trading broadly within a range between US52.50c and US53.50c.

It slipped to the lower end of the recent range against the euro after the European Central Bank (ECB) cut its interest rates by 75 basis points to leave its benchmark rate at 2.5 percent early today.

The kiwi had climbed against the European currency through last night from 0.4190 euro at 5pm to peak above 0.4250 before a fast slide down took it to 0.4155 by 8am today. By 5pm it was 0.4180.

The ECB, seen by some market participants as being behind the curve in lowering borrowing costs to boost growth, went for a bolder than expected cut, which also saw the euro rising against the greenback.

Against the yen the kiwi eased to 49.36 by today's local close from 49.60 yesterday, while it was up to A82.70c against the Australian dollar from A82.20c.

The trade weighted index was 54.14 at 5pm from 54.07 yesterday.

– NZPA

Editorial

The strange case of Sua William Sio

The news that broke today about Labour MP Sua William Sio demanding to be sworn into Parliament in Samoan struck a discordant note with many people.

Sio, as he argues in this paper, considers it is his "right" to be sworn in using his native language.

I don't see it that way at all.

No disrespect to our Samoan readers, or readers from any other ethnic group, but public office in New Zealand is, ultimately, a reflection of New Zealand, not other sovereign states. Our official languages are English, Maori and sign language. Sio, regardless of what he believes, was not elected as a Samoan representative to the NZ Parliament — he was elected as the New Zealand Labour Party's Mangere MP.

Now, granted that many Mangere voters speak Samoan, but let's be honest — a goat wearing a red

rosette could win Mangere for Labour, so Sio is overstating the significance of his nationality here. If he wanted to be sworn into parliament in Samoan, frankly he should have stood as a candidate in Western Samoa's own elections.

First and foremost, Sio is a New Zealander. His cultural heritage is secondary, as is those of us with Scottish, Irish, English, French, Dutch or German backgrounds. In migrating to New Zealand, our allegiance should firstly be to this country, not to the one we left behind. If it is still to the one we left behind, then maybe we need to examine why we're here.

Then there's the practicalities: if we make Samoan an official language, why not Tongan, or Arabic, or Swahili, or Mandarin? In fact, we'd be duty bound to recognise the native tongue of every culture living here.

Is that a unifying thing, or disunifying? Is a New Zealand that splinters into ethnic subsets and

nationalities in a form of racial federalism a good place, or a bad place?

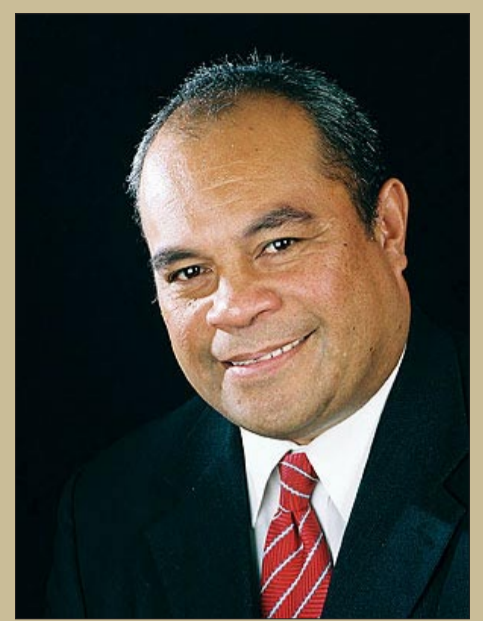
I hope Mangere voters elected Sio because a) he's a good man, regardless of culture, and b) because he's the Labour candidate. We don't have a parliament that delegates seats based on nationality, so nor should we have MPs being able to choose their native languages to be heard in, beyond the official languages on offer.

If Sio doesn't like it he can resign, and force a by-election.

All up, it's just another PR problem that Labour leader Phil Goff needs to get under control. And it's not as if Goff doesn't have his work cut out given the latest revelations about Labour's number three, David Cunliffe, being involved in the Yang Liu scandal.

I had hoped Labour could exorcise its Clark-era ghosts and move forward. It appears that hope was a trifle premature.

SUBSCRIBE TO TGIF!



MP TOLD HE CAN'T TAKE THE OATH IN SAMOAN

Wellington, Dec 5 — Labour MP Sua William Sio is upset because he can't take the oath of allegiance in Samoan when he is sworn in on Monday but Parliament says the law doesn't permit it.

Mr Sio said today that when he was sworn in as a replacement list MP in April this year he took the oath in English and in his native Samoan.

He said he wanted to do the same thing on Monday but Parliamentary Services had told him that wasn't possible.

The explanation given was that groups of MPs would be sworn in together and it would take too long for him to take the oath in Samoan.

But the Clerk of Parliament, Mary Harris, said the Oaths and Declarations Act provided only for English and Maori — two of New Zealand official languages, the third is sign — to be used for the ceremony.

She said when Mr Sio was previously sworn in, he took the oath in English.

"He wasn't sworn in both languages," she said on Radio New Zealand.

"He made either an oath or an affirmation in English, and then repeated it in Samoan on his own."

Ms Harris said the legal requirement would prevail, although Parliament tried to recognise other religions by allowing holy books other than the Bible to be used.

"I think in the interest of being fair to all members and getting through the process in a timely manner there needs to be some restraints around it," she said.

Mr Sio was still upset.

"While we're a nation that's proud of English and Maori, we are also a nation that has to recognise diversity and that we speak different languages," he said.

"We're trying to control things in an archaic way."

Mr Sio has decided to take the oath in Maori.

Another Labour MP, Ashraf Choudhary, said he would again take the oath on the Koran and he thought Mr Sio should be able to take his in Samoan.

— NZPA

Comment

U.S. conservatives move to split Episcopal Church

By Manya A. Brachear

Chicago Tribune

WHEATON, ILL. — Conservative Anglican leaders unveiled on Thursday the constitution and laws for a new organization intended to replace the Episcopal Church as the American arm of the Anglican Communion, which has 77 million members worldwide.

The move is the most telling sign yet that the role of gay and lesbian clergy has torn apart the first church to appoint an openly gay bishop.

Central to the new organization's constitution is a declaration that the Bible is regarded as the "final authority and unchangeable standard."

Dubbed the Common Cause Partnership, the leaders represent 100,000 Anglicans who believe the 2003 consecration of New Hampshire Bishop V. Gene Robinson, an openly gay man in a long-term relationship, violated the authority of scripture.

The constitution comes in the wake of a conference held in Israel last June with leaders from more than one-half of the world's 77 million Anglicans. At that conference, the leaders outlined their intentions to, in their view, reform, heal and revitalize the Anglican Communion by adhering to a more literal interpretation of the Bible.

"The public release of our draft constitution is an important concrete step toward the goal of a biblical, missionary and united Anglican Church in North America," said Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, moderator of Common Cause Partnership. Duncan was deposed by bishops in the Episcopal Church in September.

But liberals in the Episcopal Church, which has about 2 million members, claim the event at Wheaton College, the same spot nearly 70 years ago where Rev. Billy Graham began his evangelism, does not hold much significance for the rest of the Anglican Communion.

"I do not think [it's] as big a deal as the organizers think it is," said Rev. Ian Douglas of the Episcopal Divinity School.

"Yet another threatened line in the sand."

The new church is the first province to be drawn according to theological and not geographic boundaries—a dramatic departure from Anglican policy and procedure that may not get approval from the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams or other bod-



DUBBED THE COMMON CAUSE PARTNERSHIP, THE LEADERS REPRESENT 100,000 ANGLICANS WHO BELIEVE THE 2003 CONSECRATION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE BISHOP V. GENE ROBINSON, AN OPENLY GAY MAN IN A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP, VIOLATED THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

ies that must give approval to the new province.

"While claiming more conservative tradition on human sexuality and biblical interpretation, their approach is radical and contrary to church polity," Douglas said.

The new denomination will include four Episcopal dioceses that recently voted to break away from the Episcopal church — Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, Tex., Quincy, Ill., and San Joaquin, Calif.. However, not all the parishes and Episcopalians in those four dioceses agreed to leave the Episcopal Church.

It also includes dozens of breakaway parishes in the U.S. and Canada that voted to do the same. The new church also will absorb a handful of other splinter groups that left the Episcopal Church decades ago regarding issues such as the ordination of women or revisions to the Book of Common Prayer.

One of those, the Reformed Episcopal Church, left the worldwide Anglican Communion 130 years ago because Episcopalians in the U.S. reserved communion for those who were baptized. Those who left believed everyone was welcome to receive communion.

Like the Reformed Episcopal Church, canons for the new province prescribe the original 1662 Book of Common Prayer Book, though they do not impose sanctions on those who use a different prayer book. The constitution also gives parishes discretion on ordaining women.

According to the constitution, the moderator of the partnership, currently Duncan, will be the group's first Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in North America. The province's laws leave property in the hands of individual parishes, precluding the potential for lawsuits down the line if parishes or dioceses decide to leave.

Chicago's Bishop Jeffrey Lee said he is disappointed by the group's decision to leave.

"I'm saddened that some members of the Episcopal Church are choosing to affiliate with other parts of the Anglican Communion," Lee said. "I think we're impoverished whenever sisters and brothers are not with us at the same table for the same conversation. There's real regret attached to that for me."

Letters

Absolute Power a must read

I have just finished reading your book *Absolute Power*. I wish to applaud your extensive and diligent work in presenting this material. I find what you have exposed is very scary and quite chilling — but I think it ought to be compulsory reading for everyone aged 16 and over.

I have always described Helen Clark and Margaret Wilson as being "poisonous women" — but their agendas are beyond what could ever be imagined.

Let us hope and pray that much of the "social engineering" legislation that has been rammed through can be repealed, and that over the next few years we can head towards a society that most of the population sees as "normal" — that is, family orientated, and with values of honesty and integrity.

Congratulations, and keep up the good work!

— (Mrs) Jay Venables, via email

Editor responds:

Don't hold your breath on a 'repeal' — conservative governments traditionally act conservatively, and generally don't repeal laws no matter how insidious they are.

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

WHAT THE REVIEWERS SAY

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

– *Keepingstock.blogspot.com*

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

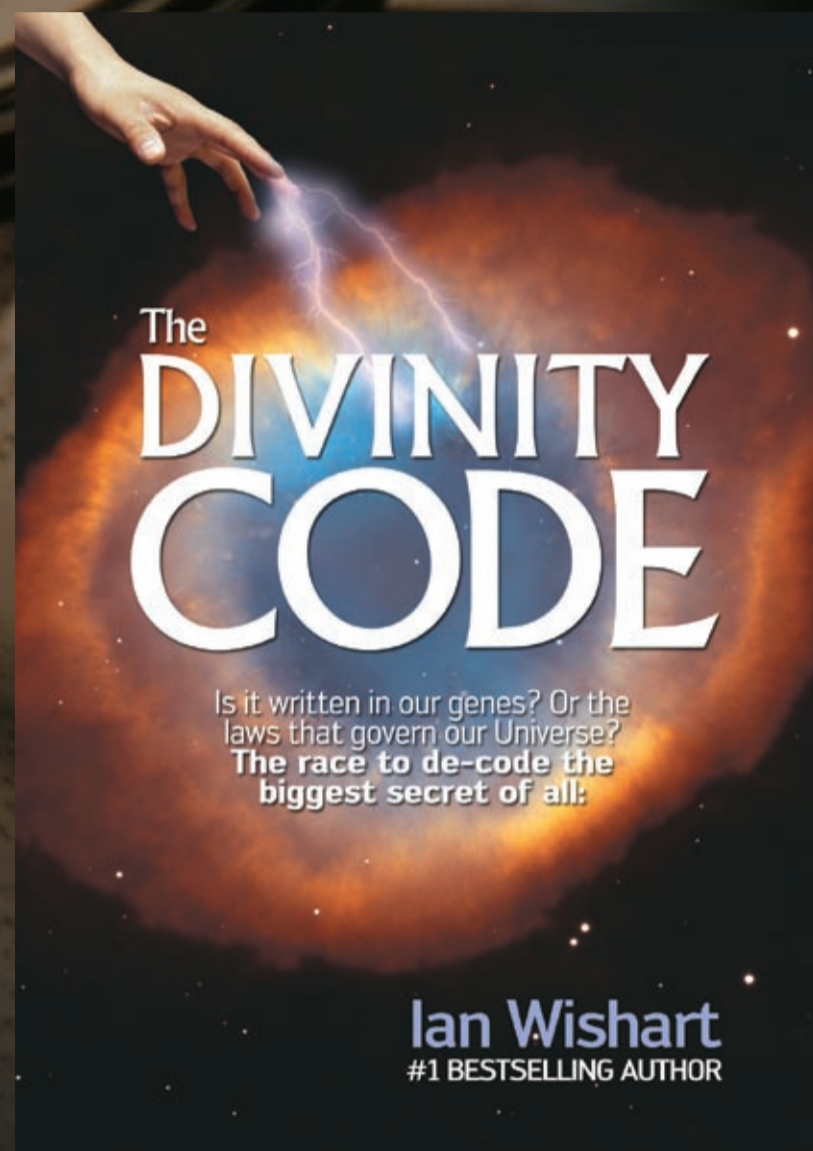
– *NZ Catholic newspaper*

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

– *Being Frank*

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

– *The Bible Geek*



THE DIVINITY CODE

From all good bookstores, or click this ad to order it right now

Outside View: Pakistan's Mumbai alibi

By M D Nalapat

MANIPAL, INDIA — Since the terror attacks on Mumbai last week, Indian security sources have promoted evidence that the attackers were trained by elements of the Pakistani military.

While the field training for the Lashkar e Ta'iba commandos took place at a camp run by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency near Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, fluency in the handling of ordnance was taught at another ISI safe house on the outskirts of Karachi.

Pakistan has done little to create deniability about these connections or earlier links discovered by U.S. intelligence agencies between the ISI and the July 7 bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Many analysts see the top priority of Pakistani intelligence as reversing India's path toward social stability and economic growth. Still, why were so many telltale clues left behind in these attacks that enraged the Indian public and made the world aware that India is among the softest terrorist targets of the major democracies?

