



Auckland

Sat: 26°/16° Sun: 25°/19°

Hamilton

Sat: 30°/13° Sun: 28°/15°

Wellington

Sat: 22°/16° Sun: 21°/17°

Christchurch

Sat: 26°/14° Sun: 34°/16°

Queenstown

Sat: 26°/15° Sun: 24°/14°

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Sat: 19°/12° Sun: 32°/16°

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# Another immigration and police blunder

By Ian Wishart

There's new information today about an embarrassing border security blunder and subsequent cover-up by New Zealand Police Headquarters and Immigration officials.

After an Official Information enquiry, the NZ Immigration Service has today admitted its security division never bothered to translate documents that prove two immigrants had links to the Islamic terror group that carried out the Mumbai massacres.

Instead of investigating the men and translating the incriminating documents and video evidence they'd been given, the Department of Labour, which oversees the Immigration Service, instead began investigating the man who'd tipped them off, and ruined his business in the process.

The businessman, Hamilton restaurateur Javed Chaudhry, had the tables turned on him – he says because the two terror trainees gained support from Muslim Labour party officials who helped them get a sympathetic hearing from the Department of Labour's employment relations division.

After handing over letters the two migrants had written in Urdu, discussing their involvement with the Lashkar e Taiba and its terrorist training camps, Chaudhry had expected police and immigration officials to urgently translate the documents and see for themselves. He hadn't expected an employment relations lawsuit instead.

While a subsequent employment authority ruling

determined Chaudhry had not paid the men enough and fined him, it rubbished claims that the men were "prisoners" or "slaves" of the restaurant owner.

Despite that ruling in his favour, documents provided to *TGIF Edition* show that the Department of Labour tried to downplay an *Investigate* magazine story on the men in October 2007 by telling the then Minister, Labour's David Cunliffe, that it was "... confirmed Mr Chaudhry treated Mr Rehman and Mr Anwar very badly; they were, in effect, Mr Chaudhry's prisoners'."

Cunliffe told journalists "I am in the process of receiving and considering briefs from Department of Labour officials on this matter... a gentleman, wherever they come from, whatever their name sounds like, is innocent until proven guilty."

But under Cunliffe's watch, there was apparently no chance of the men being "proven guilty", because his department point bank refused to read the evidence, even though *Investigate* magazine had very helpfully published them on the internet.

[Continue reading](#)

## Bad Moos: cows in backyard

**DUNEDIN, FEB 6** – A Dunedin woman woken by loud mooing was shocked to find a small herd of cows in her backyard early this morning.

Police were called to the address in suburban Outram by the startled resident shortly before 5am, Senior Sergeant Brian Ben said.

The cows were thought to have escaped from a rodeo to be held at nearby showgrounds today, he said.

"We suspect that some of the animals are having a bit of a feed before they go and take the cowboys for a ride," Mr Ben said he was "thinking of sending some policemen out there to start the rodeo early" but called animal control instead.

He did not know if the animals had been deliberately let loose.

– NZPA

## Dogs cause beach clashes

By Ian Wishart

Dog control officers are worried about clashes between families and dog owners at Auckland's Muriwai Beach, amid revelations of pit-bulls being let off the leash around young children, and fighting with other dogs.

Picnic areas just inland from Muriwai Beach itself carry signs warning that dogs must be on leads at all times, yet a large number of families with toddlers playing in shallow sandy tidal pools have complained of owners letting their dogs off the leash and unmuzzled.

"I'm furious," one mother told *TGIF* after she and her two year old daughter were confronted by two loose pit bulls. "On another occasion we were here, we asked these guys walking along the ridge with their large dog not to send it down by the children in the water, but he just told us to get over it and sent his dog down anyway."

"Every dog-owner has the same story, 'oh, my dog's OK'. But the papers are full of attacks by dogs whose owners thought they were 'OK'. And what happens if the loose mutt comes across someone else's loose mutt?"

Talking to families using the area, *TGIF* was told of exactly that happening.

"These two dogs ended up in a horrible fight," said one father who didn't want to be named. "The kids were terrified. We haven't been back for six weeks. It's a tragedy waiting to happen."

"I saw these men come across the dune with two pit bulls on chains," said one woman, "and the dogs were fair dragging them. The guys, and they'd be in their 20s, were having a hard

time holding them. Yet then they took the chains off and the dogs just fired past all the kids down here, and didn't come back when called. I told one of the men to get his dog back on the leash, but the dog wouldn't come. And they want us to believe they can control them?"

The Rodney District Council, which administers Muriwai, confirmed it's had an increase in complaints of potentially dangerous dogs being set loose at the beach and scaring beachgoers, but spokesman David Anderson said the council was also getting complaints from dog-owners about the leash restrictions, so there was growing tension.

"Our dog rangers have recognized there's a problem," he told the paper, "and we've stepped up patrols, reminding owners that their animals must remain on leads. We'll be keeping up that presence this year."

Meanwhile, one daycare centre in the Helensville area is showing dog safety videos to toddlers, after a number of young children were bitten by dogs over the summer break.



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## off BEAT

### EDUCATION MINISTER CAN'T SPELL

**LONDON, Feb. 6 (UPI)**— British Schools Minister Jim Knight said the spelling errors that litter his past blog posts were the result of his failure to proof read.

Knight, a member of Parliament for the Labour party, misspelled words including received, archaeological, maintenance, pensioners, convinced, achieving and others, *The Daily Mail* reported today.

"When I was at school, the teachers always told me to check my work," said Knight, who was educated at the prestigious Eltham College and the University of Cambridge's Fitzwilliam College.

"While my spelling is generally pretty good, I need to focus more on checking."

"He will be disappointed with his efforts in class but I'm sure he'll make every effort to improve now teacher has noticed he's falling behind," Conservative education spokesman Rob Wilson jokingly said of Knight.

### DIAMOND RING LOST AT REST STOP RETURNED

**FLORENCE, Ky., Feb. 5 (UPI)**— An Ohio woman is getting back a US\$24,000 diamond ring she lost at a Kentucky highway rest stop, officials say.

The ring's owner, Phyllis Steelsmith, 57, of Columbus, Ohio, discovered she had left the ring behind on New Year's Day at the Interstate 75 Welcome Center in Florence, Ky., and had given it up for lost when she was contacted with good news, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* reported yesterday.

Eileen Dillon of Trenton, Mich., like Steelsmith, had stopped at the Welcome Center on her way to Florida and spotted the ring on the floor, thinking it was a piece of costume jewelry. But weeks later when she had it appraised and discovered its value, she immediately contacted the manager of the rest stop, Jeff Thoke of the Kentucky Department of Travel.

Thoke knew that Steelsmith had reported the ring as missing and that a State Farm Insurance Co. adjuster had come to rest stop looking for it, but the adjuster hadn't left his name. Using the Internet, Thoke succeeded in tracking down the right insurance agent, and Steelsmith Thursday was awaiting return of her diamond ring, the *Enquirer* said.

### RESTAURANT PATRONS DECIDE OWN CHARGES



**LONDON, Feb. 5 (UPI)**— A London restaurant said it has begun a monthlong promotion to allow customers to skip the bill and pay only what they feel their meal was worth.

The Little Bay restaurant said all patrons who dine during the rest of February will be asked to pay whatever they consider to be a fair amount instead of receiving a bill, Sky News reported.

Little Bay owner Peter Ilic said the promotion is aimed at easing the stress of the economic downturn.

"Anything between a penny and 50 pounds (\$72) will make me happy, it's entirely up to the customer to decide," Ilic said. "It just seemed the right thing to do with everyone under the cosh and feeling pretty miserable."

"Customers have already paid 20 percent more than the original price," the owner said. "People want to be polite and would be embarrassed not to pay enough."

### JFK'S OVERDUE BOOK TO GO ON DISPLAY

**BOSTON, Feb. 5 (UPI)**— The John F. Kennedy Library in Boston said it plans to display a Library of Congress book thought to have been borrowed and never returned by Kennedy.

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum officials said the book, *A. Lincoln* by Ross F. Lockridge, was discovered in Kennedy's pre-presidential papers and is thought to have been borrowed from the Library of Congress while he was serving as a U.S. senator in the 1950s, *The Boston Globe* reported.

Tom McNaught, a spokesman for the library, said the tome had just always been assumed to have been one of his books but the library was recently informed that it had been checked out since he was a senator and he had just kept it.

The library said the tome will be displayed later this month as part of a weeklong President's Day celebration before it is returned to the Library of Congress, which currently lists the Lincoln biography as missing on its online catalogue.

# Security guard helped Aim's killer

**WELLINGTON, FEB 6**—The security guard on duty at a Taupo college the night Karen Aim's beaten body was found was known to murderer Jahche Broughton and has been convicted of helping the teen cover up evidence of an earlier bashing.

Leigh Herewini, 37, was the former partner of Broughton's aunt and would often take the 14-year-old on security rounds with him, the *New Zealand Herald* reported.

Yesterday, Broughton, now 15, pleaded guilty at a pre-trial hearing in the High Court at Auckland to the murder of Ms Aim, a Scottish backpacker.

He had been due to stand trial in Rotorua next week. He also pleaded guilty to wounding a 17-year-old girl with intent to cause her grievous bodily harm less than two weeks before he killed Ms Aim.

On January 5 last year, Broughton turned up at Herewini's house after bashing the 17-year-old.

The girl had left a party and started walking home when Broughton tackled her and repeatedly beat her with a rock, stopping only to pick up her handbag.

The girl, who had 10 head wounds that required more than 30 stitches, staggered to a nearby house for help.

Broughton then went to Herewini's house, where the guard helped to stash the girl's stolen pink handbag.



Jahche Broughton, the 15 year old accused of killing Scottish tourist Karen Aim. NZPA / John Cowpland

Herewini was working the night Ms Aim was murdered and helped to cordon off the scene. He was charged with being an accessory after the fact and sentenced to five months' community detention and six months' supervision.

The case, in Rotorua in November, was not covered by the media because details of his part in the crime were suppressed for fear they would prejudice Broughton's trial. Suppression orders were lifted yesterday following the young killer's guilty plea.

Herewini testified against Broughton during a depositions hearing in September.

A summary of facts, released at court yesterday, said that on the night of the first attack, Broughton arrived at Herewini's house with blood on his T-shirt, hands and under an armpit. He told Herewini he had been in a fight at a party.

Herewini helped Broughton clean up and the pair then went through the victim's handbag, which Broughton later told Herewini he had found on a footpath.

They each took \$20 from the girl's wallet before Herewini hid the handbag in bush at the back of his property.

He then took the boy home. Police were in his driveway when he returned after they had used a dog to trace the scent from the scene of the attack on the 17-year-old.

Three days later Herewini disposed of the handbag near a sewerage plant. He later took police to the location.

On the night of Ms Aim's murder, Herewini was notified of an alarm going off at Taupo Nui-A-Tia College.

He called police after finding smashed windows at the school. An officer found Ms Aim unconscious nearby.

— NZPA



A crowd gathers outside the Whare Rununga on the Treaty grounds, for the start of the dawn service on Waitangi Day, Waitangi, Bay of Islands. NZPA / Wayne Drought

# Prime Minister bounces back after mugging

**WAITANGI, FEB 6** — Prime Minister John Key returned to Waitangi at dawn today, a day after he was attacked as he entered Te Tii Waitangi Marae, saying the early morning church service was another small step towards racial harmony in New Zealand.

Mr Key had vowed that yesterday's attack would not stop him returning to Waitangi.

Two Far North men, aged 33 and 19, were later remanded on bail after appearing in Kaikohe District Court facing a joint charge of assault.

Today at the historic Whare Rununga meeting house on the Treaty House grounds Mr Key led a congregation of about 1500 people in a prayer as the skies lightened over Waitangi.

It was the first time in a decade a National Prime Minister had been at the service. Labour Prime Minister Helen Clark consistently refused to attend, saying she was "not a morning person."

Security was tight for Mr Key and for the Maori King Tuheitia in the first visit to the Treaty of Waitangi commemorations by a Maori king for many years.

Soon after the congregation was told the service was not a political service and that political arguments should stay at the lower Te Tii marae, Mr Key led the prayer.

"As we gather here this morning on this most historic of sites at dawn, we can give thanks.

"We give thanks to the fact that our country is still one of the most amazing places in the world to live, where our oceans are teeming with fish, where our land is arable and can deliver for our people, where we see opportunities for all New Zealanders and where we can live in peace.

"We also give thanks for those who came and signed the treaty 169 years ago, those iwi leaders who showed two of the most important human characteristics — hope and courage.

"The hope that they could deliver on the promise of New Zealand, the belief that New Zealand could go forward — two people, shared beliefs, shared values — and the courage to take a step that they couldn't be sure would be right but that they hoped

would deliver on the promise of our land."

After the service Mr Key told the media his attendance at the service was very important.

"It is the birth place of the nation. It's a special place for New Zealand and this is just another step in the progression towards racial harmony in New Zealand.

During the service a Ngapuhi church leader referred to the Treaty of Waitangi not being signed at Waitangi.

"There is always a range of views. That is one view that is held by Ngapuhi, that it wasn't signed in English, that it was signed in Maori," Mr Key said.

He said the commemorations had a great festival atmosphere and 70,000 people were expected over the two days.

Mr Key was due to inspect the Waka House on Hobson Beach before a walkabout at the festival.

He was then to fly to Auckland for further Treaty commemorations at Manukau City.

— NZPA

## FROM FRONT PAGE

*TGIF Edition* asked under the Official Information Act for confirmation that the Immigration Service had actually translated the documents and video they were given, and asked whether independent Urdu translators had been hired or whether the Immigration Service used its own staff. *TGIF* asked for copies of any English language translations the Immigration Service holds.

But in a letter to the newspaper, the Department of Labour says:

"I can confirm that INZ did not hire independent language translators. Neither does it hold translations. Therefore I cannot release the information pursuant to section 18(e) that the information requested does not exist."

The letters, portions of which were translated by *Investigate* magazine, show Lashkar e Taiba organizers in Pakistan were keen for the organization to set up a support network in New Zealand's Muslim community.

This extract from the original *Investigate* story gives you some idea of the context:

So what do we know of Rehman?

A letter from Anwar's sister (and Rehman's cousin) Nasreen to the men in 2002 told how the family had again attended the "itjema", or annual gathering of Lashkar e Taiba, a gathering that called in members from overseas as well. Nasreen wondered whether any NZ supporters of LeT had traveled back for the meetings. According to translations supplied to the Police, Nasreen mentioned the names of several of the family members attending, including Rehman's mother Zubaida.