The hope of those who planned last week's attack was that India would respond to the attacks the way it did to the attack on its Parliament in 2001 — by mobilizing troops on the Pakistan border and creating an expectation that a full-scale, conventional India-Pakistan war was imminent. At that time Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's unwise decision to bluff the Pakistanis into cooperating with India by the threat of war boomeranged on New Delhi. Foreign missions evacuated their nationals in a panic and business confidence plunged.

Even at that time, it was known to policymakers in most major capitals that India was bluffing, and that the genial Vajpayee would never actually go to war. Yet they participated in the hysteria, especially the United States, where there is a thriving industry of so-called conflict-resolution specialists whose declared mission is to stop India and Pakistan from going to war with each other.

Both countries are aware that a war would be suicidal for Pakistan and severely damaging for India. So the specialists will be able to toast their imagined success in keeping the peace, thereby securing more funding from their less-informed patrons.

Those within the military establishment in Paki-



“NO SOLUTION IS POSSIBLE OVER KASHMIR OR OTHER PENDING INDIA-PAKISTAN ISSUES UNTIL THE PAKISTANI MILITARY COMES UNDER CIVILIAN CONTROL AND IS CLEANSED OF THE JIHADI ELEMENTS THAT CONTROL MUCH OF ITS OFFICER CORPS

stan who enabled the Mumbai operation are now waiting for the government of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to go the way of Vajpayee and send additional Indian troops to the border. In anticipation of such a move, they already have frozen selected deployments of reinforcements to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas — the frontier region of Pakistan that has become the new home of al-Qa'ida — and issued provisional orders for sending additional forces and equipment to the border with India.

The reason is simple: Having no desire to eliminate al-Qa'ida, these military commanders are seeking to use the threat from India as an excuse for inaction on the western frontier. They will seek to explain their patent unwillingness to engage the terrorists by pointing to the need to bolster defences against an Indian attack.

Unfortunately for them, this time around there is

zero chance of India repeating the mistake of 2001, which was to mobilize when it was clear that war was never going to be an option. Also, intelligence agencies worldwide have better reach into the Pakistani military than previously.

In reality, the next war involving Indian and Pakistani troops is likely to be both sides acting together to take out the jihadis. But this will have to await a cleansing of the pro-jihadi elements from the officer corps of the Pakistani army, a necessary process that the present army chief is resisting.

Those Western commentators and analysts cultivated by the Pakistani army have begun churning out analyses speaking of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. Foolishly, U.S. President George W. Bush has fanned the flames of such inspired speculation by inserting Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice into the region, rather than adopting an attitude of business as usual. Rice, in desper-

ate need of some — any — perceived diplomatic success, can be expected to follow the playbook of the South Asia crisis management specialists by hinting at substantive tensions that do not in fact exist, at least on the Indian side.

Aware that both Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani are blameless with regard to the Mumbai attacks, the Indian government of Manmohan Singh has been careful not to place any blame on the civilian leadership in Pakistan.

The Mumbai attack was a Pakistani military operation, in which even the navy was involved, as reported by *India Today*. The civilian government had no role in it, nor was it informed of the planning and execution of the attack.

By continuing to regard the present Pakistani military as part of the solution to the problem of global terrorism rather than as a principal target, the United States and its NATO allies are creating the conditions that will allow jihadis to breed in the region in sufficient numbers to be able to launch attacks against targets in the United States and Europe.

The civilian administration in Pakistan, led by Zardari, needs assistance to secure control over the military. Next the jihadi elements must be purged from the Pakistan officer corps if the country is to be rescued from the jihadist nightmare into which it has fallen, undoubtedly due to major policy errors of the Western powers since the 1980s.

Recent statements by U.S. President-elect Barack Obama reveal a dangerous incomprehension about ground realities in the region. No solution is possible over Kashmir or other pending India-Pakistan issues until the Pakistani military comes under civilian control and is cleansed of the jihadi elements that control much of its officer corps.

Those who planned the Mumbai attacks to create an alibi for their refusal to take out al-Qa'ida in the tribal regions will be disappointed. This time India will not fall into the trap laid by the Pakistani military by sending additional troops to the border and creating war hysteria that would divert attention away from the ongoing campaign against al-Qa'ida.

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

— UPI

Walker's World: Semi-state terror

By Martin Walker

WASHINGTON — President-elect Barack Obama has already realized he's in for a very different kind of economic challenge from the one he expected when he won his party's nomination. And it should be clear from Mumbai that Obama and his national security team are going to be facing a very different kind of terrorist challenge.

Mumbai looks like a classic example of SST, or semi-state terrorism, in which a shadowy and deniable arm of government equips, trains and unleashes its human pawns in a vicious attack.

And then the state whose agents were behind the atrocity turns in all innocence toward world opinion and says, "Who, me?"

Or in an even more cunning gambit, the state's political leaders say, "We are so terribly weak and poor and overawed by our military and our intelligence agencies that we cannot control them. We don't know what they do, so you can't blame us. Perhaps if you give us more money, more weapons, more political support . . ."

That has repeatedly been the response of Pakistan, after each new terrorist outrage in India. Pakistani politicians confess they have little authority over Inter-Services Intelligence, which has been a state-within-the-state since it ran the arms deliveries to the Afghan mujahedin in the 1980s war against the Soviet occupiers.

The evidence that the Mumbai atrocity was

hatched in Pakistan is very strong.

The one terrorist who was captured alive, Azam Amir Kasab, 21, caught on security camera at Mumbai's main train station carrying an assault rifle and grenades, told police the operation was the responsibility of Lashkar-e-Ta'iba, a jihadist group based in Pakistan.

He claimed the 10 attackers had been trained in two separate camps run by Lashkar-e-Ta'iba in Pakistan, in the border region between Pakistani Punjab and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir where Pakistan's government says it has no authority and where only the army, the ISI and the militants rule.

Phones found on a trawler that is believed to have taken the terrorists into Mumbai Harbour had been in contact with Pakistan, Mumbai police said.

The Indian government seems sure that the plot was hatched in Pakistan. India's minister for home affairs, Sri Prakash Jaiswal, said, "The investigation carried out so far has revealed the hand of Pakistan-based groups in the Mumbai attack."

R.R. Patil, the deputy chief minister of Mumbai's state government, said that monitoring the terrorists' phones provided proof that they were talking to someone in Pakistan who was directing their tactics: "They were being instructed from outside regarding their movement inside the hotel, whether to go upstairs or come down or make a move left or right."

As usual, the Pakistani government has denied involvement in the attacks. President Asif Ali Zardari

promised to take the swiftest of action if there was evidence the terrorists came from his country.

The striking feature of Mumbai is how commonplace this kind of semi-state terrorism has become. Iran is probably the master of the semi-state terror system, with its long support of Hezbollah. But Hugo Chavez of Venezuela tries to undermine neighbouring Colombia by arming and supporting the FARC guerrillas, according to very strong evidence from a captured guerrilla laptop.

Indian security officials say they suffer similar low-grade insurgency from hill tribes like the Naga along the border with Myanmar, and seem convinced that both China and Myanmar find it useful to keep pressure on India in this way. The Chinese, in turn, are deeply suspicious of an Indian hand in outside support for China's restive Uighur Muslims and for Tibet.

What can be done about this kind of proxy attack? There are precedents for a robust response. In 1993, when Iraqi agents tried to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush during a visit to Kuwait, they were stopped, but the Clinton administration launched cruise missile attacks to destroy the military intelligence building in Baghdad.

Sometimes it can be useful for an attacked country to go along with the fiction that the terrorists were acting on their own, without state authorization. Although Iran's hand was apparent in the Hezbollah attacks on the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut and in the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi

Arabia, successive U.S. administrations decided not to push the accusation.

This is a shadow world, where motives are unclear and official reactions have to be carefully calibrated. Governments have to keep a very close eye on their own domestic public opinion and the demand for revenge. The Indian government, which faces a general election next year, is under strong pressure to make Pakistan pay.

But how? President Clinton tried cruise-missile attacks against terrorist training camps, which meant firing million-dollar missiles at cheap brick structures that could be rebuilt quickly elsewhere. Attacking the ISI headquarters would be a serious escalation, and, like India, Pakistan has nuclear weapons. Nobody wants the tension to spiral out of control.

But this is to surrender the initiative to the semi-state terrorists and their shadowy masters, who can turn up the tension between India and Pakistan at will. Ironically, the current Pakistani government seems more ready for compromise and confidence-building measures, like the proposal for an EU-style free-trade area. There is little chance of that developing now.

So what will Obama and his new national security team do about this semi-state terrorism? And how does one deal with a bankrupt and semi-failed state like Pakistan when its secret agents are involved in terrorist outrages and yet the state is protected by its nuclear deterrent?

— UPI

Mumbai: a survivor's stunning story

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI — A group of guests at Mumbai's Trident-Oberoi hotel were lined up against a wall. Then two terrorists simultaneously fired at them, killing most, the son of a survivor wounded in the attacks told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa this morning.

Just a week after the hotel was attacked alongside a string of other business and tourist locations, including a Jewish centre and the Taj Hotel, the family of Apoorva Parikh is still adjusting to the events that shook Mumbai in the days from November 26.

Parikh, a 57-year-old builder, is recovering from two bullet wounds and the loss of two of his closest friends. His son Rohan, 29, a business student, recounted his father's experience in an email.

His father had gone to the Oberoi that night for dinner with two of his closest friends, he said. They were at the Kandahar restaurant on the first floor when they heard gunshots. The hotel staff tried to rush the guests out of the kitchen exit.

"As the guests tried to rush into the kitchen, one terrorist burst into the restaurant and began to shoot anyone that remained. At this point my father was in the kitchen and, along with his two friends, rushed to the fire exit.

"They had barely descended a few steps when they were trapped from both ends by terrorists.

"The terrorists then rounded up anyone alive (about 20 people) and made them climb the service staircase to the 19th floor. On reaching the ... landing they made the people line up against a wall.

"One terrorist then positioned himself on the staircase going up from the landing and the other on the staircase going down from the landing.

"Then, in a scene right out of the Holocaust, they simultaneously opened fire on the people. My father was towards the centre of the line with his two friends on either side. Out of reflex, or presence of mind, he ducked as soon as the firing began.

"One bullet grazed his neck, and he fell to the floor as his two friends and several other bodies piled on top of him. The terrorists then pumped another series of bullets into the heap of bodies to finish the job.

"This time a bullet hit my father in the back hip. Bent almost in double, crushed by the weight of the bodies above him, and suffocating in the torrent of blood rushing down on him from the various bodies my father held on for 10 minutes while the terrorists left the area.

“MY FATHER MOVED JUST ENOUGH TO ALLOW HIMSELF ROOM TO BREATHE AND THEN LAY STILL. THE SURVIVORS PASSED OVER 12 HOURS LYING STILL IN THE HEAP OF BODIES TOO AFRAID TO MOVE

"When he finally had the courage to wiggle his arms he found that there were four other survivors in the room. They communicated to each other by touch as they were too afraid to make a sound.

"My father moved just enough to allow himself room to breathe and then lay still. The survivors passed over 12 hours lying still in the heap of bodies too afraid to move.

"They constantly heard gunfire and hand grenades going off in the other parts of the hotel. They feared that any noise would bring the terrorists back.

"After approximately 12 hours, the terrorists returned with a camera and flashlight and joked and laughed as they filmed what they thought was a pile of dead bodies.

"They then moved to the landing below where they set up explosives. On their departing, my father decided that it was too risky to remain where they were, due to the explosives."

The survivors then climbed the rest of the stairs to reach an air-cooling plant room where they hid, drinking sips of water from the air-conditioning unit, till Friday morning when a commando team rescued them and took them to hospital.

Parikh, who had two minor bullet wounds is recovering well, his son wrote. "He, however, lost his two best friends he was dining with that night."

In an interview with the *Times of India* newspaper, Parikh said he later heard what seemed to be the voices of four terrorists, which were different from those of the first two who opened fire. He said it was his presence of mind—turning sideways and sliding down to escape the bullets, and later pretending to be dead for hours—that kept him alive.

—DPA

Suddenly, Zimbabwe wants Western help

HARARE — Zimbabwe has declared the cholera outbreak that has claimed at least 565 lives a national emergency, and appealed for international aid to tackle the crisis.

Health Minister David Parirenyatwa told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa: "We are expecting the international community to chip in with assistance so that the pandemic can be eradicated as soon as possible."

Cholera has compounded the misery of Zimbabweans, who are trying to ride out the country's worst-ever economic and humanitarian crisis.

Around half the population of 12 million is in need of food aid and government hospitals have been closed for a month as doctors and nurses strike over pay and conditions.

"Our central hospitals are literally not functioning. Our staff is demotivated and we need your support to ensure that they start coming to work and our health system is revived," Parirenyatwa was quoted by state media as saying.

South Africa's government spokesman said President Kgalema Motlanthe would be convening a ministerial meeting to discuss the situation.

"We believe people are dying of starvation and we cannot fold our arms," government spokesman Themba Maseko said.

Health experts blame the outbreak of waterborne cholera that dates to August on the govern-



The funeral industry booms in Zimbabwe at the moment. Graeme Williams/South Photographs

ment's failure to import water treatment chemicals and to dispose of sewage and garbage.

The capital Harare has been experiencing acute shortages of water resulting in residents resorting to shallow wells and rivers for drinking water.

"This is going to get a lot, lot worse," Matthew Cochrane, spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

Seasonal rains that usually culminate in flooding are already starting to fall in parts of Zimbabwe. Cholera cases are common during the flood season.

"You're going to have this aggravating factor on top of an already urgent situation," Cochrane warned.

Harare ran completely dry for more than 48 hours from Saturday after water purification chemicals ran out. The situation has yet to return to normal, with most parts of the city still without water.

The Red Cross is digging 70 water boreholes in Zimbabwe, rehabilitating a further 150 and distributing cholera kits, Cochrane said.

Meanwhile, the situation remained tense Thursday in Harare, where a riot by soldiers Monday revealed cracks in President Robert Mugabe's vice-like grip on power.

Armoured army vehicles patrolled the streets and armed police stood guard at banks as Zimbabweans rushed to take advantage of new higher cash withdrawal limits for fear the cash would soon run out.

On Wednesday, the state increased the limit on cash withdrawals to 100 million Zimbabwe dollars (about 50 US dollars) a week, from 500,000 Zimbabwe dollars amid growing defiance over cash shortages that has spread to sections of the military.

On Monday, a group of soldiers took to the street in Harare, looting and attacking black market currency dealers, apparently frustrated by the bank queues.

On Thursday, around 70 demonstrators were detained after police broke up two protests, one over cash limits, the other by doctors and nurses protesting the breakdown of the health system.

In September, Mugabe signed up to a unity government with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) but the deal has become mired in squabbling over how the rivals will really share power.

—DPA

Canadian crisis: coalition 'treasonous'

MONTREAL — Prime Minister Stephen Harper won an important and historic tactical victory today in his no-holds-barred confrontation with combined forces of the opposition.

But the crisis has also whipped political sentiments in Canada up to a level of aggression not seen for decades in Canadian politics, with strident and searing comments about treason and sedition against an opposition alliance with Quebec separatists.

In a highly unusual step, Governor General Michaëlle Jean, Canada's head of state, agreed to Harper's request to adjourn parliament until January 26, 2009.

The move, just two weeks after parliament began seating, allowed Harper to hang on to his job for at least another seven weeks. No prime minister had ever asked for Parliament to adjourn so early and solely to avoid a vote of no-confidence.

"Today's decision will give us an opportunity — I'm talking about all the parties — to focus on the economy and work together," Harper said as he left the governor general's residence at Rideau Hall in Ottawa after a two-and-a-half hour meeting.

The minority Conservative government led by

Harper had been headed for an almost certain defeat Monday at the hands of a centre-left coalition, angry over the government's provocative economic statement that included no stimulus package for Canada's slumping economy.

To make matters worse, Harper had suggested cutting public financing to political parties, a move that would have devastated the opposition parties.

Harper's miscalculation helped to forge an unlikely alliance between the centre-left Liberal Party; their rivals on the left, socialist New Democratic Party (NDP); and the Liberals' arch foe, the separatist Bloc Quebecois party, which advocates for sovereignty for the French-speaking province of Quebec.

The Liberals and NDP agreed on a formal coalition with support from the Bloc and signalled their intention to defeat the government at the first opportune moment.

With the parliament prorogued, the Tories won some breathing space.

But the parliamentary crisis, which has Canadians glued to the screens of their TV sets, is far from over.



Federal Conservative Leader Stephen Harper hugs his wife Laureen as he celebrates winning his second minority government on election night. UPI Photo/Heinz Ruckemann

The Conservatives will face another confidence test after the House of Commons returns January 26 as they present their budget on the following day.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion said only a "monumental change" of tone from the prime minister would change his position on toppling the government.

"Warm sentiments are not enough. His behaviour must change," Dion said, accusing Harper of running away from Parliament.

The government took office just two weeks ago, after Conservatives won an enhanced minority in October 14 parliamentary elections. After the defeat, Dion, who had led the Liberals to their worst ever showing, resigned effective May 2, remaining as interim party leader to give the Liberals time to decide on a successor.

Yet in a stunning change of political fortunes, he could become prime minister, at least until the embattled Liberals choose another leader in May.

The Liberals' controversial deal with the separatist Bloc has exposed the opposition coalition to charges of treason and sedition by some Tory legislators.

"They've actually written a deal giving the separatists a veto over every decision of the Canadian government," said Bob Dechert, a Conservative MP from Mississauga, Ontario. "That is as close to treason and sedition as I can imagine."

Harper went on national television Wednesday evening to denounce the Liberals and New Democrats.

"At a time like this, a coalition with separatists cannot help Canada," Harper said.

—DPA

US carmakers: Goodbye, corporate jets



General Motors Chairman Richard Wagoner Jr.; Ford Motor Co. CEO Alan Mulally; and Chrysler CEO Robert Nardelli; during Senate Banking hearing on potential financial aid legislation for the U.S. auto industry. Scott Ferrell/Congressional Quarterly

WASHINGTON – The last time the United States' three top automotive executives travelled from Detroit to Washington to plea for a federal bail-out, they flew each in their own corporate jets.

It was a public relations nightmare. One legislator noted the "delicious irony" of living the high life while asking for billions in emergency federal assistance.

Taking their case before Congress a second time today – seeking 34 billion dollars to help stave off bankruptcy – it appeared the group had learned its lesson.

"I'm proud to say that I drove a hybrid here from Detroit, and it performed – the technology performed extremely well," said Rob Nardelli, Chrysler chief executive.

Nardelli said that the more than 800-kilometre trip had to be split between two days. Not only did they use environmentally friendly cars this time – each executive proudly proclaimed that he didn't even hire a driver.

"I drove with a colleague. We split it up about 50-50. We drove down yesterday, and I'm going to drive back myself Friday or Saturday," General Motors Corp chief executive Rick Wagoner told the Senate Banking Committee.

"Where'd you stay? What did you eat?" quipped the committee's chairman, Senator Christopher Dodd.

Driving was not their only symbolic move. Ford Motor Co said it would sell its five corporate jets as part of an extensive recovery plan submitted earlier this week to Congress.

Wagoner assured the committee of the "cessation of all corporate aircraft operations."

Both Wagoner and Ford's Alan Mulally have pledged to take salaries of 1 dollar for 2009 in exchange for the federal funds. Chrysler's Nardelli said he's already working for 1 dollar a year.

While such moves will hardly return the auto industry to profitability on their own, the public relations campaign masks a broader argument that has been brewing during the US financial crisis.

Politicians and voters have regularly complained that Wall Street's sailing banks were being bailed out ahead of "Main Street," where ordinary Americans are struggling with a housing market collapse and shrinking spending power.

Dodd said that the auto industry's top labour union, the United Auto Workers, was the only group that has made concrete concessions.

UAW President Ron Gettelinger on Wednesday said the powerful union would delay health-care payments, suspend pay for laid-off workers and modify their labour contracts with the Big Three carmakers.

– DPA

Europe looks to a 1.5% OCR in new year

BRUSSELS/LONDON – Europe's two leading central banks – the European Central Bank and the Bank of England – delivered big rate cuts early this morning as monetary authorities around the world stepped up their drive to spur global growth by slashing the cost of money.

While the European Central bank (ECB) meeting in Brussels announced an unprecedented 75-basis-points cut to 2.5 per cent, the Bank of England (BoE) decided at its meeting in London to reduce borrowings costs in Britain by a hefty 100 basis points.

The BoE's decision brought British rates down to 2 per cent, their lowest level since 1951.

At the same time, the London-based BoE Monetary Policy Committee, led by bank governor Mervyn King, warned that the "downturn has gathered pace," with the bank facing growing pressure to continue lopping back the cost of money into the new year.

"Consumer spending and business investment have stalled, while residential investment has continued to fall," the BoE said as it announced today's rate cut.

Echoing the BoE's comments, ECB chief Jean-Claude Trichet also warned that the 15-member eurozone faced a protracted downturn, saying there had been "an intensifying and broadening

of the financial turmoil" which has hit the global economy.

Trichet also released the ECB's latest staff economic projections, which included substantial downward revisions in both the inflation and economic growth outlook for the eurozone.

Amid signs that the global economic slowdown was gathering momentum, central banks around the world have stepped up moves to cut the cost of borrowing.

The US key interest rate now stands at 1 per cent, after the Federal Reserve reduced the cost of borrowing in the world's biggest economy by 325 points this year in a series of rapid-fire cuts.

Meanwhile, China has delivered the biggest reduction in borrowing costs in the country since the Asian financial crisis a decade ago. Australia's Reserve Bank this week announced its fourth rate cut in as many months, and New Zealand's central bank delivered a massive 150 basis point cut, although with an OCR of 5% interest rates there remained some of the highest in the OECD.

At the same time, Switzerland's normally conservative national bank last month chopped 100 basis points off rates.

The BoE's decision was immediately welcomed by industrial leaders and in the City of London, as

well as by mortgage lenders.

But analysts said the cut should be followed by further reductions early next year.

"We need to be at [an official cash rate of] 1.5 per cent in early spring," said Ian McCafferty, chief economist at the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).

City analysts said more cuts were needed quickly, with a key rate of 1 per cent – which would be the lowest-ever in the 300-year history of the BoE – on the cards in the first quarter of next year.

Today's ECB 75-basis-points reduction was the biggest rate cut since the notoriously cautious ECB took charge of eurozone monetary policy about ten years ago.

Speaking at his press conference following the meeting of the bank's 21-member rate-setting council, Trichet said the bank now wanted to assess the economic impact of the cuts – totalling 175 basis points – it has delivered since October.

"We have to concentrate on getting what has been decided operational," said Trichet.

However, many economists believe that with a slew of indicators underscoring the sharp slump underway in the eurozone economy and dwindling inflation, the ECB will press on with its rate-setting cycle well into the new year.

"The ECB is likely to cut rates in January by another 50 basis points, a 75 basis point cut can not be ruled out," said Commerzbank Chief Economist Joerg Kraemer. "In any case, the (ECB's benchmark) refinancing rate should be below the 2 per cent mark by spring next year," he said.

Indeed, the staff projections underscored how the economic slump in the eurozone has worsened since the release of the last projections in September, with the figures showing growth coming to a halt next year and inflation plunging to below the ECB's annual target of close to, but under, 2 per cent.

Instead of growing by 1.2 per cent as set out in the September staff projections, the eurozone economy is now likely to contract by 0.5 per cent.

Growth should then gain ground again in 2010, coming in between 0.5 per cent and 1.5 per cent.

Data released last week showed annual eurozone inflation chalking up its biggest fall in almost 20 years in November to drop to a lower-than-forecast 2.1 per cent from 3.2 per cent in October.

As a result, today's staff projections show annual eurozone inflation falling to 1.4 per cent in 2009 before edging up to 1.8 per cent in 2010. In September, the staff projections had forecast a 2.6 percent inflation rate for next year.

– DPA

Politician hung up on Obama

WASHINGTON – Apparently, Barack Obama is quite good at impersonating himself.

A Republican congresswoman from Florida hung up on the US president-elect – twice – when he telephoned to discuss policy, believing it was actually a hoax from local pranksters.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen received a call on her mobile phone yesterday from an aide to Obama, who asked her to hold for the president-elect.

"A gentleman sounding like Obama introduced himself when Ros-Lehtinen cut him off and said that 'I'm sorry but I think this is a joke from one of the South Florida radio stations known for these pranks' and hung up," according to a press release from the congresswoman's office.

Soon after, she received a call from Obama's chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, who promptly told her: "Ileana, I cannot believe that you hung up on the president-elect."

Unconvinced, Ros-Lehtinen proceeded to hang

up on Emanuel, too.

It eventually took a call from Howard Berman, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, to convince her this was no joke. But even Berman was first made to recount a personal story only the two of them would know.

Finally, Obama called back. They discussed Cuba and Israeli policy and she congratulated him on his election victory, but not before both lamented the success of local pranksters in Florida and Obama's hometown of Chicago.

"Saturday Night Live could use a good Obama impersonator like you," Ros-Lehtinen quipped, according to the press release.

She had some reason to be suspicious. Shortly before the November 4 general election, Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin was fooled by comedians from a Canadian radio station who impersonated French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

– DPA



British DNA database hit by court ruling

LONDON/STRASBOURG – A ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg condemning Britain's policy of storing DNA samples from innocent people was described as "disappointing" by the government in London today.

The court said the DNA and fingerprints of two British men who had no previous convictions should not have been kept on a national database by police in Yorkshire, northern England.

The judges said keeping the information constituted a "breach of rights" and "could not be regarded as necessary in a democratic society."

Britain's Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said she was "disappointed" at the ruling and would consider the judgement "carefully."

She said DNA and fingerprinting was "vital" in

the fight against crime, providing the police with more than 3,500 matches a month.

The judgement could have serious implications on how DNA records are stored on a national database, which could now have to be scaled back in scope.

Smith said the existing law would remain in place while the judgement was being considered.

Under present laws, the DNA profiles of everyone arrested for a recordable offence in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are kept on the database, regardless of whether they are charged or convicted.

The ruling does not mean that police will be forced to delete the 850,000 records of innocent citizens – including tens of thousands of children – with immediate effect, commentators said.

But individuals could now challenge the holding of their genetic data in British courts and thus increase pressure on the government to amend legislation.

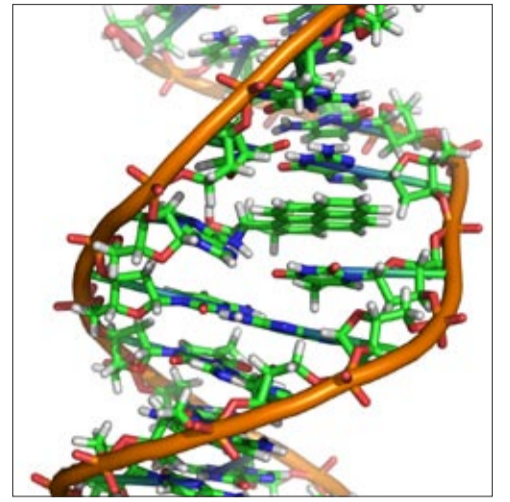
In total, the details of about 4.5 million people are held, of whom about a fifth do not have a criminal record, British figures show.

The two men who took their case to the European Court were awarded 36,400 pounds (NZ\$100,000 dollars) in costs.

British civil rights group Liberty welcomed the ruling.

"The court has used human rights principles and common sense to deliver the privacy protection of innocent people that the British government has shamefully failed to deliver," the group said.