By way of independent corroboration, the website globalterroralert.com describes LeT's "Annual Mujahideen Conference in Pakistan. The conference was held, according to the militant group, to acquaint our brothers and sisters of the current situation [state] of Jihad."

In a second letter, a relative named Saeed Ahmad asks whether there is any representative of LeT in New Zealand, then notes that Anwar's father (also Rehman's uncle) wants both young men to establish "Lashkar e Taiba in New Zealand", by "making introductions" and extending "invitations" for local Muslims to join the group.

The Waikato restaurateur, already suspicious, was shocked to discover Rehman and Anwar had been discussing the need for young Muslims to complete military "jihad" with the businessman's teenaged sons, regaling them with stories of "training camps" in remote regions.

"He told me," one of the teenagers swore on oath in a High Court statutory declaration about Rehman, "that while studying at a madrassa, he received three months' training in a training camp in Shinkiri, and said that he fully supported what the terrorist organization and Osama bin Laden are doing.

"As he described the training to me, he mentioned that he learned to use firearms and had to survive in the forest for 1 week alone, and using the training that he had been taught..."

Another son, in his statutory declaration for the authorities, wrote:

"He has mentioned that his family are great supporters of this organization and that many of his brothers have attained training there, with one of his brothers reaching the commando stage. He mentioned that the training included the use of firearms and explosives."

That's part of what *Investigate* published.

The Lashkar e Taiba group went on to massacre nearly a hundred people in the Mumbai attacks late last year – the latest in a string of atrocities – and its members have also been arrested in Australia.

Yet David Cunliffe – now Labour's number three ranked MP and currently embroiled in the *Yang Liu cash for citizenship scandal* – rubbished *Investigate* magazine's revelations even though his own department had never investigated the actual terror link documents.

"Claims that a Pakistani man trained as a terrorist was working as a chef in New Zealand have proved to be false," Immigration Minister David Cunliffe was quoted in a trade union weekly news summary. "Cunliffe ordered an official investigation

last month after the allegations were made in the Right-wing *Investigate* magazine and latched on to by the National Party.

"The minister said yesterday that it appeared the allegations were made as the result of an employment dispute between the Pakistani man and a Waikato restaurant owner. "Investigate got it wrong again. The whole story was based on, as I am advised, information from the employer and his two sons," Cunliffe told *The Press*. "It would appear what we've got here is most probably a personal dispute between parties which *Investigate* has tried to drum up into a national security story." Asked about the magazine's claim that the man had spent time in a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, Cunliffe said: "As I'm advised there is no substance to the allegations that were made."

No substance, except 40 pages of handwritten letters discussing Lashkar e Taiba, and a videotape of the men's home back in Pakistan with relatives proudly showing Lashkar e Taiba recruitment posters belonging to one of the men.

Evidence that the Department of Labour has now admitted was *never* investigated by its security team.

To make matters even more embarrassing, there are now serious questions about the role of the Police in assisting with sweeping the controversy under the carpet.

The briefing paper to David Cunliffe from the Department of Labour reveals "New Zealand Police have informed the DoL that they have no substantial evidence" regarding the men's "involvement in terrorist activities."

"The New Zealand Police have verbally informed us that there was no substantial information to warrant concern or take the matter any further."

Assuming that the Police must have translated the documents in order to reach such a conclusion back in 2007, *TGIF Edition* applied under the Official Information Act for copies of the translations.

However, in a letter release to the newspaper yesterday, Police can only "confirm for you that my office does hold a number of letters in Urdu and a video recording supplied by Mr Chaudhry."

So, no translations.

End of story? Apparently not. Although the briefing to David Cunliffe in October 2007 claimed police had no interest in the case, the latest letter from the police refused to release any documentation to *TGIF* because:

"Unfortunately, this matter is part of an ongoing Police investigation and to disclose the information you have requested at this time may prejudice this inquiry and any potential prosecution action."

Whatever the outcome, the biggest public concern arising from this is that documentation given to police and Immigration in March 2006, containing revelations that two migrants had attended terrorist training camps with a major terror organization, had never been translated by either agency, yet both felt they had sufficient evidence to rubbish the claims and approve residency for one of the men still in the country.

As of early 2009, it appears the key documents still have not been translated, although the police have apparently re-opened a case they once told the government was closed.

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# Global business heavyweights hit Wellington

WELLINGTON, FEB 6 – Some of the biggest names in world business will be in Wellington next week to discuss and feed ideas into the Asia Pacific Economic Forum.

The first meeting of the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac) this year is expected to warn against knee-jerk regulation to combat the global financial crisis.

"We have the 21 economies of Apec represented here with senior business people from all of those economies coming in," said New Zealand delegate Tony Nowell, who chairs the group's liberalisation working group this year.

"It is a great opportunity to expose New Zealand," he said.

The delegates include Oleg Deripaska, one of the richest oligarchs in Russia, and Alexander Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russian energy giant Gazprom, which had the standoff with the Ukraine over gas supply.

Jack Ma, the boss of Alibaba Group, the world's largest online business-to-business marketplace, is attending and is seen as a big supporter of small and medium-sized businesses.

Anthony Nightingale, managing director of Hong Kong's largest private employer Jardine Matheson, is also attending along with Richard Li, chairman of telecommunications giant PCCW Ltd, and son of Li Ka-shing, the richest person of Chinese descent in the world.

Lili Wang a board member of Chinese banking giant ICBC is among the bankers attending, along with Maquarie Bank deputy chairman Mark Johnson, Andrey Kostin from Russia's VTB Bank and Jef-



frey Koo, chairman of Chinatrust Financial Holdings.

Lindsay Fox, the Australian logistics magnate who owns assets in New Zealand, is also among the 200 delegates expected at the meeting, which is closed.

The group generally releases a communique, expected on Thursday, and letters to senior officials at Apec.

"It is that twilight zone between business and diplomacy," Mr Nowell said.

Abac is expected to warn governments not to give in to pressures for short-term regulatory and protectionist solutions to the financial crisis.

But equally it is likely to call for bold measures to stimulate economic activity.

Abac New Zealand will support discussion of the concept of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, and enlargement of the Trans-Pacific Economic Partnership.

The New Zealand delegates are John Blackham, chief executive of XSOL Ltd, Mr Nowell, and Gary Judd, chairman of ASB Bank.

Abac comprises three members from each of the 21 Apec economies, appointed by leaders in each economy.

Other topics expected to come up are energy security and climate change, doing business across borders, intellectual property, food security, labour mobility, supply chain logistics and investment.

The Wellington meeting will be preceded by a joint Abac/Apec workshop on the theme of trading across borders.

It is the first meeting of the group in New Zealand since 2004.

— NZPA



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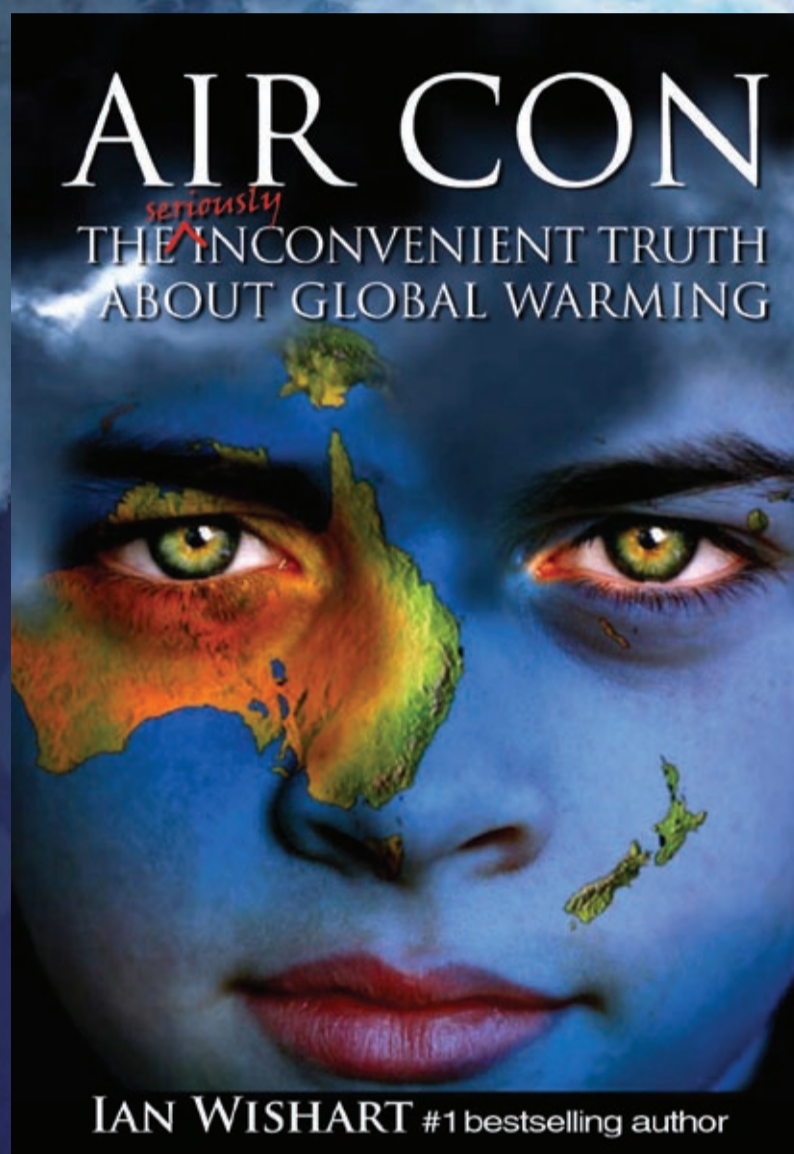
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## Editorial

# How much detail do we need?

A story on the next pages of this newspaper raises some fascinating questions about how far we should go in exposing ourselves to evil to learn about it.

How much of something bad is good for educational purposes?

In this particular case, reprints of old Nazi era newspapers that form part of an educational series on the evils of Hitler's Third Reich have been seized off German newsstands this week, because of sensitivities that they may be used to glorify Nazism and anti-semitism.

The publishers argue that Germans need to face their demons and learn about the past, but authorities disagree.

It once again highlights the difficulties of educating people about evil.

In New Zealand, it is against the law for the news media to report the precise details of a suicide, for fear that someone in a vulnerable state of mind might read the details and try it for themselves.

The same logic, however, can presumably be applied to reading or viewing other potentially harmful material that might strike other vulnerable people in different ways.

For example, it's long been known that television violence, and in particular sexual violence, can not only desensitize people but provoke copycat attacks.

Violent or sexually suggestive video games cause similar responses.

If something is powerful enough to evoke visceral, sometimes even subconscious, reactions among people, then we should treat it with care. Nazism did not

arise in a vacuum. It touched a chord with millions of people in hard economic times similar to those we now face.

The fewer people who are exposed to the charismatic oratory and persuasive skills of the Nazis, the less likely their ideas are to take root again.

The suggestion that we need to know the gory detail of Nazism in order to know that its general principles were evil, is like saying we need to know the gory details of what a pedophile does in order to know whether his behaviour is evil.

No we don't. We can accept the big picture and leave the details for those who have a duty to know.

Words, images, actions. All these things have power. Sometimes even long after those who wrote them are dead.

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## Comment

# Bush's Iraq dream comes true

By Richard Tomkins

Following years of mentoring by U.S. advisers and increasing confidence in their own capabilities, Iraqi Security Forces stood front-and-centre last week in the country's important provincial elections.

Unlike balloting in 2005, Iraqis were responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing security for thousands of polling sites around the country.

Unlike 2005, U.S. military forces were well in the background, support-only forces in case of terrorist attacks and only if called upon for help by their Iraqi counterparts. And there they stayed. The first post-surge political contests in Iraq took place last Saturday with little violence.

About 51 percent of eligible voters reportedly cast ballots in 14 of 18 provinces. More than 14,000 candidates were in the running nationwide either as independents, as candidates on individual party lists or as part of coalition blocs.

"The Iraqi Security Forces have developed a good plan," U.S. Army 1st Lt. Andy Garwitz said before the balloting. "They've done all the work. . . . To see how much they've done on their own is a good sign of how far things have come."

Garwitz is a platoon leader with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, which operates in the Tahrir district of Baquba, the capital of Diyala province. The company's duties in the run-up to the voting, as with other U.S. units in the country, were to check and assess ISF security plans and offer assistance in materiel and advice if needed and requested. On Election Day, they were to be far from election sites and provide help only in case of violence and only if requested to do so.

That secondary/support role for the Americans was totally in keeping with the recently implemented Status of Forces Agreement, also called the Strategic Framework, that governs America's military presence in the country. As of Jan. 1, Iraqi forces are in the lead in all security operations.

In Diyala province, a restive mixed-sect region northeast of Baghdad, the Iraqi 5th Division and Ministry of Interior Iraqi Police secured the more than 300 voting centres, which were mainly schools. Sites were checked and rechecked days in advance, IPs took up temporary residence at the sites days in advance, multiple security cordons and checkpoints were chosen and established. Fuel supplies for patrol vehicles – always a problem for ISF – were obtained and joint communications centres established.

"The (Iraqi army) battalion and company commanders were ahead of the Brigade in working up plans," said Maj. Jonathan Lauer, a Military Transition Team leader with the 19th Brigade of 5th IA Division. "They know their areas really well."

Military transition teams work with Iraqi forces on the battalion level and higher, teaching and mentoring their counterparts on everything from weapons skills to recordkeeping to combat medical treatment to operational planning.

Lauer's team has worked with the 19th Brigade and its companies and battalions since March.

Last Saturday each voting centre had between 12 and 17 Iraqi police on site, with concrete blast protection barriers placed in front of entrances. At 30 metres – the distance depended on terrain – were IA checkpoints on approaches to the sites. All people entering were searched multiple times; women were searched by female personnel at the sites for hidden bombs; no one without an identity card and a food ration card, which shows place of residence, was allowed into a voting site.

At a Joint Communications Centre in Khalis, about 15 kilometres from Baquba, Iraqi army soldiers and IP officers manned walkie-talkies and conversed on cell phones with units in the field for security situation updates. The sole U.S. military phone was unused – there were only a couple of minor, non-terror-related incidents – and the Americans were not needed for backup. The Iraqis handled it themselves, quickly and efficiently.

The communications centre, with aerial maps on the wall and whiteboard unit deployment information, was replicated elsewhere in the Baquba area and the province.

"No one is on leave," said Lt. Col. Kareem Jadoi Hussein, deputy commander of the 19th Brigade. "That will come later in the week, but we'll still be ready for anything."

The division's vigilance was and is not overzealousness. Diyala is one of Iraq's most restive regions. Al-Qa'ida terrorists, although greatly disrupted, still hide or operate in the province's eastern area that borders Iran; remnants of Shiite extremist groups are also believed to be in the province.

As many as 60 percent of its 1.8 million people are Sunni Muslims, but minority Shiites dominate the current provincial government as a result of Sunnis boycotting 2005 balloting in protest of the U.S. occu-

pation or as a result of al-Qa'ida intimidation.

The boycott was off this time around, and election results, to be formally announced later this month, are expected to result in a political turnaround. How Shiites react to the change is the question. A second question is whether extremist groups will be able to take advantage and exploit resentments.

"Those are problems that come after the results," Kareem said. "There will be anger and shouting. We're prepared for trouble, but there will be no security problems, Inshallah (God willing)."

The Iraqi people are beginning to get back to their right minds. Inshallah. Baquba is just 70km from Baghdad. An explosion of sectarian violence here could easily spread beyond provincial borders.

An Iraqi government-funded survey in January found more than 40 percent of 4,750 people polled in the 14 or 18 provinces participating in the vote said they would vote for candidates not affiliated with religion-based parties or coalition blocs. Iraqis on the street often say they are done with sectarianism and are more concerned with electing people who will work to restore and expand basic services and fight rampant corruption.

"We came here to vote for someone to lead us in a good way, someone honourable," Yahya Genei, a Sunni, said outside a voting station in the village of Hebbel. "We chose the wrong people last time and got nothing."

We know who deserves to be elected. We won't look whether they are religious or not."

A Shiite soldier said: "People are going to vote for good guys, people who will work for everybody and not steal money."

Results of the contests in Diyala and elsewhere in Iraq – a total of 440 seats were up for grabs – will soon be known. And then the real test of Iraq's fledgling democracy begins.

— UPI



## Family Matters

By Bob McCoskrie

## Vaccine maker targets boys

The calls for the cervical cancer vaccine to be given to boys as well as girls is based on shonky research, marketing pressure, and wrong spending priorities. The claim that Gardasil prevents penile cancer is based on a study of 16 to 26-year olds, funded by the drug company Merck which sells the drug, and the study lasted only five years. But penile cancer does not normally present until a person reaches the age of 50, and is extremely rare at approximately 1 in 100,000 men. There has also been no research on whether the vaccine actually reduces the carriage of HPV in the community and this is acknowledged by NZ's Immunisation Advisory Centre.

Any research by Merck should be treated with extreme caution as they have just funded a \$4.85 billion payout to settle 26,500 lawsuits regarding Vioxx – a painkiller which caused heart attacks, strokes or deaths. They were accused of waging 'a campaign of deception to promote its drug, moving slowly to warn of possible hazards while at the same time dressing up in-house studies as the work of independent academic researchers'.

The Labour government's commitment to spend \$160m over four years on the Gardasil vaccine for cervical cancer, and now being promoted for boys, may be more as a result of aggressive marketing by the drug company but without adequate research to warrant the huge taxpayer investment.

Two recent articles the *New England Journal of Medicine* suggest that the vaccines are being widely used without sufficient evidence as to their cost benefit, and their effectiveness in tackling the disease.

Throwing money at a problem doesn't necessarily make the problem go away. The best strategy for preventing the HPV virus in teenagers is for them to postpone sexual involvement and to promote abstinence. We are accepting by default that kids are going to be sexually active at a time that is not suitable or safe for them. Young people deserve good advice – not vaccines for at-risk behaviour.

## Marriage steady, civil unions ignored

The latest statistics on marriage and civil unions show that while the marriage rate has been reasonably consistent over the past decade, the demand for civil unions is negligible.

The civil unions legislation has continued to be a white elephant despite the claims by the previous government that it would strengthen human rights and support the choices of apparently 300,000 people who were not married but lived in stable relationships. Over the past three years, civil unions have been less than 2% of the rate of marriage, and 80% of the civil unions have been same-sex relationships.

The civil union legislation was presented as a human right issue, but NZ'ers didn't feel discriminated against and they didn't have a problem with the religious connotations of marriage, which are not compulsory anyway. The huge amount of energy spent on trying to concoct a need for civil unions would have been better spent on developing policies which promote, encourage and strengthen marriage, and to minimise the likelihood of divorce, and thereby provide the best and safest environment for children to be raised.

Marriage is an important social good with a smorgasbord of positive outcomes for children and adults alike. Governments should encourage and support what works.

## School fees – compulsory or not?

With the start of the new school year, the new government must clarify to parents whether school fees are compulsory or not.

The previous government's Education minister Chris Carter said that he would personally deal with complaints from parents if schools try to force them to pay voluntary school fees, and that no school had a legal right to insist that parents pay voluntary fees.

They effectively sent a mixed message which confused parents and resulted in some parents paying the fees and others refusing. Although often labeled as 'voluntary', most parents think that school fees are compulsory and need to be paid to keep the school functioning effectively – especially higher decile schools.

In the end, the whole school community is penalised by the uncertainty and the subsequent shortfall.

Last year the PPTA said that 36 percent of school funding came from sources outside of Government operations grants and these were generally from local sources such as parents.

Either education is free or it's not. Schools deserve to know where they stand on this issue, and the expectations of parents should be made clear.

Family Matters is a new editorial column from Family First's Bob McCoskrie, designed to provoke discussion on issues of the week affecting households. To receive McCoskrie's FREE regular updates, visit [http://www.familyfirst.org.nz/index.cfm/Sign\\_Up](http://www.familyfirst.org.nz/index.cfm/Sign_Up)

# Obama gets tough on banks, sort of

By Kevin G. Hall and Margaret Talev  
McClatchy Newspapers

**WASHINGTON** — President Barack Obama has ordered steep curbs on pay and perks for bank executives seeking future taxpayer bailouts, capping their annual compensation at \$500,000.

The new rules come with a big loophole, however: The compensation limits can be waived in most cases if shareholders think the executives should earn more. Citigroup and Bank of America are excluded from this benefit.

Obama's proposal comes after a flurry of reports that after taking taxpayer rescue funds, some big banks were still planning to purchase corporate jets, planned executive junkets to Las Vegas and Monte Carlo, or had spent millions of dollars on office renovations.

"This is America. We don't disparage wealth. We don't begrudge anybody for achieving success. And we believe that success should be rewarded," Obama said. "But what gets people upset — and rightfully so

— are executives being rewarded for failure — especially when those rewards are subsidized by U.S. taxpayers."

The growing anger at bank executives for their role in creating a global economic crisis has eroded public confidence in Obama's efforts to pass an economic stimulus plan and to change course on previous bank-rescue efforts.

Obama defended both approaches anew this week, saying the public voted "resoundingly for change" in November and urging Congress "to act without delay."

As for his restrictions on bankers' compensation, Obama said that "in order to restore our financial system, we've got to restore trust."

"For top executives to award themselves these kinds of compensation packages in the midst of this economic crisis is not only in bad taste, it's a bad strategy — and I will not tolerate it as president," Obama said. "We're going to be demanding some restraint in exchange for federal aid, so that when firms seek new federal dollars, we won't find them

up to the same old tricks."

Under the new plan, companies that seek new money from the Troubled Asset Relief Program or under a bank-specific negotiated agreement called "exceptional assistance" would face the following restrictions:

- Top executives will have their pay and compensation capped at \$500,000, a fraction of current pay for most.

- Additional compensation will be limited to issuance of restricted stock in their banks, meaning that the government bailout money will have to be repaid before the executives can collect any of this extra non-salary compensation.

- Restrictions on golden parachutes, the rewards given to departing executives, are tightened. For "exceptional assistance" recipients, restrictions will apply to the top 10 executives in a company, instead of the current top five. For TARP recipients, departing executives won't get more than a year's compensation.

- Banks or other borrowers from the government

will have to publicly disclose their policies on corporate jets, office renovations and executive entertainment in the form of parties, morale-boosting trips, retreats and the like.

As important as what Obama spelled out was the signal he sent that his administration would look at executive compensation beyond banks and Wall Street.

The president promised a look at a corporate culture that's rewarded top executives handsomely, while the income of workers, including those who are college graduates, has been largely stagnant for years.

"We're going to examine the ways in which the means and manner of executive compensation have contributed to a reckless culture and quarter-by-quarter mentality that in turn have wrought havoc in our financial system," he said. "We're going to be taking a look at broader reforms so that executives are compensated for sound risk management and rewarded for growth measured over years, not just days or weeks."

## Walker's World

# The looming collapse of Russia

**MOSCOW** — It has become commonplace for Western commentators to assert that Russia's new military exercises, aggressive air patrols and far-flung naval cruises portend a return to a Soviet-style foreign policy and superpower ambition.

That could be a classic example of the conventional wisdom being wrong. The latest U.N. Development Program report on Russia's demographics, based on the birthrates of the last decade, suggests the country's numbers of young males of military age are set to halve after 2020.

Russia's current economic woes, its unemployment doubling in six months and its exchange rate tumbling against the euro and the dollar reinforce the impression that the Kremlin's current ambitions are way beyond its capabilities.

Indeed, a new study by Nikita Krichevsky of Moscow's Higher School of Economics argues that the current Russian economy is considerably less successful than the old Soviet one. It has become far more dependent on exporting raw materials and far less successful at exporting value-added products.

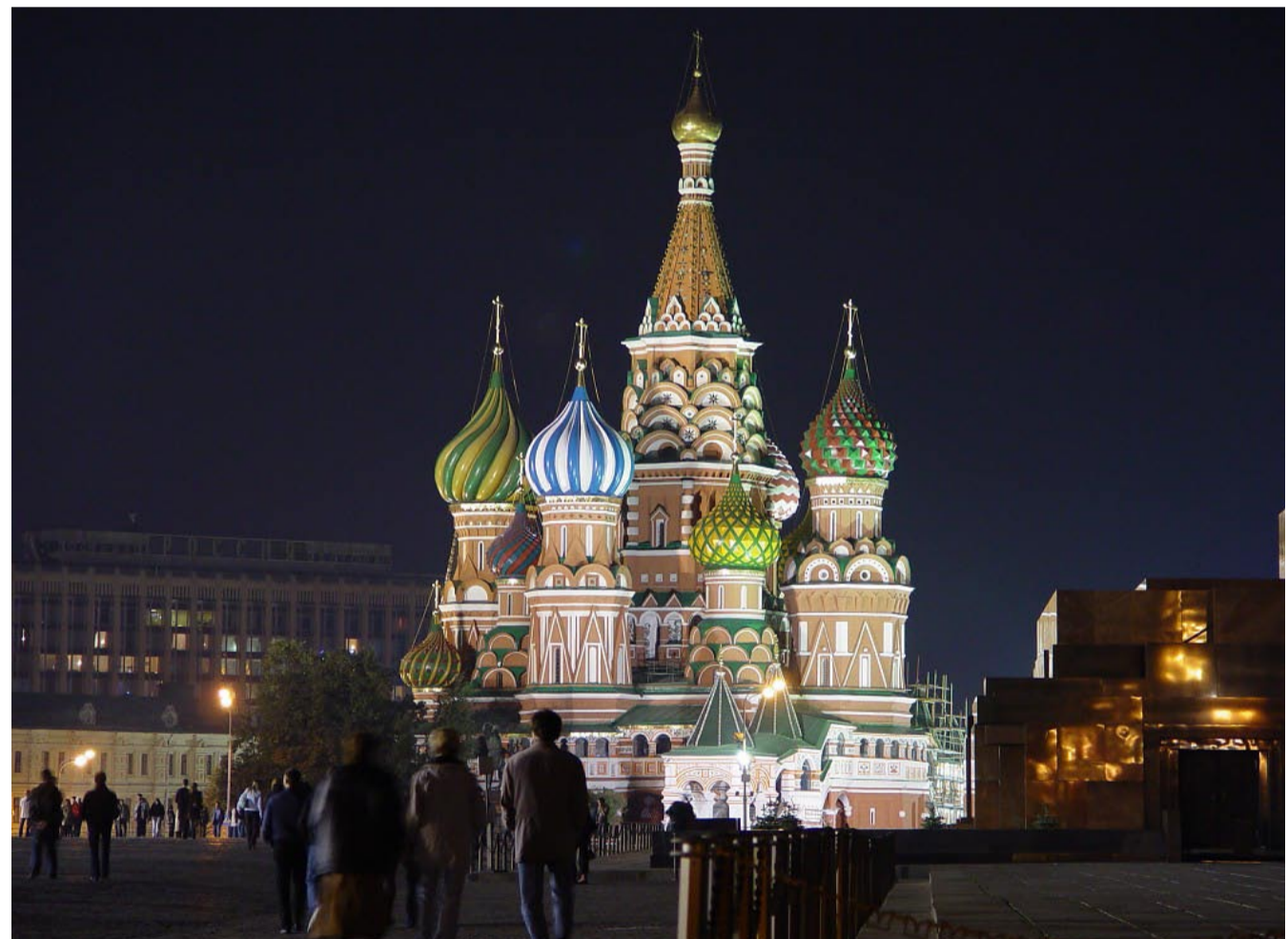
"In 1988, the proportion of exports from the (Soviet Union) of oil, gas and electric power amounted to 42.1 percent, and according to the provisional 2008 results (this had risen to) 65.9 percent," Krichevsky writes in last weekend's issue of the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* newspaper.

"Twenty years ago, the (Soviet Union) was actively exporting machinery ... means of transport, chemical products, industrial goods and much else. Modern Russia cannot boast of this," he added.

The old Soviet Union did a better job of providing housing, erecting more than a million new apartments in 1980, but only 721,000 in 2007, the peak of Russia's construction boom. Not that it benefited everybody; Krichevsky notes that only 2 percent of Russian families were able to avail themselves of a mortgage.

The fall in the oil price and the consequent economic downturn has hit Russia hard. A survey of Moscow's consumer markets by the daily newspaper *Novye Izvestia* reported this week that city dwellers have cut their food budgets by 10 percent to 20 percent since the start of this year. Russia's media are full of such reports. The Bashkirova polling firm says 40 percent of low-income groups are changing their diets. Ekho Moskvy radio talk shows get callers saying they have stopped buying precooked and frozen meals.

Russia has lost some \$200 billion from its reserves, through a combination of capital flight, the cascading decline of the ruble and special loans to its troubled companies. Krichevsky suggests this process could become catastrophic. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, in his speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, declared the Kremlin



Russia has lost some \$200 billion from its reserves, through a combination of capital flight, the cascading decline of the ruble and special loans to its troubled companies

was determined to support the country's economic champions: "If necessary, we will help them and are already helping them to refinance their debts and to refinance their debt service obligations, primarily to foreign lending institutions."