– DPA



One project and a world of change for Afghan women

By Kim Barker

Chicago Tribune

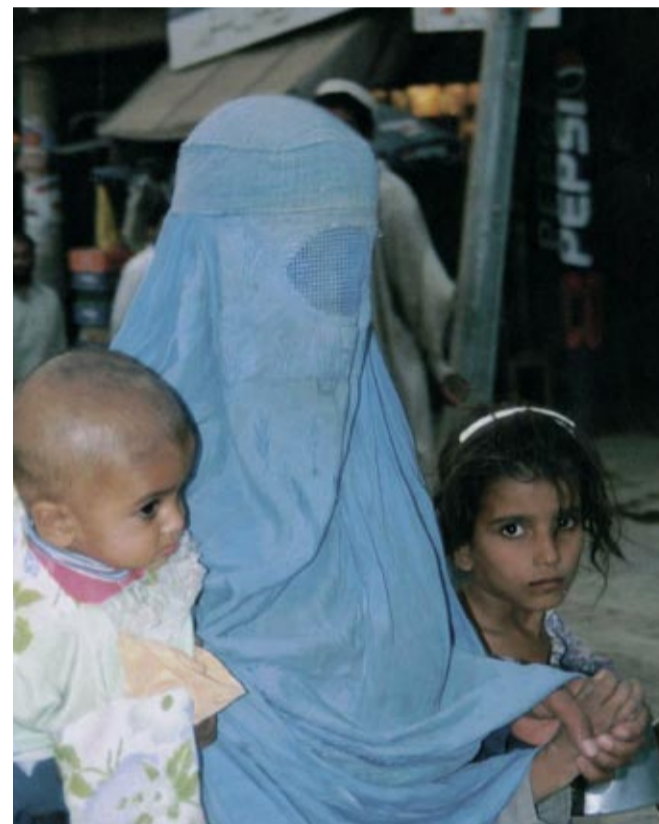
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – Most of these women do not like burqas, which conceal everything and make women look like giant blue shuttlecocks. One complained that when the Taliban forced her to wear one, she could not fit her glasses under the tight headband, so she could not see. Another remembered how her daughter, unused to the long garment, tripped and scraped her knees.

So it is with some measure of irony that these Afghan women now sew mini-burqas for foreigners to put on wine bottles. They know the math: They can make as many as 35 wine-bottle burqas from a real burqa, and they can earn a significant amount of money – for an Afghan woman, at least.

"I don't know why the foreigners like them," said Marzia, 30, who like many Afghans has one name. "Maybe they like them for their children, maybe for themselves. Maybe they like them because it's interesting to have a burqa."

The women learned about the odd tastes of foreigners through the Women of Hope Project, started by Betsy Beamon, an American who left her customer-service job with US Airways after the Sept. 11 attacks and moved to Afghanistan to help women.

In a country now considered the major focus of the U.S.-led war on terror, where the Taliban is gaining strength, where corruption is endemic and foreigners and Afghan officials are accused of gobbling up most aid money, this project is a rarity. It shows how one person can help, on a small scale at least, and how far women have come since the rule



Afghani mother and children on the Pakistani border. Shayne Kavanagh/INVESTIGATE

of the Taliban, who whipped women if they did not wear burqas or if they tried to work.

"I had become obsessed with what had happened to them," said Beamon, a mother of two who favours jeans and long embroidered shirts. "I wondered,

what happens to a woman's spirit when she's been made invisible for six years?"

Beamon has had five foreign volunteers in seven years. Her Web site, www.womenofhopeproject.org, is not quite finished; she cannot take credit cards in Kabul; and her e-mail inbox has 1,052 unanswered queries. But somehow her project has helped employ about 1,000 women – 100 main seamstresses who employ other women.

The women here, each a kind of entrepreneur, have experimented with what foreigners like. One woman sews Taliban dolls. Another sews doll families, a cross between voodoo dolls and Bollywood movie stars. Another invented the wine-bottle apron, with the word "Afghanistan" crudely stitched near a camel. Another woman is such an artist that she can take a picture of a pet or scene and embroider it perfectly on a pillow. Next she wants to make a Michael Jackson pillow.

Now that it's almost Christmas, the women have shifted gears. The artist has sewn a flawless Santa Claus on a pillow – even though she did not know who he was – and cardinals in pine trees. The women sew mini-burqas in red and green, and tiny pillows to be hung as Christmas ornaments

– some that misspell Kabul – and Christmas stockings. There are table runners in red and green, and bookmarks with crosses.

In a country where spreading Christianity is against the law and where the Taliban recently gunned down a foreign woman accused of trying to convert Muslims, such crafts could create a major controversy. But these women, all Muslims, shrug when asked about what they are sewing. "It's for Christmas," said Marjan, about 45, whose husband is sick and does not work.

Such nonchalance is refreshing, yet Beamon is reluctant to allow photographs of her or her workers. Last year she threw a Christmas party so the Afghan women could see what all the fuss was about, but this year she has cancelled it, citing security fears. She is not sure how long she can stay in the country and has tried to make the project self-sufficient, in case she must leave.

The main customers are foreigners visiting Kabul and buyers in the U.S.

A fancy New York company has expressed interest in buying intricate Kandahari-style embroidery.

On Fridays at the main U.S. military base in Kabul, Beamon sets up a booth. One recent Friday, some customers flipped past Santa Claus pillowcases in favour of Afghans playing buzkashi, the national sport in which Afghans on horseback fight over a headless calf carcass. Others bought red and green table covers, and most told Beamon or the two Afghans with her to keep the change.

"They're beautiful," said Cathy Trujillo, who works with USAID, fingering the table runners. "You're going to decorate my table for the holidays."

FROM FRONT PAGE



"Mattel has established its exclusive rights to the Bratz drawings, and the court has found that hundreds of the MGA parties' products, including all the currently available core female fashion dolls Mattel was able to locate in the marketplace, infringe those rights," Larson said in his ruling.

Larson's order also gave Mattel the right to force the recall of all Bratz dolls from retailers. But pre-teen girls who are the dolls' main fans will still be able to get them for Christmas. The order does not take effect until the next court hearing scheduled for February 11.

Bratz have been a strong competitor to Barbie and are the main product line of MGA, which says it will be forced to close without Bratz. The company employs more than 1,500 people in the Los Angeles area and is to seek a stay on the injunction pending an appeal.

Even if Mattel does close down the Bratz line, Barbie would still face tough competition. Over the last year dolls from the Hannah Montana TV series have overtaken Bratz as Barbie's top competitor.

– DPA

German spy satellites see NZ

GRAFSCHAFT, GERMANY – The German military commissioned its first spy-in-the-sky satellite system this morning, enabling it to peek through clouds or the darkness of night at any spot on the planet.

The synthetic-aperture radar (SAR) system uses five satellites that bounce radar pulses off the earth. Sophisticated computers convert the returning signals into a picture of the ground that can resolve features just 50 centimetres in width.

Germany is to share the data with France, which operates Helios II military satellites that photograph the ground in the daytime.

The 350-million-euro (445-million-dollar) German system, code-named SAR-Lupe, became operational in the summer and was officially handed over to the military early today by the builders, OHB System. The ground station is in the town of Grafscraft.

Defence officials said Germany will be able to take radar pictures of any place at about 10 hours' notice, the time it takes for a satellite to arrive overhead and for the picture to be compiled.

Vice Admiral Wolfram Kuehn, deputy chief of the armed forces, said the system meant Germany no longer needed to depend on US data.

"The Kosovo conflict in 1999 demonstrated to us



how important it was to have your own worldwide reconnaissance capability," he said.

The military could have also used such a system with its troops in Afghanistan or while assisting victims of the December 2003 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Radar pictures are not as fine-grained as photography from space, which clearly shows people and pets, as users of map websites know. However radar is the best solution in night-time or rainy conditions over the target area.

– DPA

Auckland show Black Caps how it's done

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Auckland's attacking intent had its rewards on the opening day of the three-day tour cricket match against the West Indies in Auckland today.

Captain Richard Jones set a fine example with an unbeaten 186 as Auckland racked up 359 for two by stumps.

The home side fully appreciated a fine batting surface and short boundaries at Eden Park Outer Oval as they overcame the early loss of Martin Guptill, with Jones to the fore.

The 35-year-old former international crafted his 13th first-class century and shared a second wicket stand of 223 with tall left-hander Tim McIntosh.

Their partnership was broken shortly before tea when McIntosh was dismissed for 78, lifting his first-class aggregate this summer to 418 runs at an average of 69.

He was very much the junior partner to Jones as they went to lunch at 134 for one.

Jones continued to dominate after the interval, racing quickly to his century before taking a more measured approach later on.

He employed the cut and pull strokes to telling effect as he hit 25 fours and three sixes.

Once McIntosh departed Jones formed another alliance with Reece Young, who was on 55 not out at the close after an unbroken partnership of 125.

Jones, playing in his 108th first-class match, resumes tomorrow just two runs short of equalling his career best score of 188.

Earlier, after the start of play was delayed due to drizzle the tourists' sole success in the first session came when opener Guptill edged Fidel Edwards to second slip.

Guptill, back in the side after an injury-enforced break, had scored 10 when Sewnarine Chattergoon held the offering with the Auckland total on 11 in the third over.

The oval has been a haven for batsmen this summer, with last week's domestic State Championship



West Indies bowler Sulieman Benn in action on the first day of the three day test against Auckland, Eden Park, Auckland, today. NZPA / Wayne Drought

match between Auckland and Wellington producing 974 runs for the loss of just 12 wickets despite it being reduced to a three-day affair due to rain.

The West Indies batsmen will sleep easy tonight knowing their turn comes tomorrow.

The match is the only warmup for the tourists before the first of two tests against New Zealand, starting in Dunedin next Thursday.

– NZPA



NZPA / David Rowland

Moles to trim fat from NZ team's support cast

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – New Zealand cricket coach Andy Moles is wasting no time to stamp his mark on the national team.

Moles took up the role this week and today announced an end to the huge support casts surrounding the team so favoured by his predecessor John Bracewell.

Bracewell's last test in charge ended against Australia in Adelaide on Monday when there were at least eight management personnel attached to the side.

As well as team manager Lindsay Crocker, Bracewell had at hand a bowling coach in Dayle Hadlee, a batting coach in Mark O'Neill and a fielding coach in Travis Wilson.

But the New Zealanders' team room for the first test against the West Indies in Dunedin next week will be relatively empty after Moles signalled a change of direction.

Moles said that after reviewing the support arrangements, and discussions with captain Daniel Vettori, he was to reduce the core support team around the players.

The new support team structure includes the use of a pool of specialist coaches in the lead up to games, but a smaller team directly around the side

during match days.

"My priority in shaping the support team is to provide the best possible environment for the players to focus on their own performance," Moles said.

"We will use networks of specialist coaches to help prepare the team during the lead up to matches.

"For example, in the three days prior to the Dunedin test, NZ Cricket elite coaching manager John Wright will be among those working with the team.

"On match days, however, the support team will consist of just myself along with the team manager, physiotherapist, fitness trainer and video analyst."

New Zealand Cricket chief executive Justin Vaughan said it was always expected that an incoming coach would bring a new approach and a change in personnel in the support area.

"We are fully supportive of the changes Andy is proposing," he said.

"We've been well served by our support staff in the past, but Andy has signalled he wants to bring a different style to this aspect of team management.

"A sharper focus on player accountability and performance is a positive step."

– NZPA

Beckham makes Jemma's day

AUCKLAND, DEC 5 – A seven-year-old schoolgirl today got some priceless footballing advice from the world's highest paid soccer player.

Jemma Pickstock was one of six children called out at random from 6500 in the stands at Auckland's Mt Smart Stadium to join David Beckham and the LA Galaxy in drills at a training session.

At one stage, during heading practice, Beckham bent down to Jemma, the youngest of the group, and whispered something in her ear.

It seemed to work because, having just missed a previous attempt with a header, she made firm contact with the next one.

Jemma later said that the soccer megastar's advice to her was "keep your eye on the ball".

She was so excited by the half hour she and the five others spent on the pitch with Beckham and his teammates that she couldn't decide what the best part of it was.

"I can't choose," she said.

Another of the lucky six, nine-year-old Teaa Tawhi, from Oranga School, said the experience made him want to become a better soccer player.

Teaa said Beckham complimented him on his soccer skills, and the words would serve to motivate him.

"It was exciting and I was very happy," he said.

With the United States Major League Soccer competition in its off-season, the LA Galaxy are in Auckland to play a charity match against an Oceania All Stars selection tomorrow night.

Children from 130 schools across the Auckland region were at the Galaxy's practice today, and also for the Oceania session that followed.

All eyes were on Beckham, however, and there were a cacophony of screams when the former Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder arrived.

The Galaxy trained for about 75 minutes, and Beckham stayed on for about 10 minutes afterwards, signing autographs as he was mobbed by fans near the team bus.

While the former England captain can lay claim to being the most recognised name in world soccer, his drawing power hasn't yet extended to selling out the 32,000 tickets for the match.

The Auckland Regional Council, which owns Mt Smart Stadium, today expanded a two-for-one ticket deal to everyone who had brought a ticket.

General manager of parks Lance Vervoort said the decision was taken after a sponsors' group initiative yesterday to offer two tickets for the price of one on every ticket sold from last night.

He said the ARC felt it was only fair to offer the same to all ticket purchasers.

About 15,000 tickets were reported to have been sold as of yesterday, with 19,000 being given as the break-even mark.

Vervoort said staff had told him that 1000 tickets were sold in two hours after the announcement of the offer extension.

"Things are taking off and we're expecting a big walk-up crowd with the announcement."

Vervoort said organisers estimated the total gate would be "well over 20,000, but you never know".

"With a fine day, you might get an even bigger walk-up crowd."

– NZPA



Football star David Beckham waves to fans during training with his L A Galaxy football team Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland, today. NZPA / Wayne Drought

Honda pulls plug on Formula One

TOKYO – Japanese carmaker Honda Motor Co is quitting Formula One as the company battles sinking profits, Honda's chief executive said Friday.

Honda President Takeo Fukui said Japan's second-largest carmaker will withdraw from the costly sport by the end of this year, citing deteriorating business conditions due to the worldwide economic downturn, as uncertainty continued to grow and recovery was expected to take some time.

The carmaker a few months ago slashed both its profit projections and production for the fiscal year through March 2009.

"It was a very difficult decision," Fukui said at a press conference in Tokyo.

Honda representatives had informed its team, which is based in Britain, that it was to pull out of the expensive sport if no new sponsor was found, Japan's Jiji Press news agency said earlier, also citing British news reports.

If there was no buyer by March, the team was to be sold, leaving current drivers Jenson Button and Rubens Barrichello in limbo, the BBC reported.

– DPA



UEFA Cup moves to final 32

HAMBURG (DPA) – Bundesliga teams Wolfsburg and SV Hamburg brought some much-needed UEFA Cup joy to Germany with victories this morning to secure their passage to the last 32.