Krichevsky argues that Russia still commands some US\$386.5 billion of foreign currency reserves and foreign securities. But he argues that the state's budget deficit and its welfare obligations will consume some \$225 billion of this, and that \$40 billion of the remainder already has been promised by the government to bail out the banking system.

That leaves \$120 billion in state funds, but Krichevsky calculates that Russian enterprises and banks will in the next 18 months have to pay out altogether \$171.7 billion.

By next year, the country's international reserves could have dried up, he concluded.

This is a deeply gloomy picture, and while government economists can quibble with some details of the argument, Krichevsky's perspective is broadly right. The bottom line is that Russia is running through its reserves faster than it built them up.

Nor can Russia's finances expect much help

from the most famous of its national champions, the Gazprom energy giant, which is beginning to look like a bubble all by itself.

From 2004 through 2008, Gazprom's operating costs grew three-fold; its debts rose four-fold and its market capitalization grew ten-fold, he notes. But the average annual increase in production amounted to only 1.35 percent.

One key symbol of the financial crisis is the dizzying rise in interest rates. Since October 2008 the interest on a three-month ruble loan has more than tripled, from 9.1 percent to 28.3 percent. Another key statistic for the Russian economy is energy production, and in January oil output fell to 9.7 million barrels a day, a 1 percent decline on the year. Less oil, fetching a far lower price on world markets, is an ominous trend. At the same time, gas output fell by more than 10 percent in January because of the price row with Ukraine.

Krichevsky is not alone in his concern. The weekly *Novaya Vremya* reports that President Dmitry Medvedev at the end of December met a group of the country's leading economists who warned that the country faced a looming catastrophe and that measures

undertaken by the government were not sufficient.

Medvedev forwarded a report on their argument to Putin, who declined to take them seriously, seeing this as a power grab by Medvedev or, in Novaya Vremya's words, as an attempt to take management of the economic crisis out of his hands.

Other parts of the government seem rather more concerned. Economic Development Minister Elvira Nabiullina last week indicated that the official forecast of economic growth at 2.4 percent for this year had been scrapped, telling a forum: "We should reconsider forecasts of Russia's social and economic development. Most likely, these will show a decline."

The Russian public seems to agree. In December, 23 percent told the opinion pollster VTsIOM that the global economic situation was critical; in January, that number almost doubled to 43 percent. And only 11 percent thought the government's anti-crisis plan is commensurate with the situation and should bring about positive results in the near future. Andrei Sizov, executive director of the SovEkon analysis group, said, "The producers of meat have proved the hardest hit."

— UPI



## Exposure to evil to educate – a fine line

By Stefan Nicola

**MUNICH** – A British publisher's attempt to sell reprints of Nazi newspapers in Germany catapulted Adolf Hitler back to the front page and sparked a major controversy in the country.

Hitler Chancellor of the Reich read the headline on Page 1 of the newspaper *Der Angriff* (The Attack), with one of the ensuing pages featuring an anti-Semitic rant by Hitler's demagogue Joseph Goebbels.

The newspaper is part of the first issue of *Zeitungsszeugen* (German for newspaper witnesses),

a controversial history weekly launched in early January by British publisher Peter McGee. It features authentic reprints of Nazi-era newspapers wrapped by a magazine with commentaries by leading historians and media scientists who dissect the Nazi's propaganda tricks.

The first issue, which sold exceptionally well, focused on Hitler's Jan. 30, 1933, ascent to power. It includes not only a reprint of the Nazi newspaper but also reprints of the communist daily *The Fighter* and of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, a conservative newspaper, thus showing how the German press

**“THE GERMAN STATE OF BAVARIA OWNS PUBLISHING RIGHTS TO MOST NAZI NEWSPAPERS, AND IT HAS THREATENED TO SUE MCGEE. MUNICH ARGUES IT WANTS TO PURSUE THE BAN BECAUSE THE REPRINTS CAN BE EASILY SEPARATED FROM THE MAGAZINE**

reacted to Hitler's rise to power. (The communist paper warned of a dark era, calling on Germans to take the streets in protest; the conservative daily was hopeful that Germany, suffering from a recession, would see better times.)

The publisher says *Zeitungsszeugen* is aimed at stirring a debate and giving an authentic insight into the Nazi era and its press. He argues Germans, some 65 years after the end of World War II, are ready to confront their dark past.

“From today you will have a unique opportunity to read what information was available to your grandparents and your parents, the historian and editor of the magazine,” Sandra Paweronschitz, said in a statement.

But prosecutors for now have put an end to the reprints.

Last week German police followed a court order to confiscate thousands of copies of the second *Zeitungsszeugen* issue from German newsstands, pending an investigation into whether the weekly newspaper violated copyright rules and laws banning the publication of Nazi symbols such as the swastika.

The German state of Bavaria owns publishing rights to most Nazi newspapers, and it has threatened to sue McGee. Munich argues it wants to pursue the ban because the reprints can be easily separated from the magazine. This undermines the weekly's educational purpose, Munich says. As the reprints look just as they did 60 years ago, critics fear neo-Nazis might even use them as modern-day propaganda material.

“The dissemination of Nazi propaganda is willingly accepted,” Bavaria's justice minister told the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper.

Jewish organizations, alarmed by growing numbers of anti-Semitic crimes in Germany, are also uneasy about the venture.

Charlotte Knobloch, the head of the German Central Council of Jews, said she was doubtful that *Zeitungsszeugen* could positively educate a broad public.

“If only the newspapers and their Nazi propaganda are read, which are published clearly separately from the annotated commentaries, then this would be disastrous,” she said in a statement. “As a Holocaust survivor, these texts for me are more than interesting historic sources. They are part of a gruesome reality that I was able to escape. Millions of other Jews were not. As a publisher, you should be aware of that.”

Her council backs the ban, which McGee says is not right. The publisher claims his magazine is purely educational. It would cover the entire period of the Third Reich until the Allied victory in 1945, and also feature exiled and foreign press, as well as material from the German resistance.

The following issues of *Zeitungsszeugen*, which will hit the newsstands tonight, nevertheless will have to do without Nazi newspaper reprints until the legal issue is resolved.

It is the latest round in a long-running conflict in Germany about whether to keep disturbing Nazi material away from the public or publish it for educational purposes.

Wolfgang Benz, one of Germany's leading historians and the head of the Centre for Research on Anti-Semitism at Berlin's Technical University, in this particular case backs the latter – he is part of a team of scientists advising the *Zeitungsszeugen* project.

On Monday Benz told the foreign press corps he was able to relate to the concerns brought up by the German Central Council of Jews, but not the legal ban promoted by the Bavarian government.

McGee last year launched a similar project that reprinted Nazi newspapers in Austria, to which Munich didn't react with copyright lawsuits, Benz said.

The historian added that neo-Nazis easily could get their hands on Nazi material by simply browsing the Internet. Hitler's poorly written and outrageously repulsive pamphlet *Mein Kampf*, for example, can't be printed, but can be easily bought in vintage bookstores.

Benz said banning the newspaper reprints would only serve to surround Nazi material with an aura of forbidden glamour – just the opposite of what Bavaria wanted to achieve.

*Zeitungsszeugen*, he added, would not help neo-Nazis, but instead serve to educate responsible citizens who may not be eager to delve into a history book.

“The Nazi era is not yet sufficiently dealt or coped with,” Benz on Monday told the foreign press corps in Berlin. “Therefore, education needs to be ongoing.”

## Joe Biden holds the cards at Munich

By Stefan Nicola

**BERLIN** – All eyes will be on U.S. Vice President Joe Biden at this weekend's 45th Munich Conference on Security Policy, where the world hopes to learn about a foreign policy turnaround in Washington.

The Feb. 6-8 conference, which draws political leaders from all over the world, is a major venue for backroom politics and high-profile speeches. In 2007 Vladimir Putin, then Russia's president, accused Washington of provoking a Cold War-like arms race with its plan to place ground-to-air missiles in Poland and the Czech Republic; it was the start of a major downturn in Russian-American relations.

This year the world is eagerly awaiting the first major security policy speech of a member of the new U.S. administration.

President Barack Obama has promised to undo the Bush Doctrine, and instead bank on multilateralism and calm-headed negotiations. European observers hope that as a result, the West's conflict with Iran and the constant bickering with Russia finally will come to an end.

While Obama won't attend the conference, he will send Biden to Bavaria, “a sign that America wants to make its first serve when it comes to foreign policy here in Munich,” said Wolfgang Ischinger, a former German ambassador to the United States

who is chairing the conference.

Political heavyweights such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Afghan President Hamid Karzai also will attend, but it's Biden who likely will be the star in Munich.

Observers anticipate his speech will extend a negotiation offer to Iran to end a 30-year diplomatic silence that some say is preventing progress in the nuclear conflict with the Islamic Republic.

They are eager to then hear a reply from Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, a former lead negotiator on the nuclear issue who will be attending the conference.

Significant improvement could also come to troubled relations with Russia.

“In Washington, there is a new kind of realism about dealing with Russia,” John Hulsman, a trans-Atlantic expert at the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin, told United Press International in a telephone interview Thursday.

U.S.-Russian relations since the turn of the millennium have been marked by emotional ups and downs. Bush and Putin got along extremely well in the beginning and extremely badly at the end of the Texan's eight years in office.

Because of Putin's muscle-flexing, the Bush administration tried to minimize Russian influence

in Europe (for example, regarding energy supplies). “Obama's camp,” Hulsman said, “has understood that Russia's economic influence in Europe is here to stay for at least another decade or so.”

There are reasons to be optimistic regarding U.S.-Russian relations. The Kremlin has been angry about NATO's eastward expansion and U.S. missile plans for Eastern Europe, and both may now be given up.

Ukraine's chances of getting into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have been lessened by the latest gas row with Russia, and Obama also indicated he might be willing to scrap the controversial missile defence program initiated by the Bush administration. “Obama's team is questioning the science and the money of the project,” Hulsman told UPI.

This development has pleased the Kremlin, which recently backpedaled on its own rocket plans.

“Russia does not need to place Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad if a U.S. missile defence shield is not going to put fear into Eastern Europe,” Russian news agency Interfax quoted an unnamed Russian official as saying.

For Hulsman, ditching the U.S. missile defence project makes sense.

“You give up something you don't much like, and you get something in return from Russia -- for

example, increased cooperation in dealing with Iran,” he said.

Increased cooperation -- that's something Biden will likely ask of America's allies in Afghanistan.

It's an open secret that Washington wants large European nations -- for example, Germany -- to take on additional responsibilities in the war-torn country. And for all the enthusiasm in Berlin about Obama, direct requests for more troops or increased military engagement in the volatile southern provinces of Afghanistan will not go down well with the German government.

“When Biden will speak about Afghanistan, the Germans will look at their shoes,” Hulsman said.

Germany currently has some 3,500 troops stationed in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. Their role is restricted to reconstruction efforts and training missions in the northern provinces. Berlin so far has refused to have its troops take part in the casualty-heavy fighting in the south and east of Afghanistan.

Yet as Obama has pledged to send as many as 30,000 additional U.S. soldiers to Afghanistan, it is unthinkable that European powers will get away without beefing up their commitment as well.

“Germany and others will have to get ready for doing tough things for the greater good,” Hulsman said.

— UPI

# France pushes for socialism to replace capitalism

**PARIS** – French President Nicolas Sarkozy demanded this morning that the European Union adopt a common position to reform the capitalist system.

During a 90-minute appearance on national television to discuss the economic crisis, Sarkozy also criticized the European Union for passivity in the face of the crisis.

“It is not possible that, in such a situation, Europe does not take the initiative,” Sarkozy said, indirectly criticizing the Czech presidency and the European Commission.

He went on to say that he wanted Europe to have a common position at the April 2 meeting of the G20 nations in London on the future regulatory measures to be imposed on Western financial institutions.

Sarkozy said that all financial institutions must be regulated in the future, particularly hedge funds, tax havens and rating agencies.

“France wants this to be a common European position,” Sarkozy said.

Speaking one week after a general strike and nationwide demonstrations to protest his government’s economic policies, Sarkozy sought to defend his economic stimulus plan and his ambitious economic reform programme.

The success of the January 29 strike and demonstrations, in which up to two and a half million people took to the streets, added urgency to his performance, which took the form of an interview with four French journalists.

Trade union leaders had threatened to call for more strikes and street demonstrations unless

Sarkozy abandoned his economic and public sector reforms and did more to protect jobs and increase purchasing power.

But in the matter of the reforms, the French president remained firm. “Are the reforms still on? The answer is yes,” he said. “It is the only way for France to emerge stronger from the crisis than it was when (the crisis) started.”

Sarkozy said he was considering new measures to increase the purchasing power of the French consumers, including eliminating income taxes for lower-middle-class families and increasing state family subsidies.

He said he would make new proposals during a meeting with trade union leaders and entrepreneurs on February 18. One of those proposals, which is certain to stir controversy, would be to force employers to more equitably distribute profits within their firms.

He also said he was considering abolishing local corporate taxes for all French industries in 2010.

The widely anticipated appearance was crucial for Sarkozy’s credibility in the face of the worsening economy and the growing protest movement.

Surveys show that the popularity he had gained through his energetic performance as president of the European Union in the second half of 2008 is now being eroded by rising unemployment and other gloomy economic news.

In addition, according to a recent poll, nearly two out of three French adults believe the government’s measures to fight the economic crisis are not working.

– DPA



# Obama’s world religion dream gains pace



United States President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama applaud the remarks of former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, Ron Sachs / Pool via CNP

**WASHINGTON** – US President Barack Obama today reached out to believers of all faiths as he expanded the White House office of faith-based partnerships.

Obama signed an executive order establishing the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighbourhood Partnerships – effectively revamping an office created by former president George W Bush that helped religious groups seek grants to provide social services, but had also drawn criticism for blurring the line between church and state.

Speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington earlier in the day, Obama acknowledged differences among religions, but stressed the common beliefs of all faiths to care for others.

“Instead of driving us apart, our varied beliefs can bring us together to feed the hungry and com-

fort the afflicted; to make peace where there is strife and rebuild what has broken; to lift up those who have fallen on hard times,” he said, adding that this would be the purpose of the office of faith-based partnerships.

Obama insisted his work would not favour religious groups over secular ones but simply allow all organizations to provide services to their communities.

Under Bush, religious groups receiving grants were not subjected to federal laws prohibiting discrimination in hiring practices, allowing them to favour employees who shared their religious beliefs. On the campaign trail, Obama said he would favour removing such stipulations.

On Friday morning it remained unclear whether that policy would change,

but the office’s executive director was charged

with seeking legal and constitutional advice from the attorney general on such matters.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State was among the groups urging Obama to change the policy, and director Barry Lynn said the president did not go far enough.