Wolfsburg downed England's Portsmouth 3-2, helped by a blunder from keeper David James, while Hamburg were 2-0 winners at Slavia Prague to progress from the group stage with a game to spare.

The wins were a welcome boost for the Bundesliga who yesterday saw both Schalke 04 and Hertha Berlin beaten and now facing an uphill struggle to qualify.

England's Aston Villa also progressed despite a 2-1 home defeat to Slovakian outfit Zilina, and now visit Hamburg for a match which will help decide who tops a group in which Ajax – not in action today – are also through.

Portugal's Sporting Braga also progressed with Wolfsburg from Group E after coming from behind to beat Heerenveen 2-1.

Spain's Valencia joined the qualifiers after earning a 1-1 draw in Group G with Belgium's Club Brugge.

Wolfsburg joined already qualified Group E rivals AC Milan into the last 32 with a 3-2 victory over vis-

iting Portsmouth, leaving the Premier League side crashing out without a win from three matches.

Felix Magath's Wolfsburg benefited from a blunder by England keeper James who directed a back pass straight to the feet of Zvezdan Misimovic who rounded the hapless goalie to slot in a 74th-minute winner.

The goal virtually ended any hopes for Portsmouth despite James making amends by saving an 80th-minute penalty weakly struck by Misimovic.

Wolfsburg had got off to a bright start when Edin Dzeko scored from close range in the third minute.

James had done well to set up Portsmouth's equalizer in the 11th minute when a long throw launched Armand Traore down the left. The Frenchman's cross was not dealt with by Diego Benaglio in goal and Jermaine Defoe was able to turn the ball over the line.

The Premier League side were in front three minutes later when Arnold Mvuemba beat Benaglio with a shot from outside the area.

Defoe came close to notching his second with a shot deflected just wide of the post, but the home side levelled in the 23rd when Christian Gentner's ball into the area sailed past friend and foe alike

leaving James without a chance.

Portsmouth needed to win after Braga took the lead at Heerenveen, but their hopes were dashed by James' error.

Magath said his team could be proud of advancing following three successive wins.

"We played well, at least going forward, although I wasn't pleased with our defensive play at the beginning," he said.

"Dzeko was again outstanding. With a player like that in your team you can always score goals."

SV Hamburg made sure of qualification from Group F where Ivica Olic on the half hour and fellow Croatian Mladen Petric with a penalty in stoppage time gave the Bundesliga side a 2-0 win over Slavia Prague.

England's Aston Villa slipped to a 2-1 defeat at home to Zilina but go through along with Hamburg and Ajax.

Valencia qualified from Group G thanks to a 1-1 draw with visiting Club Brugge. The Belgians led from the 19th minute through Antony Alcaez but a goal on the hour by Nikola Zigic gave the Spanish side the point they needed.

Rosenberg were held 1-1 at Copenhagen, a result which now leaves the Danish side needing to beat Brugge.

In Group H, Vagner Love scored a hat-trick as already-qualified CSKA Moscow edged French outfit Nancy 4-3, while Lech Poznan and Deportivo La Coruna finished 1-1, leaving Nancy, Deportivo and Lech all still in with a chance.

Following matches on Wednesday and Thursday, the following teams have now qualified from the UEFA Cup group stage for the Round of 32: SV Hamburg, Wolfsburg, Manchester City, Aston Villa, AC Milan, Udinese, Ajax, FC Twente, Valencia, St Etienne, Standard Liege, Braga, Galatasaray, CSKA Moscow, Metalist Kharkiv.

They are joined by three teams so far from the Champions League: Aalborg, Zenit St Petersburg and Shakhtar Donetsk.

The final group matches are on December 18/19, to be followed by the draw for the Round of 32 and Round of 16 at UEFA headquarters in Nyon on December 19.

– DPA



NZPA / Stephen Barker

Drag race in rowing forecast

By Peter Martinez

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Sunday's Billy Webb centennial challenge race on the Whanganui River will more than likely come down to a sprint finish for the \$5000 first prize, Olympic rower Mahe Drysdale says.

The 5km challenge is being held on the same

stretch of water on which Webb, New Zealand's first single scull world champion, defended his world title against Australian Richard Tressider 100 years ago.

Three-times world champion Drysdale's competition will come from Olympic champion Olaf Tufte of Norway and the winner of a qualifying challenge.

would hurt a lot more than usual because it was over a longer distance and lasted 18 minutes, rather than the seven of a 2km race.

"Both of us will be trying to break away but we are pretty evenly matched so I think it's going to be pretty tight at the end – probably a sprint finish through the last bridge and decided right at the line.

"I am really looking forward to racing on Sunday – it is a great celebration of Billy Webb and what he has achieved. To have Olaf out here for the race is awesome," Drysdale told NZPA from Wanganui today.

"I think I'll win. But Olaf probably thinks he will too.

"It's a pretty fair course and it'll be a bit more exciting than a normal two-kilometre race because there's other factors to deal with other than going fast on the river."

Drysdale, who has rowed on the Whanganui before said "it was a little bit hairy" with a little bit of mud and swirl around the last corner of the course.

From training this week alongside Tufte, Drysdale was anticipating a close finish in the downriver race that

"If that's the case, it is going to be pretty exciting and we are hoping to put on a good show."

Besides the friendship and longstanding rivalry over a number of years between Drysdale and Tufte, Sunday's race will be tinged with memories of their Beijing Olympics duel.

Drysdale had been debilitated by a stomach virus before the Olympics final and needed to be hooked to a drip.

In the final, Drysdale held the lead but began to fade with 300 metres to go, letting Tufte power through for his second Olympic gold.

Czech Ondrej Synek overhauled him in the shadow of the finish line to relegate a desperate Drysdale to the bronze medal.

Drysdale is hoping home waters and a clean bill of health will help him edge out the Olympic champion.

"This is a good time to get one back on him," he said.

The third competitor was to be decided today in a 2km qualifying race containing decorated New Zealand internationals Hamish Bond, Nathan Cohen, Duncan Grant, Graham Oberlin-Brown, Joseph Sullivan, Peter Taylor and Storm Uru.

All are current or former world champions, or Olympians.

Sunday's race will start at 11.30am and be streamed live on the internet.

Riverboats Waimarie and Wairua will follow the rowers down the course, the same vessels from which supporters watched and cheered Webb a century ago.

– NZPA

TV & Film



Four Holidays: three too many

Four Holidays

➔ **Director:** Seth Gordon

➔ **Cast:** Vince Vaughn, Reese Witherspoon, Robert Duvall

➔ **Length:** 88 minutes

➔ **Rated M (for sexual references)**

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

There are worse holiday-related ways to spend your time than *Four Holidays*. I suppose. Making a three-hour drive to grandmother's house in pea-soup fog, for one. Assembling a bicycle with with one of those fake little screwdrivers, for another.

But honestly, there isn't much in this mostly cheerless comedy — starring an oddly matched Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon as a reluctant couple, both products of divorce, making the inevitable Christmas Day family pilgrimage to four households — that is worth the trouble of going to the theatre and interrupting your holiday-meal digestion.

You know the drill in this story from the opening scenes (and the unrelenting and unblinking previews, which dutifully spell out pretty much the whole movie). Brad (Vaughn) and Kate (Witherspoon), rich and carefree, blow their parents off each year at Christmas by making up some humanitarian trip they've committed to. This time, however, they get caught on live TV when they're stranded at the airport. They actually have to hunker down and endure what millions of Americans engage in every year: racing around on Christmas Day trying

to fulfil all their family holiday obligations.

Each of the four households they visit is, inevitably, wildly dysfunctional. Brad's father (Robert Duvall) is a blustering reactionary. His mum (Sissy Spacek), has hooked up with his childhood best friend. Kate's mother (Mary Steenburgen) is romantically involved with a fundamentalist evangelist. Her dad (Jon Voight) is a — well, I'm not sure I can even recall, at this point. Perhaps his great sin is just that he's boring. An odd thing happens in *Four Holidays*: The four families all blend together into a big, goopy morass of sit-com stridency and Red-State outlandishness.

The point is, of course, that the hip and sophisticated Brad and Kate — dwelling in that rarefied environment of high incomes, lavish lifestyles, no children and restful holiday-morning slumbers — are missing out on something essential. Which might be a valid enough point if director Seth Gordon didn't feel required to shove the sentiment down our throats.

Or maybe the point is that when you're lucky enough to vault over your parents' economic class and social standing, you should run when you can.

Vaughn and Witherspoon are old pros, and they gamely do what they can with the screenplay (credited to no less than four writers, which is at least fewer than the number of pieces in the bicycle you have to build), which involves many of the expected calamities: baby vomit, revelation of traumatic childhood secrets, Neanderthal siblings, devil nieces. At one point, Kate is forced to relive one of

“THERE ISN'T MUCH IN THIS MOSTLY CHEERLESS COMEDY — STARRING AN ODDLY MATCHED VINCE VAUGHN AND REESE WITHERSPOON AS A RELUCTANT COUPLE, BOTH PRODUCTS OF DIVORCE, MAKING THE INEVITABLE CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY PILGRIMAGE TO FOUR HOUSEHOLDS

her biggest fears of being trapped in a birthday-party bounce house, and she tackles the task with comic relish.

Yet mostly the film comes across more irritatingly bland than amusing. There's a huge canon of holiday disaster movies out there, and 90 percent are fresher and funnier than *Four Holidays*. As you recover from macaroni-salad-induced food poisoning, flop on the couch and rent *Planes, Trains & Automobiles* instead.

Watch trailer

— By Donald Munro

coming
SOON



Australia > Baz Luhrmann (*Moulin Rouge*) has had seven years away from filmmaking, and he's come thundering back with a \$130 million WWII love story. The cinematography is epic, with the land playing a role all its own. Nicole Kidman plays a refined Englishwoman come to claim a vast Outback cattle ranch; Hugh Jackman is the rough-hewn loner cowboy who captures her heart. There are grandiose battle scenes involving Japanese dive-bombers and swooningly romantic dance sequences.

Frost/Nixon > Ron Howard explores the backstage drama surrounding the post-Watergate TV interviews between English talk show host David Frost (Michael Sheen, who played Tony Blair in *The Queen*) and disgraced ex-president Richard Nixon (Frank Langella).

Seven Pounds > Will Smith plays it straight as a suicidal IRS agent who vows to change seven deserving strangers' lives before he goes. When costar Rosario Dawson offers him an emotional connection he never anticipated, he reassesses his plans. Directed by Gabriele Muccino, who guided Smith to a deeply touching performance in 2006's *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

Revolutionary Road > *Titanic* lovers Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet reunite as 1960s Connecticut suburbanites whose differing desires wrench their marriage. Sam Mendes (*American Beauty*), composer supreme Thomas Newman and superstar photographer Roger Deakins (currently shooting the Coen brothers' *A Serious Man* around town) collaborate on this adaptation of Richard Yates' rueful novel.

The Wrestler > Darren Aronofsky's character study of a onetime sports star won the Golden Lion at the Venice film festival and propelled actor Mickey Rourke into the Oscar spotlight. Rourke can probably identify with Randy (The Ram) Robinson, an aging has-been grappler who gives his bloody all for the loyalists who remember him. His love interest is Marisa Tomei as a past-her-prime stripper; Evan Rachel Wood is his estranged daughter. The story shapes up as a touching tribute to a battered but brave American generation.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button > Brad Pitt is shaping up as the best character actor ever to inhabit a handsome movie star's body. In this adaptation of a F. Scott Fitzgerald short story, he plays a man with a bizarre medical condition that causes him to age backwards. Director David Fincher (who worked with Pitt in *Seven* and *Fight Club*) gives the tale a lush, stately look; his peerless command of cutting-edge film technology should come into play as Pitt regresses from 90 to 8. Cate Blanchett, Tilda Swinton, Julia Ormond and Elias Koteas costar. The deliciously creepy composer Andre Desplat wrote the score; Oscar winner Eric Roth (*Forrest Gump*, but still) wrote the screenplay.

Valkyrie > On the plus side, there's immense drama in this true-life tale of German military officers engineering a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. Director Bryan Singer is a dramatic and visual craftsman, and *Apt Pupil* proved he knows how to make Nazi uniforms look elegantly evil. The cast boasts Kenneth Branagh, Bill Nighy, Tom Wilkinson and Eddie Izzard, the cream of Britain's acting pool. On the down side, we have Tom Cruise playing lead plotter Col. Claus von Stauffenberg with a Malibu accent, and hammer-it-dead expository dialogue about the true nature of patriotism. Did we mention he has a dead hand and an eye patch? Cross your fingers, jawohl!

Music



The rocking Reverend

By Walter Tunis

"Man, I wish the Derby was going on while I was there," said the Rev. Al Green of his upcoming performance in Kentucky. "We could go out and put some money on those horses. But seeing as I'm a preacher, I'd have to keep my bets to \$2.50."

Following such a modest proclamation was a vocal trait almost as endearing and distinctive to Green as his singing: laughter.

It came like a cloudburst – quick, explosive and transforming. Almost without realizing it, you find yourself laughing with him.

"Hey, man, when I sing 'For the Good Times,'" he said, referring to the Kris Kristofferson song he refashioned into a soul hit in 1981, "it means 'for the good times.' It don't mean for the bad times. It means we're going to make the most of our time together. We're going to make it work. We gotta make it work because it's getting pretty late in the game, baby."

One can't help but think the Rev. Al has his next Sunday sermon in mind when he talks like that. After all, the veteran soul singer with the killer falsetto has been an ordained minister in his adopted hometown of Memphis for more than 30 years.

But "late in the game" seems also to reflect the secular side of Green's life and music. Two days before our conversation, he was winding up a European

tour in support of "Lay It Down." The recording is the third in a series of critically lauded albums for the Blue Note label that have set Green back on the path of the earthy, upbeat soul he explored during the early '70s. Green's hits from that era with producer Willie Mitchell – "Let's Stay Together," "Tired of Being Alone," "Love and Happiness," "I'm Still In Love With You," "Here I Am (Come and Take Me)" and many others – came to define one of the final golden eras of American soul music.

"Every house we played over there was rocking," Green said of the European tour. "But this music is my life, man. I've been doing it ever since I came to Memphis and met Willie Mitchell in '70 or '71. We're gonna do what we do wherever we go."

But "Lay It Down" is the only one of the three Blue Note albums – 2003's "I Can't Stop" and 2005's "Everything's OK" were the others – that did not have Mitchell at the helm. Instead, Green co-produced Lay It Down with Ahmir Thompson of The Roots. He also enlisted new-generation soul stars John Legend, Corinne Bailey Rae and Anthony Hamilton.

While they summon more of Green's '70s muse than material on the other Blue Note albums, the songs on "Lay It Down" were hardly premeditated. In fact, he wrote the bulk of them with Thompson and several collaborators after recording sessions had begun.

To set the scene, Green keeps his distance to offer a third-person perspective of his work at the sessions.

"If you had a picture of Al at the recording sessions, he would be sitting on the floor," Green said. "Everybody else would be around him – the organ player, the drummer, the bass player. They're all in a circle around him."

"That first night we got together, we wrote eight songs. I was talking to Willie about that. He thought that was astounding. So I asked if he liked the album. He said, 'Of course, I like it. My only problem is I didn't get to produce it.' But he wished me well, hugged me and said, 'Hey man, a fine album.'"

What "Lay It Down" shares with the preceding Blue Note records is Green's boundless vocal exuberance. At 62, the gleam and fire of his falsetto and the sheer jubilation of his phrasing haven't diminished. The singer says he takes care of himself, walks 5 km every morning and again, "at a very brisk pace," in the evening.

"I'm still striving to be the best," Green said. "The girl singers in our band say, 'What are you trying to do when you're out there onstage singing that hard?' I say, 'I'm trying to perfect something.' And they'll go, 'Perfect something? This music was perfected when you cut it.'"

With that, the laughter pours out again like a waterfall.

"I guess my music is like an oil painting. I just try to touch it up – a little blue here, maybe a little red or white. I just want to perfect it so when I'm done

with it, I can say, 'Now I can sign my name at the bottom of it and present it.' That's it."

When asked whether he had a favourite song among those paintings, Green fell silent momentarily before using audience reception on his recent North American and European tours as a gauge.

"Whether it's overseas or in America, it's going to be 'Let's Stay Together.' On that one, everyone stands, everyone sings and everyone dances. And then Al comes out and throws flowers and roses everywhere (reviews of Green's recent shows attest to the latter). It's just a song that makes everyone come together."

Of course, when Al Green, soul superstar and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, isn't touring the world, he remains the Rev. Al to the members of Full Gospel Tabernacle in Memphis. But while concert audiences and church congregations might approach his music with different forms of devotion, Green says spiritual and secular followings are more similar than either realize.

"Man, I find life similar," Green said. "And I always will. If we look at ourselves, we will find we have more in common than our differences. Take both groups and put them together and you have the answer because if you smile, the whole is going to smile with you. But if you're a crybaby, well, you'll just be crying by yourself."

Let's Stay Together 

NEW CD RELEASES

Britney Spears

➔Circus

★★★★☆



Don't call it a comeback. "Comeback" doesn't even come close to describing what Britney Spears has done on her new album, arriving in stores Tuesday, her 27th birthday. Not only is "Circus"

the best album of her career, but it could return her to the kind of massive, multiplatinum sales that she hadn't seen since the turn of the century.

"Circus" is overflowing with smart, savvy dance pop — the kind of hits that she has hinted at in the past with "Toxic" and "I'm a Slave 4 U" — that creates the perfect escapist soundtrack for these downsized times. All these accomplishments are made that much more incredible considering how low she had sunk — personally and professionally — last year with her string of tabloid-worthy exploits and the embarrassment of her clumsy train wreck of a performance on MTV's "Video Music Awards."

The monster hit "Womanizer" is only the beginning of the radio-ready barrage Spears is about to throw down. "Lace and Leather" is another example of the biggest surprise of "Circus" — the way that it nods to previous classics before taking the songs in a new, contemporary direction. Spears has never been one to look back in her music, but there's a bit of Tina Turner's "River Deep, Mountain High" on "Mmm Papi," a bouncy little multi-culti trifle that telescopes several decades of sugary pop into a little more than three minutes. "Kill the Lights" — which chronicles her dealings with paparazzi, or maybe one particular paparazzo ex-boyfriend, as she says, "Is that money in your pocket or are you happy to see me?" — opens with a call-and-response similar to Aretha Franklin's "Respect." And on the bonus track "Amnesia," one of the album's catchiest tracks, Spears comes over like a cross between the Ronettes and Fergie as she coos, "I get amnesia when I'm sitting next to you-ooh-ooh."

It's all part of what seems like a new direction for Spears, one that values musicianship. She tackles some ballads, both from Robbie Williams collaborator Guy Sigsworth, that accomplish their missions. "Out From Under" shows how her voice, which is still a bit limited, can carry a song, even with spare accompaniment, while "My Baby" is a bit schmaltzy, as it conveys how Spears is a loving mother now — the cornerstone of her image rehab.

Forget the release of "Chinese Democracy" as the year's biggest surprise. "Circus" is a Britney Spears album I never expected to hear — one that matters.

— Glenn Gamboa

The Fireman

➔Electric Arguments

★★★★☆



"Don't Stop Running," Paul McCartney urges himself on "Electric Arguments," his third collaboration with 47-year-old producer Martin "Youth" Glover as the Fireman. You've got to hand it to Macca: At 66,

the cute Beatle shows no sign of slowing down, recording each of these experimental yet catchy tracks in a single day, and playing all the instruments himself. This may be a man who's just gone through a painful divorce, who howls in pain like Howlin' Wolf on the psych-rock opener "Nothing Too Much Just Out Of Sight." But the signature McCartney sunniness cannot be kept at bay, on the satisfyingly Beatley "Highway," the hopeful "Light From Your Lighthouse," or the optimistic "Sun Is Shining." Which is not to say that, as texturally and melodically rich as they are, tracks like the would-be English folk song "Travelling Light" aren't a touch ponderous and corny. And the tail end of "Electric Arguments" settles for wallowing in its own ambience. Still, it's a left turn worth taking.

— Dan DeLuca

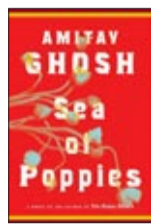
Books

A portrait of 19th-century India

Sea of Poppies

➔By Amitav Ghosh

➔John Murray Publishing (\$39)



Amitav Ghosh, raised in Calcutta, educated in India, Egypt and England, now a resident of his homeland and Brooklyn, has long been inclined toward sweeping, panoramic novels such as *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide*, works that successfully transport readers to densely rendered locales.

With *Sea of Poppies*, a work of astonishing ambition that was short-listed for the Man Booker Prize, Ghosh has widened his aperture to take in a larger landscape enlightened by discovery yet shackled by racial prejudice and immutable attitudes toward class and faith. It's one of the best 19th-century novels of the year.

Set in 1838 on the eve of the Opium Wars, *Poppies* begins with the arrival of the schooner Ibis in Ghazipur on the Ganges, near the vaunted Benares poppy fields. A former slave ship, the Ibis embarks on a journey promising freedom for some of its human cargo and indentured servitude for others, setting out to Mauritius by way of the Andaman Islands.

The universe described here is one of unwitting subjugation. Opium, the Ibis' other haul, proves an apt metaphor for the fate of many characters. The drug initially intoxicates, serving as a palliative from daily suffering, until ultimately forcing bondage upon the addict.

India is at the mercy of the ruling British and the East India Co. monopolizing the opium trade while restricted by its own byzantine caste system, as oppressive as any tyranny. Meanwhile, the Chinese risk bondage to the English through addiction.

The ship's two prisoners mirror this quagmire. They're educated and upper class: One is an Indian raja who has fallen into debt to an Englishman, and the other is a Chinese addict. Zachary Reed, the lone American in "Poppies" and its romantic hero, is an octoroon, passing as white while shackled by slavery's dark legacy, risking exposure at any moment from the ship's manifest.

Poppies grand love affair is with language. The book is drunk with words, phrases both rich with 19th-century sailor-speak and rushing over regional boundaries. Language is a river of the unknown, with characters as unaccustomed to one another's language as the reader is.

"If ye're born with a wooden ladle, Mannikin, it don't matter if y'can eat the wind out o'a topsail. There's always the little Lord Mannikins and Hob-dehays and Loblolly-boys to gammon the skippers, and pitch slum to the shipowners. Ne'er mind they don't know a pintle from a gudgeon, nor a pawl from a whelp, but there they are — at the weather end of the quarterdeck, with Jack Crowle eating their wind."

This heady, thick idiom requires patience despite Ghosh's inclusion of "The Ibis Chrestomathy," allegedly written by the Indian prisoner, the aesthete Neel Rattan Halder. "Words! Neel was of the view that words, no less than people, are endowed with lives and destinies of their own. Why then were there no astrologers to calculate their kismet and make predictions about their fate?"

The glossary is illuminating and maddening, witty but only half useful. Footnotes might have been kinder. Ultimately, it's best to surrender to the novel's rush of words and carry on, full throttle without brakes, seduced by the dizzying pleasure and otherworldly prose that matches its subject.

Dickensian in scope, the novel renders a textured portrait of 19th-century India and the shipping trade. Where it stumbles is in the limited breadth of its myriad characters.

The comedians are very silly. Villains are out of Nazi central casting, one given to torture and humiliation, another prone to sexually charged

masochism. The two pairs of lovers are near flawless, recognizable literary constants, hidden by disguise and manufactured identity. They're exceptionally modern in their dismissal of racial and caste differences, a theme Ghosh has explored in earlier works with more success.

Zachary's star-crossed intended is the French "child of Nature" Paulette. She's initially "defeated by the impossibility of everything" but possesses the requisite pluck and intelligence to propel her fate forward. As her father notes of her, "If she remains here, in the colonies, most particularly in a city like this, where Europe hides its shame and its greed, all that awaits her is degradation." Then, he conveniently dies. Ghosh's world, like that of Dickens, is populated by orphans and outcasts untethered by home.

Poppies is the first volume of a proposed Ibis trilogy. The novel ends with a longboat embarking off-course into uncharted territory with a crew of stowaways and strangers. With any luck, Ghosh's second instalment will not only broaden the fertile territory, but also enrich his characters so that they're equal to the glory of his subject and the ardour of his language.

— By Karen Heller

Obsession: A History by Lennard J. Davis

Obsession: A History

➔By Lennard J. Davis

➔University of Chicago Press (US\$18.15 via Amazon)



When it comes to scholarly ideas, Lennard Davis flies by the seat of his pants.

But only if those pants are corduroy. And not just the seat. The rest of fabric, too, inspires reflection.

"I'm looking at my pants right now," Davis said in a phone interview, "and they're corduroy. All the lines are regularly spaced apart. Why is that? We live in a world of incredible regularity. Look at a brick building, or a venetian blind. We expect a geometric symmetry."

And yet for most of human history, until interchangeable parts revolutionized industrial capacity in the 19th century, Davis noted, we lived in an irregular world, a world of curves and squiggles instead of straight lines, a world of raggy imperfection. Our expectation — sometimes, even our craving — for regularity has made a household acronym out of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), one of several obsessions that seems endemic to modern life.

"Obsession now defines our culture," Davis declares in his new book, an elegantly written and provocatively argued cultural commentary titled *Obsession: A History*.

For Davis, an English professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago and pioneering scholar in the field of disability studies who also teaches in UIC's medical school, obsession is the default position of contemporary life. Consider a TV series such as *Monk*, whose title character has OCD, as well as our celebration of real-life folks with a driving, single-minded focus, from Olympic Gold Medalist Michael Phelps to Microsoft founder Bill Gates.

"We live in a culture," Davis writes, "that wants its love affairs obsessive, its artists obsessed, its genius fixated, its music driven, its athletes devoted. We're told that without the intensity provided by an obsession things are only done by halves. Our standards need to be extreme, our outcomes intense."

"To be obsessive is to be American, to be modern."

It was not until the late 19th century, as the scientific revolution began to grip the world like a pair of tongs does a test tube, that obsession became "a secular, medical phenomenon," Davis writes. Yet the term has never been a stable category. When does an eccentricity become an obsession? When does a quirk become a pathology? You can't understand

obsession, the professor believes, without considering "the social, cultural, historical, anthropological and political" swirl in which it lives.

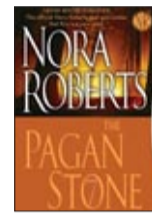
— By Julia Keller

The Pagan Stone just misses Nora Roberts' usual excellence

The Pagan Stone

➔By Nora Roberts

➔Jove (US\$7.99, via Amazon)



Nora Roberts very, very rarely disappoints. But the finale of her latest otherworldly-type trilogy fizzled somewhat.

Perhaps it was because the bad guy wasn't really a guy — or gal. Perhaps it was because Gage and Cybil weren't really romance

hero and heroine worthy. Maybe it was because Gage and Cybil's "courtship," if you can call it that, seemed to be more about the physical than romance.

And maybe some readers aren't just enlightened enough to latch onto characters who are way too casual and "cosmopolitan" about certain things.

Or maybe all the research and speculation about the big evil entity lurking in their lives just got a bit tedious and overshadowed the romance.

Regardless, *The Pagan Stone* wasn't as good as its predecessors, *Blood Brothers* and *The Hollow*.

Still, a disappointing Nora Roberts book is better than many and it's still an intriguing story. And besides, if you read the first two books, you've got to read this one.

Encouraged by successful battles against the evil thing in the earlier books, the team of six is ready to dispense of the bad entity for good. They're far from totally confident they can, but they know they have no choice.

Of course we started *The Pagan Stone* with two couples already blissful — Quinn and Cal ("Blood Brothers") and Fox and Layla ("The Hollow.") By the way, Layla was less annoying in this book.

Gage and Cybil resent the notion that fate may be forcing them toward coupledness. They acknowledge a physical attraction, but are determined not to be paired for eternity. Of course, they end up paired for eternity.

When Gage confesses his love — and it does rather charmingly come out like a confession dragged out by torture — he says, "I'm not here with you because of some grand design dictated before either of us were born. I don't feel what I feel for you because somebody, or something, decided it would be for the greater good for me to feel it. What's inside me is mine, Cybil, and it's in there because of the way you are, the way you sound, the way you smell, you look, you think...."