“I am very disappointed that President Obama’s faith-based programme is being rolled out without barring evangelism and religious discrimination in taxpayer-funded programmes,” Lynn said in a statement. “It should be obvious that taxpayer-funded religious bias offends our civil rights laws, our Constitution and our shared sense of values.”

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Obama believes faith-based institutions provide important services, such as childcare, but must adhere to “constitutional directives” prohibiting

the establishment of a state religion or limiting the practice of religion.

The revamped office’s top priority will be getting religious and neighbourhood groups involved in the economic recovery and in reducing poverty, the White House said. It will also focus on supporting women and children’s issues, including teenage pregnancy and reducing the number of abortions; supporting fathers; and promoting interfaith dialogue around the world.

The office will be led by Joshua DuBois, a 26-year-old former pastor, who worked for Obama as senator and conducted religious outreach for the campaign.

Obama also created a council of religious advisors from various backgrounds to provide input on the office’s policies. The board

includes directors of secular groups like mentoring organization Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, experts on church and state issues and religious leaders of conservative and liberal churches.

The Reverend Jim Wallis, the president of Sojourners, a liberal Christian group, was among those named to the council, and called it “a shift towards a deeper and more constructive engagement with the faith community and civil society around substantive policy issues.”

Obama made an effort during his election campaign to reach out to religious groups, even designating staff specifically to the task. He faced controversies, however, over inflammatory statements made by his then-pastor and rumours that he was a Muslim.

At the breakfast, Obama outlined his religious journey as the child of a Muslim father who became an atheist and non-religious mother, and how he became a Christian as an adult while working with disadvantaged residents in Chicago.

The breakfast draws thousands, including many legislators and religious leaders, each year. Former British prime minister Tony Blair gave the keynote address, speaking of religion being attacked from extremists within and non-believers.

Haitian President Rene Preval, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha, Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam also attended.





German Chancellor Angela Merkel (L) welcomes World Bank President, Robert Zoellick, at the chancellery in Berlin / DPA

## World crisis deepens

**BERLIN** – The world's leading economic and financial institutions painted a grim picture today of the global economic outlook and warned of rising unemployment.

"We've gone from a financial crisis to an economic crisis and now in 2009 it's becoming an unemployment crisis," World Bank chief Robert Zoellick said in Berlin.

"In some countries around the world, particularly developing countries, it will become a human crisis," he said following a meeting chaired by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Also taking part in the talks were the heads of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The talks in Berlin came as Europe's top central banks opened the door to further rate cuts with the Bank of England (BoE) delivering Thursday a 50-basis points reduction in borrowing costs.

But while the BoE announced in London it was reducing the cost of money in Britain to 1 per cent, the European Central Bank (ECB) meeting in Frankfurt said Thursday it was keeping borrowing costs on hold at 2 per cent.

However, speaking at a press conference following the ECB's governing council meeting, bank chief Jean-Claude Trichet signalled that the Frankfurt-based ECB might press on with its rate-cutting cycle when it meets in March.

"We are in an uncertain universe," said Trichet. "We have to be prepared for everything."

"The global economy is in the throes of a severe and synchronized downturn," said the BoE said in a statement announcing the rate cut.

"Output in the advanced economies fell sharply in the fourth quarter of 2008, and growth in the emerging market economies appears to have slowed

markedly," the BoE said.

With the global economy in the grip of what could be its biggest decline in six decades, the Berlin meeting warned of the threat posed by protectionism and urged countries to "work towards tangible further opening of world trade."

In addition to Merkel and Zoellick, Pascal Lamy, director general of the WTO, IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Angel Gurría, secretary general of the ILO, and OECD director general Juan Somavia, also took part.

"The world economic situation is very bad, even worse," said Strauss-Kahn, warning of serious social consequences, especially on the global labour market.

Against this background, "it is more important than ever that the international community remain committed to its goals of fighting poverty and promoting economic development in poor countries," the conference said.

Of particular concern to Strauss-Kahn was the continuing global credit crunch, with banks were still reluctant to lend money to businesses.

"There is no way for companies to develop if there is no more credit," Strauss-Kahn said. The IMF chief said an improvement in the global outlook was possible in 2010 provided lines of credit were restored.

The meeting in Berlin forms part of the buildup to a summit of Group of 20 (G20) leading industrial nations and emerging economies set to take place in London on April 2.

Hosted by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the G20 summit is expected to review progress towards forging a new global financial architecture aimed at better regulation, greater transparency and improved cooperation among authorities.

Merkel is scheduled to host a preparatory summit of European G20 members in Berlin on February 22.

– DPA

## Iran demonstrates rocket power

**TEHRAN** – Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad today rejected concerns and worry in the West over the launch into orbit Iran's first domestically produced satellite, Fars news agency reported.

"This satellite is just a messenger of peace and justice," Ahmadinejad said in a speech in the city Mashad in north-eastern Iran.

Ahmadinejad on Tuesday ordered the launching of Omid (Hope) on a domestically produced Safir 2 rocket. The move caused concern in the West as the capability of launching satellites would also enable Iran to launch ballistic missiles.

"The current era is dominated by respectful dialogue and logic – current global problems can no longer be solved by bombs and missiles," the Iranian president said.

He said that Iran would be ready to enjoy friendship with the Western world and help settling the world's problems but only if the approach towards Tehran was based on respect.

"You [the West] should first learn how to speak with nations because the time of bullying literature is gone," Ahmadinejad said.

– DPA

## More bitter weather in Britain



Claudia Schiffer treads carefully through the snow as she leaves her children's school this morning in London, England / WENN.com

diff were temporarily closed and train services were cancelled on busy routes to Bristol and other cities in the south-west.

Snowfalls of up to 20 centimetres were recorded in parts of the English Midlands, in south-west England, Wales and Northern Ireland as weather services predicted more snow over the next few days.

In the Lake District, in northern England, police found the bodies of two walkers who fell victim to the freezing conditions.

Meanwhile, there were fears over a "road safety crisis" as grit supplies threatened to run out.

The government has said it was hard to prepare for such unusual weather.

**LONDON** – More heavy snowfalls in Britain overnight caused severe disruption on the road and rail network and shut down regional airports as hundreds of schools remained closed.

Runways at Luton airport, north of London, and at Birmingham, East Midlands airport and Car-

The south-east of Britain, including London, which were paralyzed by snow earlier this week, were not affected by today's snowfalls.

However, forecasters predicted fresh heavy snowfalls for southern England tonight.

– DPA

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EP543622

# NZ head into MCG confident

By Mark Geenty of NZPA

**MELBOURNE, FEB 5** – A major Perth confidence injection has New Zealand cricket captain Daniel Vettori daring to dream they can potentially wrap up the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy by Sunday.

Vettori is not making any brash predictions of a clean sweep but has responded boldly to his opposite number Michael Clarke's line that a series defeat to New Zealand was "unthinkable", ahead of today's second match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (starting 4.15pm NZT).

"Our team's got to imagine that. We've got to think about winning this series. We're 1-0 up and if we can grab these next two games then we win it," Vettori said.

"The Chappell-Hadlee is very important to us, and very important to the people back home. It's one of the series that they seem to be most up for, and that's probably because we've played relatively well in it over the last few years."

New Zealand's two-wicket win off the final ball in Perth on Sunday gave them a 6-5 lead in the overall ledger, stretching back to the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy's inception in 2004.

Australia are hurting from four consecutive one-day defeats, and this week heightened the pressure to retain the trophy when captain Ricky Ponting was given a two-game rest amid a hectic schedule.

Ponting scored a matchwinning 104 as Australia successfully chased down 291 in the teams' previous meeting here two years ago.

It means a likely one-day debut for South Australian batsman Callum Ferguson, who scored 89 against Victoria at the MCG Wednesday, and a possible recall for West Australian Adam Voges after both were summoned to the squad.

Vettori said an unchanged New Zealand team were highly likely for today's game at one of the world's premier sporting venues.

The only question is replacement batsman Craig Cumming's possible inclusion for allrounder Grant

Elliott, who scored eight off 31 balls and didn't bowl in Perth.

"I'd like to go in with the same 11. We haven't discussed it yet but you always back a winning team," Vettori said.

"Whilst some guys may not have performed to what they would have liked in the last game I'm sure they're going to step up."

While much has been made of Australia's inexperience, New Zealand are in a similar position without key allrounders Jacob Oram and Scott Styris.

Five of the team in Perth were playing their first one-dayer in Australia and their self belief had soared, Vettori said.

"To win a nailbiter was really pleasing. It started with the way we bowled and the way we fielded. We were exceptional the other day. Hopefully we've set a standard we can maintain."

The Kyle Mills-led bowling unit will be buoyed but questionmarks remain over the batting.

New Zealand slumped to 25 for three -- although

vice-captain Brendon McCullum received a poor leg before wicket decision -- and only staggered to their target of 182.

McCullum is due a big score after averaging 21.50 against the West Indies while Martin Guptill and Neil Broom showed promising signs in their Australian debuts.

After watching the state match on the one-day pitch yesterday, Vettori felt it would be a typical MCG surface with plenty of runs, and potentially quicken up under lights.

Clarke, meanwhile, tipped his side to hit back hard and wasn't even entertaining thoughts of a series defeat.

"New Zealand is a very good one-day team but I'm very confident in the Australian team at the moment," Clarke said.

"We've got plenty of talent, plenty of potential, plenty of youth, plenty of excitement and if we play our best cricket we can beat the Kiwis. Right now for me (defeat) certainly is unthinkable."



I felt Newcastle could have dealt with it a little bit better to be honest but I am delighted to be here now it is great opportunity for me

## Soccer's NZ\$20 million man

**LONDON** – Goalkeeper Shay Given marked his unveiling as a Manchester City player today with an attack on the hierarchy at his former club, Newcastle United.

The 32-year-old Republic of Ireland international was a huge favourite at Newcastle, but felt let down by the way his 7-million-pound (US\$10.1-million) move was handled.

Sources close to the player told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa that he was particularly disappointed by the way certain details of contract negotiations – some of them misleading – were made public.

"I felt Newcastle could have dealt with it a little bit better to be honest but I am delighted to be here now it is great opportunity for me," he told reporters.

"It is a fantastic club I am joining with great ambition and I am delighted they have brought me to the club.

"It is nearly 12 years of my life, it is a long time

and I would like to thank the supporters for the support they have been given me over them years – they have been absolutely phenomenal.

"I just felt after being there nearly 12 years, and the service I gave the club, the regime could have looked after the whole thing a little bit better and they made me do things I didn't want to do in the end.

"I felt this was a great opportunity to further my career and hopefully go and possibly go and pick up some silverware and I felt they could have dealt with it a lot better and I was disappointed the way the regime handled things.

"It is a difficult time for Newcastle they are in a difficult period and the fans deserve better they are extremely loyal supporters and I wish them well.

"This is a new chapter in my life at Manchester City and I am very excited and looking forward to the challenge."

– DPA



FOTOSPORTS INTERNATIONAL

## Formula One proceeding, despite recession

**LONDON** – Cost-cutting is a necessity in these harsh economic times but the sport of Formula One is not endangered by the global crisis with many countries seeking to host races, its commercial boss Bernie Ecclestone says.

Ecclestone confirmed in an interview with Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa that India will stage its first Grand Prix in 2011 and that races in South Korea and Russia were also in the planning.

But he also said that reducing costs would have been mandatory if the situation was not so grim.

"The teams were growing so big and did spend so much money. It got a little bit out of hand. Even if we had not had this economic crisis, if this is the right word, they needed to get back.

"We need to reduce the necessity to spend money to be competitive. It should not be a race that the team with the most of the money wins," Ecclestone told dpa.

The ruling body FIA and the team union FOTA have agreed to save 30 per cent or around 1 billion dollars in the upcoming 2009 season, and to save 50 per cent in 2010 through various rule changes.

The Honda team has quit F1 citing the recession and German organizers of the Hockenheim race are in a dire financial situation as well.

Ecclestone said he hoped an investment by him into Hockenheim a few years ago was not lost and suggested that the troubled organizers should get the financial support from the state that they seek.

"The trouble is that today we are fortunate enough to have a lot of different sports which are supported by the governments. You can imagine what the Olympic Games (in London 2012) are going to cost," said Ecclestone.

"A small amount is necessary to maintain Formula 1. It's very cheap for a country to maintain one of the top sports."

Ecclestone dismissed criticism that the hosting fee ranging from 5 to 45 million euros was too high, pointing out that many organizers were lining up to stage races.

"I don't understand that, because we have more people who want races, than we can have races. There are a lot of new markets. The world has moved on since it used to be more or less a European Championship with one race outside in America."

The India race in 2011 will take place and Ecclestone said "sure" when asked whether South Korea was still on the agenda.

Ecclestone said he was "surprised" that Honda left and suggested that they "used the whole crisis as an excuse" after poor results in the 2008 season.

But he was upbeat that a buyer can be found for the team in time for the season that starts on March 29 with the Australian Grand Prix.

"I think so. I think that will happen," said Ecclestone.

– DPA

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## TV &amp; Film

**He's Just Not That Into You**

➔ **Cast:** Ginnifer Goodwin, Kevin Connolly, Scarlett Johansson, Bradley Cooper, Ben Affleck, Jennifer Connolly, Drew Barrymore, Jennifer Aniston

➔ **Director:** Ken Kwapis

➔ **Length:** 129 minutes

➔ **Rated:** TBC

★★★★☆

*He's Just Not That Into You*, the straight-talk best-seller that decoded the mixed messages and self-deception surrounding love affairs, has inspired a date movie of epic proportions. The film boasts the biggest romcom ensemble this side of *Love, Actually*, stumbling into snares of miscommunication and pitfalls of wishful thinking.

What makes this one a cut above the generic date movie is a tart dose of drama and hard-bitten intelligence amid the candy corn. The film doesn't peddle the fantasy that a Hallmark-valentine happy ending is the inevitable climax of every meet-cute. For all its breezy humour, it recognizes that love is ephemeral and elusive. Thankfully, this is not "Relationships for Dummies."

The film follows a flurry of romantic entanglements among a group of Baltimore-based professionals. Their lives carom against one another so busily that sorting out the connections between the characters takes some concentration, but the effort is worthwhile. The story is set in motion with a blind date between idealistic, romantic Gigi (Ginnifer Goodwin of HBO's *Big Love*) and Conor (Kevin Connolly, *Entourage*), who leaves her with vague assurances that they'll reconnect soon. Before they've walked a

block, she's on her cell phone raving to a gal pal about the amazing connection between them, and he's on his, calling Anna (Scarlett Johansson), a casual hook-up who keeps stringing him along.