"I'm in love with you, and I'm almost through being annoyed about it."

And by the time you read that, you'll almost be through being annoyed at Gage and Cybil and the research that bogged down the story somewhat.

HOW IT STACKS UP

Overall rating: 3 of 5 hearts. While the research and speculation about how they can best defeat the evil entity gets cumbersome, there is still enough witty dialog and repartee to make it worth reading. Nora Roberts is incapable of writing a bad book. This one just isn't as good as most of hers.

Hunk appeal: 10. Gage is a good enough guy, and while he stumbles a bit — and is somewhat too casual — he does rally nicely at the end.

Steamy scene grade: XXXX. Doesn't stumble here.

Happily-Ever-After: OK. The evil is destroyed and the town can live without the fear that strikes every seven years. The couples are all paired and headed toward wedded bliss.

— By Leslie Patterson

Salmon better than fish pills for your health

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Eating salmon is more likely to boost a person's health than popping fish oil pills, according to new research.

While Massey's Institute of Food, Health and Human Nutrition researches found fish oil capsules and salmon were equally beneficial for increasing omega-3 levels, but eating salmon also significantly increased blood concentrations of a cancer-fighting antioxidant selenium.

The finding was particularly important for New Zealanders, who generally had lower selenium levels than other parts of the world, Associate Professor Welma Stonehouse said.

"Because soils in New Zealand are low in selenium, the selenium content in our food is low making New Zealand one of the countries with the lowest selenium status in the world," Associate Professor Welma Stonehouse said.

As well as being associated with a reduced risk of cancer, selenium is also believed to reduce the risk of heart disease.

– NZPA



Because soils in New Zealand are low in selenium, the selenium content in our food is low making New Zealand one of the countries with the lowest selenium status in the world



Heart patients more likely to die of fright

HAMBURG – A patient who receives an implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICDs) after a heart attack is more than twice as likely to die within five years from sheer anxiety over their heart condition, according to a team of German scientists.

Even patients who display no severe heart problems after the ICD is implanted have a higher risk of death owing to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) brought on by the trauma of having suffered a heart attack, they said.

Cardiologists often overlook such fears. They tell their patients they have nothing to fear but fear itself. But the patients remain terrified that another heart attack could strike at any time – and that fear increases the chances of another heart event.

The researchers from the Technische University of Munich in Germany found that PTSD symptoms in this patient population were associated with a 2.4-fold increased mortality risk.

"We were struck by the finding that patients suffering from PTSD symptoms had a substantially higher risk of mortality, and it was particularly striking that this association was strengthened after adjustment for known risk factors. This study shows there is direct evidence that PTSD independently influences mortality risk," said principal investigator Dr Karl-Heinz Ladwig.

The study was published in the November 2008 issue of *Archives of General Psychiatry*.

According to Ladwig, PTSD is often overlooked in cardiac patients. Although it is generally recognized that ICD patients should undergo psychological screening and possible treatment as part of their follow-up care, this does not always translate into clinical practice.

"In part, this may have to do with the patients themselves, many of whom are resistant to this type of care and are intent on coping by themselves, but there is no doubt that they need help," said Ladwig.

The German researchers followed 211 patients with ICDs who routinely attended a cardiac outpatient clinic after a cardiac event in 1998. The study's primary outcome was mortality risk per 1,000 person-years.

Participants were surveyed an average of 27 months after implantation, and at that time 38 reported severe PTSD symptoms and 109 reported low or moderate PTSD symptoms. During an average of 5.1 years, 45 (30.6 per cent) of the patients died: 32 of 109 patients with low or moderate symptoms and 13 of 38 with high levels of symptoms.

In their adjusted analyses, which controlled for age, sex, diabetes mellitus, measures of cardiac disease, comorbid anxiety and depression, the researchers found that PTSD symptoms substantially increased mortality risk.

Despite assurances from cardiologists that they were doing fine, some patients continued to have nagging doubts about their heart. And those patients displayed higher risk of having another heart attack.

"Therefore, the perceived severity rather than the objective severity of a cardiac condition, as determined by cardiac criteria, may be associated with PTSD," the authors write.

According to Ladwig, more research is needed to assess the behavioural and biologic pathways by which PTSD contributes to excess mortality risk in patients with ICDs.

– DPA

EU identifies more melamine risks



BRUSSELS – The European Union is to crack down on imports of foods which contain soya products and consignments of baking powder from China in a bid to stop food contaminated with the toxin melamine reaching Europe, officials in Brussels said.

The EU's executive, the European Commission, will take measures to ban the import from China of food for infants and young children containing soya and soya products, after high levels of melamine were recently found in Chinese soy bean meal," a statement said.

The measures include a complete ban on children's food containing soya, and compulsory testing on all other soya-related foods and on shipments

of baking powder (ammonium bicarbonate), the statement said.

Only foods with less than 2.5 milligrams of melamine per kilo of foodstuff will be allowed into the EU.

The EU imported an estimated 68,000 tons of soya products from China in 2007, with a value of some 34 million euros (NZ\$80 million).

The move is the EU's latest reaction to the scandal of melamine-contaminated food in China, which has so far killed at least six children and left close to 300,000 ill in the country.

In September the commission banned the import from China of all children's foods containing any trace of milk, and imposed compulsory testing on all foods, such as chocolate, which contain milk.

– DPA

Are your hormones controlling you?

30 PLUS is a scientifically-formulated, natural supplement for women of all ages. A large percentage of women can experience hormonal fluctuations that dramatically affect their every day lives and relationships with friends and family. This can result in issues with:

- Anger
- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Lack of energy
- Stress
- Emotional outbursts
- Weepiness
- Nervous tension
- Oestrogen Dominance
- Disturbed sleep

These symptoms are often put down to working too hard, children or relationship troubles. The interesting aspect of these issues is that they are often related to abnormal hormonal balance or oestrogen dominance.

30 PLUS was developed by an Australian Naturopath to assist women maintain normal hormone balance. **30 PLUS** combines the internationally studied and proven effectiveness of *Cimicifuga racemosa* with natural amino acids, nutrients and vitamins.



Lisa Curry MBE, Olympian, Business woman and mother of three recommends 30 Plus.

Available from Pharmacies and Health Stores.

For more information ph: Apotex NZ Ltd: 0800 657 876 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm or email info@phealth.co.nz. Distributed by Pharma Health NZ Ltd, PO Box 15 185, Auckland. Supplementary to and not a replacement for a balanced diet. Use only as directed and if symptoms persist see your health professional.



TAPS MA 8518

NZ website implicated in global Microsoft piracy scam

WELLINGTON, DEC 5 – Microsoft says a New Zealand-based website has been selling counterfeit software across four continents, shipping the software from China.

The American software giant has mounted 63 legal actions in 12 countries as part of a worldwide crackdown on software piracy.

Lawyer Matt Lundy told the *San Francisco Chronicle* most of the 63 actions involved counterfeit versions of Windows XP or its components.

The fact that small piracy operations have been able to extend their reach globally through the internet, was “very alarming”, Mr Lundy said.

A Microsoft spokesman told NZPA there were two separate international investigations against individuals based in Auckland selling high-quality counterfeit software – both likely sourced from China.

Both were alleged to have sold through internet auction site TradeMe.

TradeMe spokesman Mike O’Donnell, told NZPA they had noticed increasing sales of Microsoft and Adobe products by specific members, so it asked for, and was shown receipts for the software.

“They looked okay, and we checked with Microsoft’s director of intellectual property, who confirmed they were okay, so we let them continue to trade,” said Mr O’Donnell.

“Later, Microsoft raised other concerns about the same members, and we consequently banned them.”

Offering counterfeit items on TradeMe was a breach of the website’s conditions, he said.

People who showed they held intellectual property rights could alert TradeMe to counterfeit material, and obtain a copy of the audit trail for use in prosecutions.

Microsoft said an Australasian investigation was made into dlive Ltd, Xu Lei and Liao Yaopei, between July 2007 and October 2008, after people who had purchased software on TradeMe found it did not work.

The software included high-quality copies of Microsoft’s Windows Vista Business, Office Profes-

sional 2007, Office Professional 2003 and Windows XP Professional.

In a statement Microsoft quoted Tina Tweedie, a small business owner who purchased her software online from Lei: “I assumed I was buying the genuine thing”. “But when I loaded the software I realised that I had been duped into buying counterfeit. This had real financial implications for me and my business.”

The second case followed a nine-month international investigation against three Auckland men, Jun Li, Gong Qi and Jingtao Jin, who were allegedly offering Microsoft software products over internet auction sites, including TradeMe, OZtion, and iOffer.

Many consumer complaints were filed on TradeMe and iOffer against the reseller, and Microsoft bought a sample of 27 items of software, which was all high-quality counterfeit software.

The recommended retail value for that sample alone was over \$NZ22,000.

“As part of its follow-up investigation in this case, Microsoft learned that the Auckland-based auctioneers sold high-quality counterfeit Microsoft Windows and Office software to unsuspecting consumers in Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the US and shipped it directly from China,” Microsoft’s spokesman said.

This week, Li agreed to a High Court judgement for damages in the amount of \$100,000 and requiring him to refrain from infringing Microsoft’s copyright, engaging in misleading and deceptive conduct in the course of trade, and to deliver up to Microsoft all infringing product in his possession, and pay Microsoft’s legal costs.

So far there has been no judicial determination for Qi and Jin.

In both cases, Microsoft obtained High Court orders freezing bank accounts and assets, and requiring both sets of traders to cease trading in counterfeit Microsoft products until the claims of copyright infringement are investigated.

– NZPA



New Storm is missing magic touch

By Eric Benderoff

With the touch-screen Storm, Research In Motion Ltd. offers a response to Apple Inc.’s iPhone. Unfortunately, the Storm is more like a flurry, failing to add much more than a trace of innovation.

If you use a BlackBerry, you quickly will grasp the basics of how to work this phone. But if you’re a smart-phone newbie – the kind of person RIM wants to lure – who’s looking for a touch-screen model, there are better choices.

The Storm is sleek and offers nice multimedia functions; videos look great. But navigating the phone can be cumbersome.

The faithful BlackBerry user may be better off with the Bold, another RIM model with multimedia muscle plus two fast network connections.

THE STORM

I was disappointed during my first few hours using the BlackBerry Storm, but I started to get comfortable the more I relied on it for messaging.

But let’s get right to the point: The touch controls on the Storm do not compare with the more responsive iPhone or Google phone. RIM should have included a trackball with the touch controls, like HTC did with the Google phone.

Navigating the Storm is challenging because BlackBerry software is designed for a trackball or scroll wheel, and RIM barely changed the interface here. An example: When you want to reply to an e-mail, you hit the menu key to bring up the familiar list of messaging options. The “reply” button is between “save” and “forward,” both of which I frequently hit instead, leading to frustrating back-tracking. A trackball would have alleviated this problem.

The keyboard uses a technology called SurePress,

also called “clickable” typing, to simulate the feel of a virtual keyboard.

At first, I thought I was going to break the phone when I typed. As I became more sure-fingered, my typing became more accurate. But it’s not as good as the iPhone’s approach or a physical keyboard.

Also, there are three different keyboard styles on this phone, which is two too many (on the iPhone, a QWERTY keyboard appears in the vertical position):

▶ A QWERTY keypad opens when the phone is held horizontally.

▶ Vertically, you have a choice of a “sure type” key-



board, where the “q” and “w” share one key.

▶ You also can use a “multi-tap” keyboard, which looks like a standard phone keypad.

As for pluses, the Storm is great for watching movies, thanks to its 3.25-inch screen (measured horizontally). You also can shoot video, which you can’t on the iPhone, and the 3.2-megapixel camera is better than average.

The Storm will appeal to people who must have a touch-screen phone, but I think users deep into a “crackberry” addiction would be happier with another RIM offering, the Bold.

THE BOLD

The biggest drawback to the Bold, which went on sale this month, is its \$1199 price. (Can you say “holiday sale”?)

It’s a fast, responsive device that has enough multimedia content to keep road warriors entertained in a pinch. The keyboard is nice and firm, but I did find it a little slick.

Navigating through applications and e-mail with the trackball is much faster on the Bold than the touch-controlled Storm. This is a phone that remains true to its roots with impressive results.

It’s also a nice media phone; videos, music and photos looked good. The camera offers only 2 megapixels, but you can shoot videos.

As with the Storm, setting up my corporate e-mail was simple. (I didn’t even need help from IT.) I had more trouble accessing my personal Web-based e-mail, but I did get it to work.

The phone fits nicely in your palm, and typing messages with one hand is a breeze. It runs on Vodafone’s high-speed 3G network, and you can access Wi-Fi networks, which you can’t on the Storm.

If you’re looking for a new BlackBerry, my choice would be the Bold. (Is a sale on the way?)

Nanomaterials may pose serious health risk

Minuscule nanoparticles added to consumer products increasingly may be swarming through the body and threatening organs like the liver, U.S. scientists fear.

“The smaller a particle, the further it can travel through tissue, along airways or in blood vessels,” Dr. Adnan Nasir, a clinical assistant professor of dermatology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, told *The New York Times*.

“Especially if the nanoparticles are indestructible and accumulate and are not metabolized, if you accumulate them in the organs, the organs could fail,” he said.

Even when made of inert elements, nanomaterials take on unique properties, compared with their larger counterparts, due to their small size and large surface area, research suggests.

Animal studies indicate nanoparticles can penetrate cells and tissues, move through the body and brain and cause biochemical damage. They have also been linked to testicular cancer and cardiovascular system damage and may pose an environmental hazard, studies suggest.

Their use in lotions and creams – particularly in sunscreen lotions – has drawn the most critical attention, the *Times* said.

Consumer Reports magazine commissioned a study that found mineral nanoparticles in five sunscreens, even though four of the companies denied using them.

A separate study by the U.S. Commerce Department’s National Institute of Standards and Technology found stoves and toaster ovens emit ultrafine particles of 2 to 30 nanometres.



Rising to the task

Great loaves are easy when you have the right supplies and ingredients on hand

By Lisa Futterman

Baking bread at home can be one of the most soulful, satisfying ways to spend an afternoon – especially when successes are shared at the dinner or breakfast table, or as gifts for neighbours and family.