Anna no sooner rings off than she's exchanging numbers with Ben (Bradley Cooper), the handsome married guy behind her in the supermarket check-out line. Ben introduces us to Neil (Ben Affleck), whose seven-year commitment to Beth (Jennifer Aniston) is fraying from his aversion to marriage. So it goes as more friends and coworkers are drawn in, and even characters unrelated to the plot share their romantic experiences in monologues delivered straight to the camera.

The film's comic standout is Justin Long as Alex, a swaggering seen-it-all bar manager who takes the vulnerable Gigi under his wing to explain what it means when a guy doesn't call. "Maybe he lost my number, or was out of town, or was hit by a cab, or his grandma died," she offers, and Alex bluntly replies, "Maybe he just didn't call because he has no interest in seeing you again." His tutoring helps Gigi evolve from a puddle of self-doubt and confusion, and her emotional honesty puts him in touch with feelings he'd forgotten he had. Jennifer Connolly delivers a deep, textured performance as a woman discovering that her outwardly ideal marriage is not as secure as she believed.

In clumsier hands, this would be an exercise in tearjerking and silly humour. Director Ken Kwapis combines the competing subplots like a smooth medley of 10 different romantic comedies, helped by a screenplay that avoids lazy characterization. Writers Abby Kohn & Marc Silverstein (*Never Been Kissed*) don't flatter their target market by making

**“THE FILM DOESN'T PEDDLE THE FANTASY THAT A HALLMARK-VALENTINE HAPPY ENDING IS THE INEVITABLE CLIMAX OF EVERY MEET-CUTE. FOR ALL ITS BREEZY HUMOUR, IT RECOGNIZES THAT LOVE IS EPHEMERAL AND ELUSIVE**

the female characters flawless princesses and all the men toads. Their characters are driven by internal and external forces, by personal history, by fate, by chance, by mistakes, and by luck. Both sexes get their share of foibles, and instead of comforting predictability, most of the myriad relationships make us wonder what's coming next. They can sling a joke with deadly accuracy or chart the sad course of a love triangle that becomes a circular firing squad.

Even the look of the film is nuanced. It's beautifully shot and lit, but it frequently paints the actors in shadows. Despite a couple of implausible eleventh-hour character reversals, *He's Just Not That Into You* is a welcome paradox, a movie that's satisfying precisely because it doesn't strain to satisfy us with easy answers and prefabricated happy endings.

Watch the trailer

— By Colin Covert

**The Pink Panther 2**

➔ **Cast:** Steve Martin, John Cleese, Andy Garcia, Emily Morton, Jean Reno, Alfred Molina

➔ **Director:** Harald Zwart

➔ **Length:** 92 minutes

➔ **Rated:** PG (for some suggestive humor, brief mild language and action)

★☆☆☆☆

Ponzi schemes and lowbrow comedies may be the only parts of America's economy that work. The skidmark that is "Paul Blart, Mall Cop" has scarcely been mopped up and now comes Steve Martin's insufferably stupid *Pink Panther 2*. Recycling bins have fresher content than this listless exercise in check-the-boxes moviemaking.

John Cleese, taking over as Chief Inspector Dreyfus from Kevin Kline, generates the film's only sequence of genuine humor as Clouseau's invincible dumb luck drives him to a fit of head-banging apoplexy. Fifteen minutes into this fiasco and I knew exactly how he felt.

The carefree wit of the Peter Sellers originals is lost here as every scene and performance strains for laughs. The bawling physical comedy is overstaged, the supporting players mug shamelessly (especially Andy Garcia, playing an Italian Lothario who is a member of Clouseau's international detective team), and Martin's tongue-twisting accent seems to have come from Pluto, not Paris.

Martin not only lacks Sellers' physical comedy chops, he fluffs the joke, rebounding from pratfalls with a beaming grin, as if to say, "Hey, did you catch that? Wasn't that funny?" Worse, he gives the character a coat of invulnerable smugness. That worked for Martin's Wild and Crazy Guy an eon ago, but it's the wrong tone for this character.

Emily Mortimer returns as Clouseau's prim love interest, and her pinched expression suggests that she has taken her cue from Martin's face-squinting. Also on board are returning sidekick Jean Reno, Alfred Molina as a sleuth from Scotland Yard and a renowned English film star in an uncredited, and overlong, cameo. If you buy a ticket for this one, mon ami, le joke is on you.

Watch the trailer

— By Colin Covert

## Music



Mary Duggan/PHOTOlink

## Singing a different tune

Welcome to Jessica Simpson country

By **Walter Tunis**  
*McClatchy Newspapers*

It wasn't the sort of career move anyone saw coming. Jessica Simpson: pop pinup, reality show princess, tabloid celebrity and country singer?

Truth to tell, Simpson didn't exactly see Nashville as part of her star journey, either. But believe the transformation.

"I didn't set out or say to myself, 'I'm going to make a country record, or anything like that,'" Simpson said in a recent phone interview. "There were just songwriters in Nashville I wanted to write music with. And what we did ended up being country. It's just more of who I am.

"I never looked at country as being too far

removed from what I had been doing. But then I never really felt that, in the pop world, I owned everything I was doing. The music was a bit more scattered. I would have five or six producers on a record, which didn't help the consistency or the flow. For me to do a focused record, to really tell the story of the experiences I've been through in life, was important. Going to Nashville and writing with those writers helped me dig into a deeper side of myself."

The country version of Simpson seems to be a solid sell. Her debut country album, "Do You Know," hit No. 1 on the country charts and No. 4 on the pop charts upon its release last fall. A convincingly contemporary Nashville single called "Come on Over" has won considerable airplay.

But then Simpson, 28, is used to big numbers. The

four pop albums that the native Texan has released in the past decade have all achieved gold or platinum status. The country conversion, it seems, was as much a cry for credibility as anything else. Her music has always been a hit, but it paled next to the profile that Simpson created offstage, beginning with the 2003 MTV reality series *Newlyweds: Nick and Jessica* that chronicled the early days of her marriage, which eventually failed, to pop singer Nick Lachey. Since then, her celebrity romances have gained as much attention in the tabloids as her music has on the charts.

"I don't know if you ever get used to tabloids and people making up stories about you and writing about you when you're not really attached to it, like you would be if you were giving an interview,"

she said. "You never get used to that. But there is a way to not allow that to be your focus. I really just have to detach myself from the world of gossip and preconceived ideas.

"They've been writing about me for a long time. And for some reason, people still want to read it all. Sometimes it definitely gets frustrating. But that's why I write music: so people can get to know the real me."

One of Simpson's first major public stabs at country nose-dived, however. At a December 2006 taping of the Kennedy Center Honors, Simpson performed as part of a tribute to lifelong idol Dolly Parton. But after botching the lyrics to 9 to 5, and then being dissatisfied with a second recorded attempt for the broadcast, Simpson withdrew from the event.

But the silver lining to such a public and professional humiliation was Parton herself, who befriended the singer, offered encouragement and penned the title tune for "Do You Know."

"Dolly really helped me become secure about being onstage again and secure with who I am as an artist. She is obviously a mentor. She is an incredible songwriter, an incredible singer and an amazing woman. I mean, people don't know much of anything about her personal life. That's something I'm absolutely jealous of. I don't know how she did it. I've got to get some tips."

Another member of country music royalty, Loretta Lynn, also has stood up for Simpson. In the January issue of *Marie Claire* magazine, Lynn said, "People ought to give her a chance. She's got a great voice, she's beautiful — I don't know what else they want."

Simpson said, "When people like Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton believe in you and want to help people catch a glimpse of the talent God has given you ... well, I just hope to be able to do that for somebody else someday."

Not everyone in Nashville welcomes Simpson's country incarnation, however. In his Sept. 18 Nashville Skyline column, CMT editorial director Chet Flippo quoted an e-mail, which he did not credit, that was widely circulated to the city's music executives shortly after SoundScan figures confirmed "Do You Know's" No. 1 status.

The cryptic message: "Country has lost its soul. It's never been clearer that we're now a marketing system for failed pop acts."

Simpson said, "Anybody that second-guesses me, any of the sceptics out there ... they just present a fun challenge for me. I truly believe in myself. I didn't really have any fear going into this project. Whenever you feel like you have failed at something, you want to pick yourself back up and just try harder the next time. That's very empowering."

Love Me Tender

## NEW CD RELEASES

## Melinda Doolittle

➔ **Coming Back to You**  
 ➔ Hi Fi Recordings

★★★★☆



Melinda Doolittle, a Top 3 finalist on the sixth season of "American Idol," released her soulful and frisky debut on Tuesday, and it's a quantum cut above the "Idol" norm. Al Green, Tina Turner, Gladys Knight and Sarah Vaughan are not physically on this 13-track disc, but Doolittle absorbed their auditory DNA while listening to their records as a young girl in Tennessee, and their influences bleed through on this raw and rockin' disc.

What CAN'T Doolittle do? The 31-year-old handles songwriter Sammy Cahn's rich, late-night, pop-jazz balladry with flair and revives the flavor of Hi Records/Motown-era uptempo soul on such gritty tracks as "It's Your Love" and "Fundamental Things." Doolittle takes "Declaration of Love," a feisty pop song Celine Dion previously recorded in the mid '90s, to church with gospel fervor, fat drums and robust horn section.

Even better, she takes on the blues of Robert Johnson on two of his compositions, "Dust My Broom" and "Walkin' Blues," and brings to mind some old Ike & Tina Turner sides.

She can make even nonbelievers forgive "Idol" for its many sins against pop music.

—Howard Cohen

## Franz Ferdinand

➔ **Tonight**  
 ➔ Domino

★★★★☆



At first blush, Franz Ferdinand leader Alex Kapranos' claim that "I found a new way, baby," on "Tonight's" first single, "Ulysses," seems like an idle boast. Three albums in, the Glaswegian quartet

hasn't really bothered seriously to retool the stylishly arty dance-rock that made them sound so fresh when their self-titled debut arrived in 2004. But as "Tonight"—a linked suite of songs that moves through an evening on the town with the skinny Scotsmen—comes upon the wee hours, tweaks and adjustments begin to show up. An extended jam bounces electro keyboards off rubbery bass lines at the tail end of "Lucid Dreams." There's morning-after acoustic intimacy in the closing "Katherine Kiss Me." The structure works out nicely as FF gives fans what they want for starters, then slips them something they might find they need as "Tonight" progresses.

—Dan DeLuca

## Heartless Bastards

➔ **The Mountain**  
 ➔ Fat Possum

★★★★☆



Between her unapologetic wail and her thirst for classic-rock rawness, Erika Wennerstrom and her band Heartless Bastards have long been the perfect estrogen-spiked complement to their current touring mates and erstwhile label mates, the Black Keys. This, Heartless Bastards' third album, finds them mellowing a bit, and like the Keys' latest, "Attack & Release," adopting extra instruments to flesh out a previously spare sound. Notably restrained in her singing here, Wennerstrom sounds more in line with the charred, country-blues croon of Jolie Holland, and the album's heightened folk vibe culminates in the aptly titled "So Quiet" and the extended mandolin jags of the nearly eight-minute "Witchy Poo." "The Mountain" is richly recorded and impressively disciplined, but fans may miss the throaty rabble-raising and barreling blues of the Bastards' early days.

—Doug Wallen

## Books

## Author analyzes addictions – including his own to sex

### America Anonymous: Eight Addicts in Search of a Life

➔ **Benoit Denizet-Lewis**  
 ➔ Simon & Schuster, (US\$26 via Amazon)

Benoit Denizet-Lewis can take or leave drugs, alcohol, gambling and shoplifting. Sex is the addiction that has been a lifelong struggle for him.

In his new book, Denizet-Lewis learns that, regardless of vice, the struggle for sobriety is the same across addictions – and the country.

Denizet-Lewis, a San Francisco native now living in Boston, spent three years following eight American men and women – including a grandmother addicted to crack and a college student addicted to pornography – in various stages of recovery and relapse. Denizet-Lewis weaves in his candid struggles with sex addiction as well as a very sobering analysis of our schizophrenic culture, where escapism and Band-Aid remedies are common and encouraged from a young age.

"We are a culture of excess and distraction, and that combination leads to addiction," says Denizet-Lewis, 33, during a recent phone interview. "What do we do when our kids tell us they're sad? We distract them with food and shopping instead of saying, 'You're going to feel bad for a while. That's life. Let's talk about it. Negative feelings are not things to be ignored or covered up.'"

The 340-page nonfiction book, the author's first, is a treatise on the state of addiction in America, exploring oft-ignored subjects such as addiction and the elderly. He charges that addiction is the country's biggest public health crisis, triggering and exacerbating our most pressing social problems, from crime and poverty to childhood abuse and increasing health care costs.

Yet most of the positive work being done to overcome addiction happens behind the closed doors of Twelve Step meetings instead of in the halls of Congress, Denizet-Lewis notes. According to the book, 84 million Americans are hooked on drugs, alcohol or cigarettes while millions more are slaves to gambling and overeating.

Even still, we are far from accepting addiction as a medical disorder. That's one of the reasons Denizet-Lewis wanted to write about it. He sought to intellectualize addiction.

"Why can I drink a glass of wine and be normal or gamble and be fine? Was I born with it (sex addiction) or did it happen growing up? I wanted to figure it out," he says.

Denizet-Lewis entered recovery in 2002 and became sober with the help of psychotherapy and Twelve Step groups. By the time he started writing the book in 2004, he was sober.

"The goal is not never to have sex again but to do it in a healthy and joyful way," he says. "Drugs can be incredibly difficult to recover from, but as a sex addict, I can't get away from my brain and body parts. They're with me."

Did spending three years with eight addicts resurrect any issues for Denizet-Lewis? He admits to a "pretty big relapse" during the writing process. His subjects, such as Bobby, a 34-year-old heroin addict in denial; and Kate, a 32-year-old shoplifter reluctant to face her traumas, did not shy away from turning the tables on the author, he says. And he was open to sharing.

"They asked me to open up, and I related to everyone as a result," Denizet-Lewis says.

Like many children of divorce, he lived in two different households with two different sets of expectations. His father was loving and affectionate, he

says; his mother, less so. Denizet-Lewis headed to Northwestern University, where he studied journalism. After graduation, he took a job as a staff writer for the Contra Costa Times followed by a brief stint at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. At 25, he moved to Massachusetts for a job with *Boston Magazine*. His latest articles have been appearing in the *New York Times Magazine*.

In selecting his subjects for the book, Denizet-Lewis knew he wanted a diverse range of addicts. "Many people die from their addictions. Others get sober and lead rich lives. Some struggle to maintain sobriety. The lucky ones are able to go to treatment and stop the behaviour. I wanted to represent all of that," says Denizet-Lewis, who ultimately found his eight colourful subjects through friends and treatment centres.