When riffing with just four basic ingredients – yeast, water, flour and salt – technique and tools become more important.

We've come up with a list of essential equipment for frustration-free home baking with professional results. And we asked bread experts to share a few of their best tips for breadmaking.

Chef Laurent Gras and his team bake up to seven types of bread per day for dinner service at L20 in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighbourhood. His secret for creating crisp-crust, deeply coloured loaves?

"Simply place a cast-iron pan in the bottom of the oven and pour water in to create some steam," Laurent said. This trick replicates the steam-injected professional ovens that large bakeries often use.

Rich Labriola, owner of Labriola Baking Co., agreed that steam is critical for artisanal bread baking. A high level of moisture in the oven allows the loaves to expand evenly while baking. But a common problem for home bakers is overmixing the dough.

"You are very unlikely to overdevelop the gluten in the dough if you mix by hand, but that idea keeps people from baking because they might think breadmaking is too tiring," he said. Careful use of an electric mixer will prevent the tight, dense interior created by too much kneading.

"An undermixed loaf may not be the most beautiful, but will be the best tasting," Labriola added.

THE TOP TOOLS ...

Most of these products can be found in kitchenware shops as well as many larger department stores. Also

check out specialty baking sites such as kingarthurfour.com and kitchenkapers.com.

► **Deep mixing bowls** A baker can never have enough bowls, and the luxury of not washing the same bowl over and over makes investing in several large ones worth it. We recommend glass, ceramic or stainless steel for versatility and functionality.

Dough-rising containers: Square plastic containers with tight fitting lids take up less room in the fridge while the dough is rising. Plus you can watch the volume increase incrementally if the sides are marked with graduations. Two quarts is a practical size. Buy a few extra to stack and store flours and sugars.

► **Kneading board** A wooden surface is best for kneading because it absorbs excess moisture from the dough. Look for a large (more than 30cm wide) board with an edge that hooks over the counter to keep it from creeping all over.

► **Board scraper** This metal-bladed tool is perfect for cutting yeast doughs into the proper pieces when portioning and shaping rolls and loaves.

► **Heavy-duty electric mixer with dough hook** The hook attachment is perfectly engineered to knead dough thoroughly without missing pockets of flour. A strong motor is a necessity when kneading heavy doughs. Hand mixers do not have enough power for bread doughs. A 5-litre bowl will be spacious enough for any job without allowing dry ingredients to escape and mess up your counter.

► **Baking stone** A stone creates a more even temperature and the crunchy-chewy crust that bakers seek. Also known as a pizza stone, this large porous tile can be left in the bottom of the oven at all times to even the heat. Labriola recommends baking bread directly on the stone. "Be sure to heat the oven longer," Labriola said, "to ensure that the stone is heated through to become a good source of bottom heat."

► **Heavy baking pans** Spring for long-lasting professional grade aluminium. Inexpensive baking sheets and loaf pans cause scorched crusts and uneven baking. Keep in mind that a dark-coloured pan will create a darker crust.

► **Silicone pastry brush** The silicone revolution has improved the humble baking brush, making it sturdy (no lost bristles), heat resistant, odour-free and dishwasher-safe. We use ours for greasing pans and glazing loaves before, during and after baking.

► **Bread knife** A good-quality serrated knife allows you to enjoy the loaves you toiled over without crushing and tearing. Try to resist cutting a loaf of bread until it is cool to the touch; otherwise it might have a gummy interior.

► **Bread machine** Don't toss out your electric bread machine in favour of making bread by hand. While we don't usually bake in it, the machine does a thorough job of kneading the dough to save some elbow grease and puts pizza dough well within reach for a weeknight treat.

... AND IN THE PANTRY

► **Flour** Home bakers should keep unbleached, all-purpose flour and bread flour on hand. Bread flour is high in gluten (protein) and results in a stretchier dough and chewier result than with all-purpose flour – don't just substitute willy-nilly or your tender loaves will end up tough. Whole-wheat flour is very low in gluten, but high in flavour and fibre. Try replacing ½ a cup of the all-purpose flour with whole-wheat flour in favourite recipes. Keep all whole-grain products in the freezer to prevent them from going rancid.

► **Yeast** Although professional bakers often prefer yeast in a cake form, we recommend active dry yeast as an easy-to-use ingredient. If you plan on baking frequently, buy a jar of the dry yeast and keep it in the freezer. Avoid "rapid-rise" yeasts unless you are in a big hurry – a fast rise can be uneven and unpredictable.

► **Kosher salt** Easy to find and easy to measure, this ingredient is the salt of choice for most professionals. Don't leave out the salt in a yeast-leavened recipe – it not only improves flavour but also prevents the dough from rising uncontrollably.

GRISSINI

This recipe for Italian breadsticks is adapted from Nick Malgieri's new book, *The Modern Baker* (US\$23 via [Amazon](#)). Grissini, he writes, are a specialty of Piemonte, Italy. He also explains the use of cold and warm water in this recipe: "Warm water is necessary to dissolve dry yeast, but the addition of the cold water afterward prevents the dough from overheating while being mixed."

Prep: 25 minutes

Rise: 2 hours

Cook: 22 minutes

Makes: 24 breadsticks

2 cups unbleached flour

3 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or lard

1 teaspoon salt

2 1/2 teaspoons (1 envelope) active dry yeast

1/3 cup warm water, about 43 degrees C (most taps are set to 55 max)

1/3 cup cold water

Cornmeal

1. Combine the flour, oil and salt in a food processor; pulse 10-15 times to incorporate the fat. Whisk the yeast into the warm water; add the mixture to the bowl. Pulse very quickly 2-3 times. Add the cold water; pulse until the dough forms a ball. Pulse continuously 10 seconds.

2. Transfer dough to an oiled bowl, turning to coat all sides. Cover bowl with plastic wrap; let rise at room temperature until doubled, about 1 hour. Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured work surface; fold it over on itself several times to deflate. Return dough to bowl; cover. Refrigerate dough 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

3. Lightly dust 2 baking sheets with cornmeal; set aside. Set racks to upper and lower thirds of the oven; heat to 160 degrees C. Remove dough from the refrigerator; scrape onto a floured work surface. Press dough to deflate; press into a square. Cut into 4 smaller squares. Cut each of the squares into 6 equal strips.

4. Roll each of the strips to make a thin strand about 15 inches long; set on pan. (If the dough gets sticky, flour your hands.) Bake 12 minutes; turn pans for even cooking, if necessary. Bake until evenly gold and crisp, 10 minutes.

Nutrition information

Per breadstick: 56 calories, 33 percent of calories from fat, 2 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 8 g carbohydrates, 1 g protein, 97 mg sodium, 0 g fibre



For more information on the new Cayenne Diesel contact your Official Porsche Centre or visit www.porsche.co.nz

Same fuel. Different spirit.

The new Cayenne Diesel.



PORSCHE

GILTRAP PRESTIGE Auckland Ph 09 92 00 911
CONTINENTAL CAR SERVICES Auckland Ph 09 52 68 991
ARMSTRONG PRESTIGE Wellington Ph 04 38 48 779
ARCHIBALDS Christchurch Ph 03 37 75 200
SOUTHERN EUROPEAN Dunedin Ph 03 45 61 010

The ultimate still life

BUILT-IN IMAGE STABILISATION

E-520



The compact Olympus E-520 features a powerful built-in Image Stabilisation system. Shoot sharp images with vibrant colour at low light, without needing a tripod. With the built-in stabiliser you can use it with any of the Olympus Zuiko digital specific lenses, achieving up to 33x zoom over a wide range of focal lengths†. With new auto focus Live View technology and superb image quality, the E-520 is ideal, whether you're a photography enthusiast or it's your first time with a Digital SLR.

†Olympus recommends use with the upcoming 9-18mm, 14-42mm, 40-150mm and 70-300mm lenses

 **H. E. Perry Limited**
Imaging Supplies

Available from all leading photographic and specialty stores

For further information please contact: HE Perry Limited. Phone 0800 10 33 88. Email sales@heperry.co.nz.

OLYMPUS

Strangely liberated

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](#).



Just as the sun was sinking beyond Lake Taupo, behind the peaks of Tuhahua and Pukepapu, the captives were conducted back to their prison. They were not to leave it again till the tops of the Wahiti Ranges were lit with the first fires of day.

They had one night in which to prepare for death. Overcome as they were with horror and fatigue, they took their last meal together.

"We shall need all our strength," Glenarvan had said, "to look death in the face. We must show these savages how Europeans can die."

The meal ended. Lady Helena repeated the evening prayer aloud, her companions, bare-headed, repeated it after her. Who does not turn his thoughts toward God in the hour of death? This done, the prisoners embraced each other. Mary Grant and Helena, in a corner of the hut, lay down on a mat. Sleep, which keeps all sorrow in abeyance, soon weighed down their eyelids; they slept in each other's arms, overcome by exhaustion and prolonged watching.

Then Glenarvan, taking his friends aside, said: "My dear friends, our lives and the lives of these poor women are in God's hands. If it is decreed that we die to-morrow, let us die bravely, like Christian men, ready to appear without terror before the Supreme Judge. God, who reads our hearts, knows that we had a noble end in view. If death awaits us instead of success, it is by His will. Stern as the decree may seem, I will not repine. But death here, means not death only, it means torture, insult, perhaps, and here are two ladies —"

Glenarvan's voice, firm till now, faltered. He was silent a moment, and having overcome his emotion, he said, addressing the young captain:

"John, you have promised Mary what I promised Lady Helena. What is your plan?"

"I believe," said John, "that in the sight of God I have a right to fulfil that promise."

"Yes, John; but we are unarmed."

"No!" replied John, showing him a dagger. "I snatched it from Kara-tete when he fell at your feet. My Lord, whichever of us survives the other will fulfil the wish of Lady Helena and Mary Grant."

After these words were said, a profound silence ensued. At last the Major said: "My friends, keep that to the last moment. I am not an advocate of irremediable measures."

"I did not speak for ourselves," said Glenarvan. "Be it as it may, we can face death! Had we been alone, I should ere now have cried, 'My friends, let us make an effort. Let us attack these wretches!' But with these poor girls . . ."

At this moment John raised the mat, and counted twenty-five natives keeping guard on the Ware-Atoua. A great fire had been lighted, and its lurid glow threw into strong relief the irregular outlines of the "pah." Some of the savages were sitting round the brazier; the others standing motionless, their black outlines relieved against the clear background of flame. But they all kept watchful guard on the hut confided to their care.

It has been said that between a vigilant jailer and a prisoner who wishes to escape, the chances are in favour of the prisoner; the fact is,

the interest of the one is keener than that of the other. The jailer may forget that he is on guard; the prisoner never forgets that he is guarded. The captive thinks oftener of escaping than the jailer of preventing his flight, and hence we hear of frequent and wonderful escapes.

But in the present instance hatred and revenge were the jailers — not an indifferent warder; the prisoners were not bound, but it was because bonds were useless when five-and-twenty men were watching the only egress from the Ware-Atoua.

This house, with its back to the rock which closed the fortress, was only accessible by a long, narrow promontory which joined it in front to the plateau on which the "pah" was erected. On its two other sides rose pointed rocks, which jutted out over an abyss a hundred feet deep. On that side descent was impossible, and had it been possible, the bottom was shut in by the enormous rock. The only outlet was the regular door of the Ware-Atoua, and the Maoris guarded the promontory which united it to the "pah" like a drawbridge. All escape was thus hopeless, and Glenarvan having tried the walls for the twentieth time, was compelled to acknowledge that it was so.

The hours of this night, wretched as they were, slipped away. Thick darkness had settled on the mountain. Neither moon nor stars pierced the gloom. Some gusts of wind whistled by the sides of the "pah," and the posts of the house creaked: the fire outside revived with the puffs of wind, and the flames sent fitful gleams into the interior of Ware-Atoua. The group of prisoners was lit up for a moment; they were absorbed in their last thoughts, and a deathlike silence reigned in the hut.

It might have been about four o'clock in the morning when the Major's attention was called to a slight noise which seemed to

come from the foundation of the posts in the wall of the hut which abutted on the rock. McNabbs was at first indifferent, but finding the noise continue, he listened; then his curiosity was aroused, and he put his ear to the ground; it sounded as if someone was scraping or hollowing out the ground outside.

As soon as he was sure of it, he crept over to Glenarvan and John Mangles, and startling them from their melancholy thoughts, led them to the end of the hut.

"Listen," said he, motioning them to stoop.

The scratching became more and more audible; they could hear the little stones grate on a hard body and roll away.

"Some animal in his burrow," said John Mangles.

Glenarvan struck his forehead.

"Who knows?" said he, "it might be a man."

"Animal or man," answered the Major, "I will soon find out!"

Wilson and Olbinett joined their companions, and all united to dig through the wall — John with his dagger, the others with stones taken from the ground, or with their nails, while Mulrady, stretched along the ground, watched the native guard through a crevice of the matting.

These savages sitting motionless around the fire, suspected nothing of what was going on twenty feet off.

The soil was light and friable, and below lay a bed of silicious tufa; therefore, even without tools, the aperture deepened quickly. It soon became evident that a man, or men, clinging to the sides of the "pah," were cutting a passage into its exterior wall. What could be the object? Did they know of the existence of the prisoners, or was it some private enterprise that led to the undertaking?

The prisoners redoubled their efforts. Their fingers bled, but still they worked on; after half an hour they had gone three feet deep; they perceived by the increased sharpness of the sounds that only a thin layer of earth prevented immediate communication.

Some minutes more passed, and the Major withdrew his hand from the stroke of a sharp blade. He suppressed a cry.

John Mangles, inserting the blade of his poniard, avoided the knife which now protruded above the soil, but seized the hand that wielded it.



MOLLIES INVITES YOU TO A DISTINCTIVE DINING EXPERIENCE
Nestled in St Mary's Bay, the "Dining Room" at Mollies is now open to the public for a relaxed, gourmet dining experience. With elegant cuisine and a selection of the finest wines, the a la carte and degustation menus feature the best of local produce, prepared by Mollies talented and creative young team of Kiwi chefs.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are available and reservations are recommended.