Of particular interest, however, was

Denizet-Lewis' research and analysis of addiction outside the United States. In China, for instance, he writes that addiction is still widely viewed as a "profound moral failing demanding punitive action." He notes that some Chinese drug abusers are sent to labour camps, where they receive little treatment. In France, where they have generally healthier relationships to food and sex, addictions to these things are often mocked as silly American inventions,

writes Denizet-Lewis, who is half-French.

So if you don't have a cultural framework for a particular addiction, can the behaviour be labelled as addictive? He's still not sure.

"Different cultures have different ideas about it, but there is something about American culture that makes us prone to overconsumption," he says. "Addiction is incredibly complicated and anyone who thinks they've got it all figured out is on crack."

—By Jessica Yadegaran

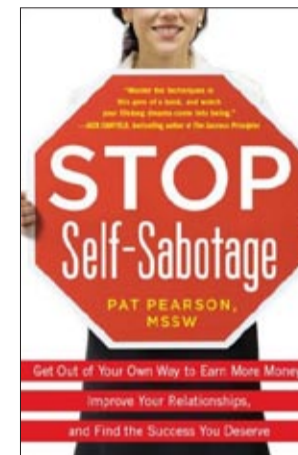
## Theories for those success-to-failure stories

### Stop Self-Sabotage

➔ **By Pat Pearson**  
 ➔ McGraw-Hill (\$16.95)

The pages of newspapers often recount the tale of someone who is at the top of his or her profession, only to inexplicably throw it all away.

Psychotherapist Pat Pearson, in *Stop Self-Sabotage*, believes that such self-destruction stems from people's unconscious belief that they do not deserve their success. Conversely, she says, people limit what they can achieve for one or more of the following reasons: giving up before you begin because of past failures; being in denial or unable to acknowledge reality; settling for less because you lack self-confidence; or possessing an undermining personality



trait such as perfectionism, procrastination, narcissism or a short temper.

According to Pearson, each of us has a Deserve Level, largely instilled by our parents. Self-sabotage regulates this Deserve Level to keep us in the self-imposed boundaries. She says the Deserve Level can be raised to the point of achieving to the limits of your ability – and enjoying it unconditionally.

Pearson addresses ways to build your self-esteem and self-confidence with exercises and affirmations. She wants you to find the sweet spot between challenging yourself too much and being too self-indulgent – both of which can sabotage what you have accomplished.

—By Steve Jacob

## If Darwin had read this book, he might not have believed in evolution either...

### 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"

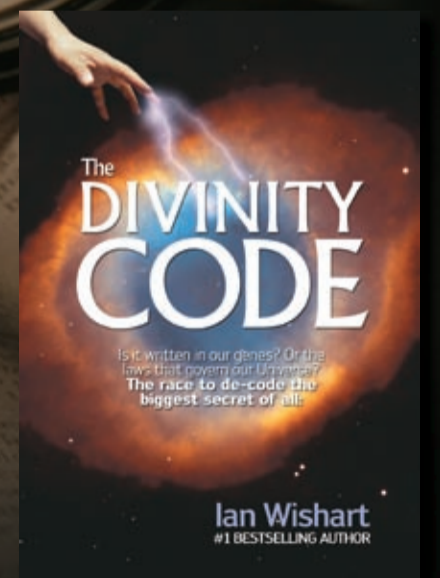
—NZ Catholic newspaper

"*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



## Living longer, stressing more

By Peter Curson

These are curious times. At the beginning of the 21st century we are all living longer, we are probably healthier than ever before, but remain more fearful about our health. Probably we have never had it so good. An average New Zealander can now look forward to living to age of 80, 10 years more than 50 years ago and probably double that which prevailed in the late 19th century. Infant mortality is now at an all time low with only five deaths per 1000 live births, compared to more than 120 deaths per 1000 in the mid 1870s. Infectious disease as a cause of death has dwindled away, with a few exceptions, (e.g. pneumonia and bronchitis in the very old, and HIV/AIDS in the much younger). There are now probably double as many hip replacements as five to ten years ago and deaths in childbirth are largely a thing of the past.

Yet people do not feel confident about their health or about the medical profession or about medical science's ability to protect them. An important part of this is the media's role in highlighting new medical discoveries and apparent contradictions. For example, one day red meat and coffee are good for you, the next day they are not. One day we are told to 'slip slop and slap' to avoid the sun, the next we are told that people are not getting enough exposure to sunlight. Small wonder that the average person just shrugs and walks away, losing some faith in medical research on the way. In addition, the price we have paid for living longer has probably been more chronic ill-health and disability as well as having to direct more resources into health care and aged support services. We are all fortunate to live in an age of high tech medical science – but it has not removed deep underlying fears about

health, about contagion, about the fear of 'outsiders' and communicable disease (witness SARS and Bird Flu). It is also a great irony, as Roy Porter once said, that the healthier a society becomes the more medicine it craves, almost as a god-given right. One might add that it also seeks more recourse to alternative therapies and in times of epidemic 'crisis' may even fall back on traditional folk cures. Witness the extraordinary growth of alternative therapies like Chiropractic and Osteopathy over the last few decades as well as the plethora of health food shops that adorn our towns and cities.

Moreover, the high priests of medicine and societal confidence have been shaken many times over

the developing world and the rapidly rising problem of antibiotic resistance in our own. Much of this relates to our carefree attitude to our environment, our increasing mobility, our greed and our general carelessness. But some of it also relates to our political and economic structure which has not only allowed (or pursued) wilful environmental modification or destruction and ignored greenhouse protocols, but also, in pursuit of economic returns, sought to locate production in developing countries so as to take advantage of lower overheads and avoid stringent health and environmental controls.

But what do we want out of modern medicine? What role should the medical profession assume in modern society? Is it to provide relief from suffer-

ing? Is it to keep us alive longer, regardless of the quality of life we may be forced to endure? Is it to make us lead healthier lives? Is it simply to cater to the 'worried well'?

**“WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE MEDICAL PROFESSION ASSUME IN MODERN SOCIETY? IS IT TO PROVIDE RELIEF FROM SUFFERING? IS IT TO KEEP US ALIVE LONGER, REGARDLESS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE WE MAY BE FORCED TO ENDURE? IS IT TO MAKE US LEAD HEALTHIER LIVES? IS IT SIMPLY TO CATER TO THE 'WORRIED WELL'?”**

the last century. In 1918-19 the influenza pandemic killed more than 50 million people around the world including more than 8,500 in New Zealand, with runs in 1957-8 and 1968-9. Between 1948 and 1956 polio paralysed New Zealand as it did many developed societies. HIV/AIDS did much the same in the 1980s and 1990s, as did SARS, Bird Flu and fear of a human pandemic of flu, more recently. There would seem little doubt that the next decade will see the emergence of many new 'hot viruses' as well as the return of older infections once thought under con-

rol and destined for oblivion. Much of this relates to our carefree attitude to our environment, our increasing mobility, our greed and our general carelessness. But some of it also relates to our political and economic structure which has not only allowed (or pursued) wilful environmental modification or destruction and ignored greenhouse protocols, but also, in pursuit of economic returns, sought to locate production in developing countries so as to take advantage of lower overheads and avoid stringent health and environmental controls.

the developing world and the rapidly rising problem of antibiotic resistance in our own.

In the final analysis a number of questions cry out for answers. Why is it in a society committed to social equality and welfare that certain groups of people – the young, the old, the disadvantaged, and Maoris and Pacific Islanders – continue to bear a disproportionate burden of injury and disease? Why is it that our high technology and high quality hospitals belie their true purpose and cause death and ill-health? Probably one in every 10 people entering hospital for a surgical procedure these days, will acquire a hospital-based infection. A recent Australian study indicated that two out of every three people undergoing a coronary bypass, 52% of those undergoing a colectomy and 42% of those having a hip replacement will suffer a complication or infection. In Australia more than 12,000 die each year from complications or an infection after entering hospital for a surgical procedure. Why is it that so many people are injured or die as a result of injuries in the workplace or diseases sustained in the course of their employment? In New Zealand and Australia there are now more deaths from this source than there are on the roads. In addition, about one in every 12 Australians and probably the same proportion of New Zealanders, suffer a non-fatal injury or illness (e.g. broken bones, hearing loss, asthma, headaches, stress, RSI etc) in the workplace. Why is it that indoor and outdoor pollution continue to play a role in our health? And who cares about noise pollution? These are important questions that go to the very heart of New Zealand's future. They deserve attention and action.

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



# Cradle of faiths: Jerusalem sings with history, conflict and unexpected harmony

By Jane Wooldridge

**JERUSALEM** – “Don’t you want to go to Bethlehem?” the taxi driver asks.

Most restaurants are shuttered on this Jewish holiday of Shavuot, and taxis are few. But Avi, a Palestinian Christian, shadows the tourist haunts, hoping for business.

I first catch him on a street, then at the Israel Museum (home to the Dead Sea Scrolls), then at the door of the palatial King David Hotel. Always, his question is the same:

“Don’t you want to go to Bethlehem?” It’s only a 30-minute drive, he explains.

Hesitation on my part, and a deep breath. Bethlehem lies behind the political and sandstone curtain dividing lands Jewish and Palestinian, on the contentious West Bank.

Finally, a friend and I give in to the magnetism of history, and in the early morning hours, we ride off with Avi toward “the little town” memorialized in the beloved Yuletide hymn.

We’re shuttled to a welcoming gift shop, then picked up by a guide and van who will take us the few blocks to the Church of the Nativity, built by Queen Helene, mother of the Roman emperor Constantine, on the spot believed to be Jesus’ birthplace.

We scurry to a chapel beneath the sanctuary, a snug space of painted walls and hanging oil lamps said to be the site of that humble manger. White-clad nuns begin to gather, and our guide urges us out before the private service begins. By the time we reach the stone floors of the soaring church above, the rich strains of centuries-old psalms swell through the spare sanctuary.

We feel entirely safe except from the come-ons of the hawkers hoping to lure us to their gift shops.

For Christians, visiting Bethlehem is as essential to a Jerusalem pilgrimage as following the Stations of the Cross or praying in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. For those of other faiths, and those drawn more by history than religion, this sweet town is inextricably bound to Jerusalem’s twisting story of hope, conflict, alliances and resentments.

Nearly all of the more than 3 million tourists who came to Israel in 2008 included Jerusalem on their must-see lists. More than in any other place in Israel, past and present coalesce and meld here. The modern city of 700,000-plus sprawls far beyond the millennia-old walls, but in its ancient core, history seems forever at your elbow.

When you read the Bible, Torah or historical texts, you may imagine great distances between the Tem-

ple Mount, where Solomon built the physical centre of Judaism; Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed in the olive garden; Golgotha, where he hung on a wooden cross; and the stone tomb, where his body was laid to rest.

But like Bethlehem, these icons incarnate are closer than you expect. Much closer. Some religious sites stand literally atop each other; others are no more than steps apart.

As you wander through the old city’s glorious stone warren, you quickly see that proximity is partly to blame for the ceaseless argument over Jerusalem’s governance. Like a stone wedged inside your sandal, some discordant view is ever present. Regardless of your beliefs, someone who differs vehemently is likely to be just next door.

Even to a first-time visitor, it’s no surprise to find metal detectors and strict security in the passageways separating Old Jerusalem’s Arab quarter from the Jewish Western Wall, at the foot of the Temple Mount. And no surprise to find security again at the entrance leading up the Mount to the shimmering gold of the Dome on the Rock sacred to Muslims.

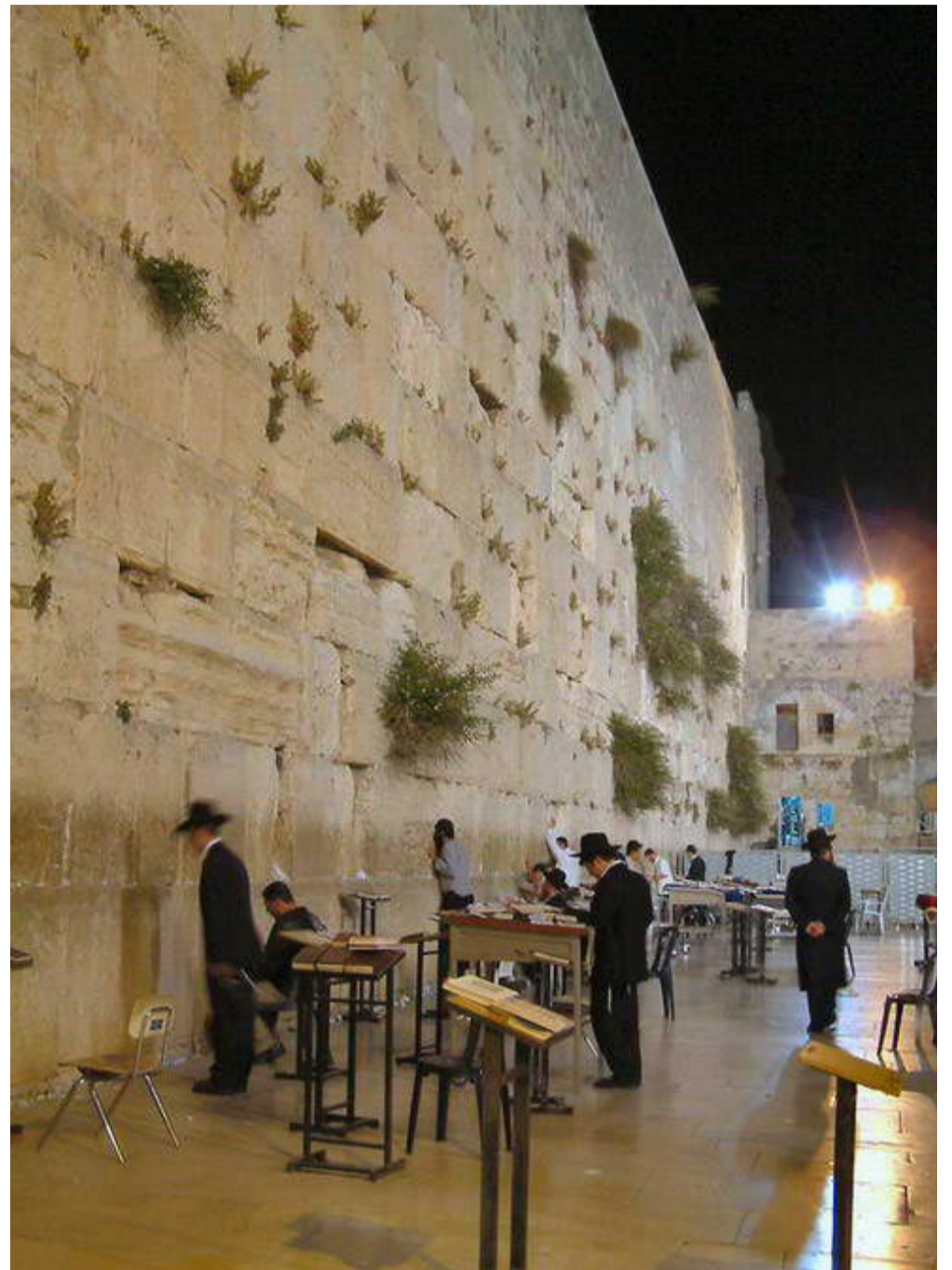
What is a surprise – at least to a casual visitor – is the dissent and violence that have plagued the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – not between Christians and Jews or Christians and Muslims, but between Christians and Christians.

These few square feet of stone, you learn, belong to the Greek Orthodox; these, to the Armenians; these, to the Catholics; these, to the Copts. In all, six Christian denominations claim jurisdiction in various parts of the massive church, which stands over the ground where Jesus is said to have been crucified, entombed and resurrected.

With six caretakers, squabbling perhaps is inevitable. Over the years, one group or another has barred the door, hidden the key, blocked entrances, refused repairs and brawled so openly that police have been called to restore peace – even as recently as a few weeks ago. If you believe in the teachings of Jesus, or have simply read them, you may be appalled.

And yet, in this ancient city of squabbles, you may also be struck by a surprising sense of fellowship.

As they have for generations, Arab and Jewish merchants sell goods side-by-side in the Old City market – scarves by lamps by jewellery by dried teas by rugs by Uzbek embroidery sold by an Arab who says he has converted to Buddhism. Non-Orthodox Jews eat in Arab falafel stands and stop by the cafe atop the Christian Austrian Hospice for a Coke. Arabs, Christian priests and yarmulke-clad Jews pass each other in the snug alleys in what often seems a



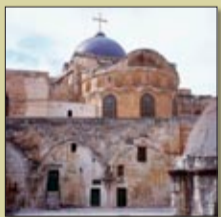
camaraderie of familiarity, if not shared purposes. “You have a sense of worldwide community, regardless of your religion,” said Paul Hewardine, an American Catholic who lives in Israel.

Groups of Christian pilgrims drag wooden crosses up the Via Dolorosa, the path partly through today’s Arab quarter, where Jesus is said to have carried his own cross to his crucifixion. A Jewish jeweller

points a bewildered traveller to the Crusader-era Church of St. Anne; an Arab bystander points to the obscured entrance.

Strains of a hymn spill from a Christian church; the Hebrew sounds of prayer flow from the Western Wall; a muezzin sounds the Muslim call to prayer. For all of Jerusalem’s discord, at times the city sings in harmony.

## IF YOU GO



**TOP SITES** Jerusalem offers so many must-see sites that you will need a week to visit them all. But don’t forget to leave plenty of time to simply stroll through the bazaar, quarters and even the roofs of the old city. The Old City measures a little more than a third of a square mile; it is divided into four quarters (Arab, Jewish, Armenian and Christian), though it’s mostly culture, rather than walls, that separate them.

The old city is closed to cars. Museums and newer attractions lie outside the old walls; all date from 1860 and beyond, when Jerusalem began its urban sprawl.

Note that hours vary – especially on holidays. Entry to religious sites is free; museums carry an entrance fee. Among the most impressive:

### OLD CITY

**Dome of the Rock** > The striking gold-domed shrine enclosing the rock where Mohammed is said to have risen to heaven is closed to non-Muslims, but a stroll around the perimeter of the city’s landmark gilt dome is a powerful experience. It dates from around 688 and is one of the world’s oldest Muslim structures.

**The Western Wall** > The simple stones that form the wall of the Second Temple are one of Judaism’s most sacred sites, and any time of the day or night you can see men and women tucking their prayers between the stones. Men and women pray separately – each has its own entrance – and though tourist garb is common, women should keep shoulders covered and dress modestly. There are a few

beggars, but paying them isn’t expected. On Mondays, newly bar mitzvah boys come here for their first Torah reading. The Western Wall sits just below the Temple Mount, home now to the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim site.

**Church of the Holy Sepulchre** > Jammed among the tight alleys of the Old City, the church marking the places where Jesus was crucified, died and buried seems unimpressive from the outside. Inside, it is a beautiful if sometimes disturbing testament both to conviction and religious strife: the church (built by Constantine in 326 A.D.) is divided among six Christian groups, including Greek Orthodox, Copts, Armenians, Catholics, who have vied over the centuries for control of church. The devout queue to get into the chapel over the tomb where Jesus is said to be buried; the slab where his body was laid after being taken from the cross is often crowded with the faithful.

**Stations of the Cross** > The 14 stations of significance on Jesus’ day of trial and procession to Golgotha are marked with bronze plaques; they’re small and easily missed. The Via Dolorosa (partly on the actual street called Via Dolorosa) is as much a path of symbolism as geography; exact locations of the various sites are sometimes disputed. On Friday afternoons, Franciscan monks lead a procession along the way; others are welcome to join.

**The Upper Room** > Also called the Cenacle or Coenaculum, the hall where the Last Supper purportedly was served is tucked on the second floor of buildings around the Church of the Dormition, on Mt. Zion, the highest point in Old Jerusalem. Many believe King David’s tomb lies in the same complex; the area can be busy and finding either space requires persistence.

**The Wohl Archeological Museum** > Jerusalem is one of the world’s great archeological sites, with cities and temples built atop each other. One of the best

places to get a sense of this is the Wohl museum, which has preserved a residential quarter of Jerusalem from Herod’s time.

### BEYOND

**Bethlehem** > Grab your passport – you’ll need it at the West Bank check point – and snag a taxi or sign up for a half-day tour from Jerusalem (from about US\$40). Note that the U.S. Department of State (<http://travel.state.gov>) advises against all travel to the West Bank.

**Yad Vashem** > The spare stark museum opened in 2005 is an emotional tribute to the victims of the Holocaust; be sure to allot several hours here. Some of the most moving exhibits include a memorial to the 1.5 million children killed during the Holocaust and audio and video tapes of survivors. The prism-like design – by architect Moshe Safdie – at times feels suffocating; at others offers light and hope. Entry is free. Tours are offered in English at 11 a.m. daily; an audio-guide is also available for a fee. Closed Friday afternoons and Saturdays. [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org); (0064-972) 2-6443769.

**Israel Museum** > The Israel Museum is lauded for its many displays, but the one you won’t want to miss is the Shrine of The Book, home to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Don’t rush past the explanatory exhibits; in many ways they’re more intriguing than the parchment themselves. US\$9.25 adults, \$4.65 ages 5-17. Open daily. [www.english.imjnet.org.il](http://www.english.imjnet.org.il); (0064-972) 2-6708811.

**Garden of Gethsemane** > Caretakers say that some of the gnarled olive trees in the garden near the Old City may have been saplings when Jesus prayed here the night following the Last Supper. The beautiful Church of All Nations and a grotto chapel across the street are most likely open in mornings.

# From peril to safety

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](#).

The night favoured their escape, and prudence urged them to lose no time in getting away from the fatal neighbourhood of Lake Taupo. Paganel took the post of leader, and his wonderful instinct shone out anew in this difficult mountain journey. His nyctalopia was a great advantage, his cat-like sight enabling him to distinguish the smallest object in the deepest gloom.

For three hours they walked on without halting along the far-reaching slope of the eastern side. Paganel kept a little to the southeast, in order to make use of a narrow passage between the Kaimanawa and the Wahiti Ranges, through which the road from Hawkes' Bay to Auckland passes. Once through that gorge, his plan was to keep off the road, and, under the shelter of the high ranges, march to the coast across the inhabited regions of the province.

At nine o'clock in the morning, they had made twelve miles in twelve hours. The courageous women could not be pressed further, and, besides, the locality was suitable for camping. The fugitives had reached the pass that separates the two chains. Paganel, map in hand, made a loop toward the northeast, and at ten o'clock the little party reached a sort of redan, formed by a projecting rock.

The provisions were brought out, and justice was done to their meal. Mary Grant and the Major, who had not thought highly of the edible fern till then, now ate of it heartily.

The halt lasted till two o'clock in the afternoon, then they resumed their journey; and in the evening they stopped eight miles from the mountains, and required no persuasion to sleep in the open air.

Next day was one of serious difficulties. Their route lay across this wondrous region of volcanic lakes, geysers, and solfataras, which extended to the east of the Wahiti Ranges. It is a country more pleasant for the eye to ramble over, than for the limbs. Every quarter of a mile they had to turn aside or go around for some obstacle, and thus incurred great fatigue; but what a strange sight met their eyes! What infinite variety nature lavishes on her great panoramas!

On this vast extent of twenty miles square, the subterranean forces had a field for the display of all their varied effects. Salt springs, of singular transparency, peopled by myriads of insects, sprang up from thickets of tea-tree scrub. They diffused a powerful odour of burnt powder, and scattered on the ground a white sediment like dazzling snow. The limpid waters were nearly at boiling point, while some neighbouring springs spread out like sheets of glass. Gigantic tree-ferns grew beside them, in conditions analogous to those of the Silurian vegetation.

On every side jets of water rose like park fountains, out of a sea of vapour; some of them continuous, others intermittent, as if a capricious Pluto controlled their movements. They rose like an amphitheatre on natural terraces; their waters gradually flowed together under folds of white smoke, and corroding the edges of the semi-transparent steps of this gigantic staircase. They fed whole lakes with their boiling torrents.

Farther still, beyond the hot springs and tumultuous geysers, came the solfataras. The ground looked as if covered with large pustules. These were slumbering craters full of cracks and fissures from which rose various gases. The air was saturated with the acrid and unpleasant odour of sulphurous acid. The ground was encrusted with sulphur and crystalline concretions. All this incalculable wealth had been accumulating for centuries, and if the sulphur beds of Sicily should ever be exhausted, it is here, in this little known district of New Zealand, that supplies must be sought.

The fatigue in travelling in such a country as this will be best understood. Camping was very difficult, and the sportsmen of the party shot nothing worthy of Olbinnet's skill; so that they had generally to content themselves with fern and sweet potato-- a poor diet which was scarcely sufficient to recruit the exhausted strength of the little party, who were all anxious to escape from this barren region.

But four days at least must elapse before they could hope to leave it. On February 23, at a distance of fifty miles from Maunganamu, Glenarvan called a halt, and camped at the foot of a nameless mountain, marked on Paganel's map. The wooded plains stretched away from sight, and great forests appeared on the horizon.

That day McNabbs and Robert killed three kiwis, which filled the chief place on their table, not for long, however, for in a few moments they were all consumed from the beaks to the claws.

At dessert, between the potatoes and sweet potatoes, Paganel moved a resolution which was carried with enthusiasm. He proposed to give the name of Glenarvan to this unnamed mountain, which rose 3,000 feet high, and then was lost in the clouds, and he printed carefully on his map the name of the Scottish nobleman.

It would be idle to narrate all the monotonous and uninteresting details of the rest of the journey. Only two or three occurrences of

any importance took place on the way from the lakes to the Pacific Ocean. The march was all day long across forests and plains. John took observations of the sun and stars. Neither heat nor rain increased the discomfort of the journey, but the travellers were so reduced by the trials they had undergone, that they made very slow progress; and they longed to arrive at the mission station.

They still chatted, but the conversation had ceased to be general. The little party broke up into groups, attracted to each other, not by narrow sympathies, but by a more personal communion of ideas.

Glenarvan generally walked alone; his mind seemed to recur to his unfortunate crew, as he drew nearer to the sea. He apparently lost sight of the dangers which lay before them on their way to Auckland, in the thought of his massacred men; the horrible picture haunted him.

Harry Grant was never spoken of; they were no longer in a position to make any effort on his behalf. If his name was uttered at all, it was between his daughter and John Mangles.

John had never reminded Mary of what she had said to him on that last night at Ware-Atoua. He was too wise to take advantage of a word spoken in a moment of despair. When he mentioned Captain

Grant, John always spoke of further search. He assured Mary that Lord Glenarvan would re-embark in the enterprise. He persistently returned to the fact that the authenticity of the document was indisputable, and that therefore Harry Grant was somewhere to be found, and that they would find him, if they had to try all over the world. Mary drank in his words, and she and John, united by the same thought, cherished the same hope. Often Lady Helena joined in the conversation; but she did not participate in their illusions, though she refrained from chilling their enthusiasm.

McNabbs, Robert, Wilson, and Mulrady kept up their hunting parties, without going far from the rest, and each one furnished his quota of game.

Paganel, arrayed in his flax mat, kept himself aloof, in a silent and pensive mood.

And yet, it is only justice to say, in spite of the general rule that, in the midst of trials, dangers, fatigues, and privations, the most amiable dispositions become ruffled and embittered, all our travellers were united, devoted, ready to die for one another.

On the 25th of February, their progress was stopped by a river which answered to the Wakari on Paganel's map, and was easily forded. For two days plains of low scrub succeeded each other without interruption. Half the distance from Lake Taupo to the coast had



**THE KAURIS MEASURED A HUNDRED FEET HIGH, BEFORE THE RAMIFICATION OF THE BRANCHES. THEY GREW IN ISOLATED CLUMPS, AND THE FOREST WAS NOT COMPOSED OF TREES, BUT OF INNUMERABLE GROUPS OF TREES, WHICH SPREAD THEIR GREEN CANOPIES IN THE AIR TWO HUNDRED FEET FROM THE GROUND**

been traversed without accident, though not without fatigue.

Then the scene changed to immense and interminable forests, which reminded them of Australia, but here the kauri took the place of the eucalyptus. Although their enthusiasm had been incessantly called forth during their four months' journey, Glenarvan and his companions were compelled to admire and wonder at those gigantic pines, worthy rivals of the Cedars of Lebanon, and the "Mammoth trees" of California. The kauris measured a hundred feet high, before the ramification of the branches. They grew in isolated clumps, and the forest was not composed of trees, but of innumerable groups of trees, which spread their green canopies in the air two hundred feet from the ground.

Some of these pines, still young, about a hundred years old, resembled the red pine of Europe. They had a dark crown surmounted by a dark conical shoot. Their older brethren, five or six hundred years of age, formed great green pavilions supported on the inextricable network of their branches. These patriarchs of the New Zealand forest measured fifty yards in circumference, and the united arms of all the travellers could not embrace the giant trunk.

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